Subordination: A Perspective of Manipuri Embedded Clause Structures

Sagolsem Indrakumar Singh[1], Ph.D.
Chungkham Yashawanta Singh[2], Ph.D.
[1, 2] Department of Linguistics, Manipur University, Imphal

Abstract: *Manipuri, being one of the Tibeto-Burman languages has a very unique place among the languages of the world. It has its own literatures and grammars and also is the richest preserver of the heritage of old literature than any other languages in Manipur, a north-eastern state of India. The present paper studies the syntactic structures regarding the various forms of embedded clauses prevailing in Manipuri. The analysis exhibits the facts that all the embedded clauses in Manipuri are constructed through the addition of nominalizer, quotative and nominalizer along with case markers. This paper also discusses structural and functional classification of embedded clauses in Manipuri. Structurally, embedded clauses are composed of by adding nominalizers, quotatives and nominalizers along with case markers. Functionally embedded clauses in a matrix sentence perform the function of nouns, adjectives and adverbs.*

Subordination

Subordination is a non-symmetrical relation, holding between two clauses- an *independent*, capable of existing as a complete sentence and a *dependent*, capable of making up a grammatical sentence only when subordinated to a further clause. Subordination is between the two clauses in such a way that the dependent clause is a constituent or part of the independent clause that is, one of the parts is clearly more salient or important, while the other part is in some sense subordinate.

In subordination, one may see subordination as the 'downgrading' of a clause to a clause to the status of a sub-clausal unit (Quirk. et. al, 1972). The device of subordination enables one to organize multiple clause structures.

Embedded clauses

In the formation of complex sentences, a matrix clause consisting of at least an NP and a VP and an embedded clause with its various forms, takes part in the construction of Manipuri complex sentences. The embedded clause here always takes subordinators formed by *case markers* (like, locative *-tə~-də*, genitive *-ki~-gi*, associative *-kə~-gə* and ablative *-təgi~-dəgi*), *lexical subordinators* (such as, *pʰaubə* 'upto' and *kandə* 'at the time of') and *suffix subordinators* (such as, demonstrative *-ti~-di*, and the suffix *-su*).

Embedded clauses, in Manipuri are constructed by adding nominalizers to the non-inflected verbal root of the clause, quotatives after the verb of the clause and nominalizers along with case markers after the verb of the clause. Embedded clauses may be classified as structural type, that is, in terms of the elements they themselves contain and functional type, that is, the structural position they have in the super ordinate clause.

Structural classification

Structurally, an embedded clause in Manipuri is constructed by three basic forms. The three forms which are significant in embedded clause constructions are as follows:

i) by nominalizers suffixing to a non-inflected verb;
ii) by complementizers suffixing to the nominalized clause;
iii) by nominalizers along with case markers suffixing to the verb.

Embedded clauses formed by nominalizers

In Manipuri, verbs in embedded clauses are nominalized in a number of ways and they function as modifying part, or nominalized complements. The nominalizers are the suffix *-pə~-bə* and lexical- *ɟat* 'type' and *pot* 'thing'. The nominalizing suffix *-pə~-bə* has a number of cognates in some Tibeto-Burman languages. This suffix reveals functional similarities with that of Lahu -'*ve*' at least as a nominalizer and as a subordinator. A language spoken in Nepal, *Thulung Rai* employs *-mu*, *-m*, *-mim*, *-kʰom* as different nominalizers (Lahaussois, 2003). But Angami has a single nominalizing morpheme *kə-* (Herring, 1991). A Bodish language namely Chantyal employs *-wa* nominalizer for multifarious functional (Noonan, 1997). The formation of embedded clauses by adding nominalizers in Manipuri is illustrated as follows.

1(a). nəŋ lakpə əi kʰəŋŋi

    nəŋ   lak-pə   əi kʰəŋ-i

    you come-NZR I   know-ASP

    'I know your coming'.

(b). məhak mi hatpəgi dəndi pʰəŋbəni

    məhak mi   hat-pə-gi   dəndi   pʰəŋ-bə-ni

    he   person   kill-NZR-GEN punishment get-NZR-COP

    'He got punishment for murder'.

(c). sitadi hek lakpəgə kəpkʰre

sita-di   hek   lak-pə-gə   kəp-kʰə-re
Sita-DEM just come-NZR-ASS   cry-DEF-PERF
'Sita has cried just after coming here'.

(d). məhak lakləmɟatlə əi kʰəŋde

məhak lak-ləm-ɟat-lə   əi kʰəŋ-de-i
he   come-INCT-type-INT I   know-NEG-ASP
'I do not know whether he has come here or not'.

(e). əisu kʰəŋŋi mədu nəkʰoinə ŋəmpot nətte

əi-su   kʰəŋ-i   mədu nə-kʰoi-nə   ŋəm-pot   nətte-i
I-also   know-ASP that   2PP-PL-ERG be able-thing   not-ASP
'I also know that you could not do it'.

As a fact that the structure of subordinate clauses is first nominalized with nominalizing morpheme *-pə~-bə* as in 1(a), 1(b) and 1(c) and with lexical nominalizers, *jat* 'type' and *pot* 'thing' as in 1(d) and 1(e).

Embedded clauses formed by quotatives

Quotatives in Manipuri derived from the verb root *hai* 'say' through the addition of the suffixes such as *haibə, hainə, haibədu, hairidu, hairidubusu, hainəsu, hainəbu, hainədum, haidunəsu, etc.* take part in the construction of embedded clauses. The quotative is used to subordinate a clause that represents statements made by someone other than the speaker or statements about the desires, wishes, or intentions of someone other than the speaker (Chelliah, 1997). Illustrative examples are given below.

2(a). ram həlləke haibə əi tai

ram həl-lək-e   hai-bə   əi   ta-i
Ram return-INCT-ASP say-NZR I   hear-ASP
'I hear that Ram has returned'.

(b). ramnə liŋguistiks təmbi hainə əi kʰəlli

    ram-nə   liŋguistiks təmbi hai-nə   əi kʰəl-i

    Ram-ERG linguistics teach say-ADV I   think-ASP

    'I think that Ram teaches linguistics'.

The quotatives *-haibə* and *-hainə* make complement to the subordinate clauses which already have complete sense or thought, i.e. *ram həlləke* 'Ram has returned' in 2(a) and *ramnə liŋguistiks təmbi* 'Ram teaches linguistics' in 2(b) are the complement embedded clauses and they are made complement by the quotatives *-haibə* and *-hainə* respectively; and for this the two quotatives are treated as sentential complements.

Embedded clauses formed by nominalizers with case markers

The nominalizer *-pə~-bə* along with case markers enable one to construct embedded clauses in Manipuri. The whole clause gets first nominalized and as a continuing process respective case markers are added as analyzed in the following examples.

3(a). məpa lakpədəgi caubə cenkʰre

    mə-pa   lak-pə-dəgi   caubə   cen-kʰə-re

    3PP-father come-NZR-ABL Chaoba run-DEF-PERF

    'Chaoba has run away as his father came'.

(b). hek lakpəgə nəŋgi həunəbidu təurəbrə

    hek lak-pə-gə   nəŋ-gi   həunəbi-du təu-rə-bə-rə

    just come-NZR-ASS you-GEN nature-DEM do-PROG-NZR-INT

    'Did you do as soon as you just arrive?'

It is clearly noticed from the sentences cited in (3) that the nominalizing morpheme *-pə~-bə* along with different case markers construct various embedded clauses. It is also fact that the whole embedded clause is first nominalized and as a continuing process respective case markers are added.

Case markers such as ablative *-dəgi* in 3(a) and associative *-gə* in 3(b) are employed. Again as a nominalized clause sentences given below can be considered.

4(a).   mi ənidu sire

mi   əni-du   si-re

person   two-DEM   die-PERF

'The two persons have died'.

(b).   mi ənidu ŋəraŋ pʰakʰi

mi   əni-du   ŋəraŋ   pʰa-kʰi

person   two-DEM   yesterday   arrest-PERF

'The two men were arrested yesterday'.

(c).   ŋəraŋ pʰakʰibə mi ənidu sire

ŋəraŋ   pʰa-kʰi-bə   mi   əni-du   si-re

yesterday arrest-PERF-NZR   person   two-DEM   die-PERF

'The two persons whom were arrested yesterday have died'.

It signifies that sentence 4(b) is embedded in 4(a) as a modifier of the noun phrase *nupa ənidu* 'the two persons' to get the sentence 4(c) where the main clause *mi ənidu sire* 'the two persons have died' signifies the focal prediction of the subordinate clause. In sentence 4(c) above, the entire main clause *mi ənidu sire* 'the two persons have died' is modified by the embedded clause *ŋəraŋ pʰakʰibə* 'who were arrested yesterday' as a modifier, i.e. '*who are the two persons died*' is modified by the clause '*they were the ones arrested yesterday*'.

Functional classification

Subordinate clauses are embedded as a constituent of the matrix sentence and they function like a noun, adjective and adverb.

Subordinate noun clauses

Subordinate noun clauses, on the basis of grammatical function in syntactic structures, perform the function of a noun being used in subject and object positions of the verb in the matrix sentences. In the following sentences, embedded clauses occur in the subject position of the verb.

Subordinate noun clauses in subject position

5(a). [məhaknə haibədu] cumde

məhak-nə   hai-bə-du   cum-de-i

he-ERG   say-NZR-DEM   be true-NEG-ASP

'What he said is not true'.

(b).   [nəŋnə ŋaŋlidu] pʰəjəi

nəŋ-nə   ŋaŋ-li-du   pʰəjə-i

you-ERG   speak-PROG-DEM be nice-ASP

'What you are speaking is nice'.

Evidence is that the clause *məhaknə haibədu* 'what he said' in sentence 5(a) performs the function of a noun being used as the subject of the verb *cumde* 'be true+NEG+ASP'. The clause *məhaknə haibədu* 'what he said' is an embedded nominalized noun clause which directly precedes the main verb cumde 'be true+NEG+ASP' and functions as a noun that is, the sentence can be as *wapʰəmdu cumde* 'The word is not true'. In this sentence *wapʰəmdu* 'word+DEM' acts as subject of the verb *cumde* 'be true+NEG+ASP' and the subject can be replaced by the clause *məhaknə haibədu* 'what he said' and hence the clause acts as embedded noun clause. The underlying sentence structure might be as *məhaknə haibə wadu cumde* 'what he said is not true'. The sentence is possible to shorten by dropping the word *wapʰəm* however, the very demonstrative -*du* remains attached to the derived noun haibə 'say+NZR'.

Subordinate noun clauses in object position

Subordinate noun clauses in object position of the verb are illustrated by the examples given below.

6(a). məhaknə daktər oibə məmanə pammi

məhak-nə   daktər   oi-bə   mə-ma-nə   pam-i

he-ERG   doctor be-NZR   3PP-mother-ERG   like-ASP

'His mother likes that he becomes a doctor'.

(b).   məninə haibə wadu əi tare

     məni-nə   hai-bə   wa-du   əi   ta-re

     Mani-ERG   say-NZR   word-DEM   I   hear-PERF

     'I have heard what Mani spoke'.

The embedded clause *məhaknə daktər oibə* 'that he becomes a doctor' functions as noun being used in the object position of the verb *pammi* 'like+ASP' in sentence 6(a). The whole clause first gets nominalized and it lies also as a complement of the matrix clause *məmanə pammi* 'his mother likes'. In sentence 6(b), the clause *məninə haibə wadu* 'the word that Mani said' is the embedded clause functioning as a noun being used in the object position of the verb *tare* 'hear+PERF'.

Subordinate adjective clauses

Subordinate adjective clause performs the function of an adjective modifying the NP that lies as a head. The following illustrations can be considered.

7(a).   əinə pambə nupidi nəŋni

     əi-nə   pam-bə   nupi-di   nəŋ-ni

     I-ERG   like-NZR   woman-DEM   you-COP

     'You are the woman whom I like'.

(b).   məhaknə səkpə isəidu mijamnə pammi

     məhak-nə   sək-pə   isəi-du   mijam-nə   pam-i

     he-ERG   sing-NZR   song-DEM   people-ERG   like-ASP

     'The song that he sang is liked by all'.

In the illustration of 7(a), the clause can be identified as *əinə pambə* 'whom I like' is the embedded clause preceding the NP *nupidu* 'woman+DEM'. Since this embedded clause modifies the head NP, the clause becomes an embedded adjective clause.

Again considering 7(b), the clause *məhaknə səkpə* 'that he sang' precedes the head noun *isəi* 'song' and which is modified by the clause. The clause becomes an embedded adjective clause as it modifies the NP.

Subordinate adverb clauses

Subordinate clause functioning as an adverb modifies a verb, an adjective or another adverb and also modifies the entire matrix clause to which the subordinate clause is embedded.

8(a). məhak sonbənə cətpə ŋəmde

məhak son-bə-nə   cət-pə   ŋəm-de-i
he   be weak-NZR-ADV go-NZR be able-NEG-ASP
'He is too weak to go'.

(b). jotti sariŋəidə jəiu

jot-ti   sa-ri-ŋəi-də   jəi-u
iron-DEM   be hot-PROG-during-DAT strike-COMD
'Strike the iron while it is hot'.

In sentences 8(a) and 8(b), the subordinate clauses functioning as adverb *məhak sonbənə* 'as he is weak' in 8(a) and *joti sariŋəidə* 'when the iron is hot' in 8(b) modify the very main clause *cətpə ŋəmde* 'unable to go' and *jəiju* 'strike' respectively. In fact, the proposition of the subordinate clause is the reason for the proposition of the main clause and therefore modifies.

Again subordinate clause functioning as adverb clause modifies the adjective and the main clause, which is shown in the examples given below.

9(a). təupʰəm kʰəŋdəbənə məhak ŋaure

təu-pʰəm kʰəŋ-də-bə-nə   məhak ŋau-re
do-place   know-NEG-NZR-ADV   he   be mad-PERF
'He is mad as he has nothing to do'.

(b). məsək tʰimənbənə məhak ikaire

mə-sək   tʰi-mən-bə-nə   məhak ikai-re
3PP-face   be ugly-excess-NZR-ADV   she   shy-PERF
'She feels shy as she is quite ugly'.

In sentence 9(a), it is observed that the clause *təupʰəm kʰəŋdəbənə* 'as he has nothing to do' functions as an adverb clause modifying the main verb *ŋaore* 'be made+PERF'. It is therefore, the subordinate clause *təupʰəm kʰəŋdəbənə* becomes the reason for the occurrence of the main clause *məhak ŋaore*, that is, the proposition of the subordinate clause is the reason for the proposition of the main clause and therefore modifies.

Similarly in 9(b), the clause *məsək tʰimənbənə* 'as she is quite ugly' functions as an adverb which modifies the adjective *ikaire* 'be shame+PERF' and as well as the clause itself becomes the reason for the occurrence of the main clause *məhak ikaire* 'she feels shy'. It is therefore, the proposition of subordinate clause *məsək tʰimənbənə* 'as she is quite ugly' is the reason for the occurrence of the main clause *məhak ikaire* 'she feels shy' and is modified.

The subordinate clause which functions as an adverb also modifies another adverb in the larger sentence.
Examples:

10(a). təpnə lakpənə məhak kʰərə tʰeŋŋi

təp-nə	lak-pə-nə	məhak	kʰərə	tʰeŋ-i
be slow-ADV	come-NZR-ADV	he	some	be late-ASP

'He got something late since he came slowly'.

(b). saunə cətkʰibənə məhak jamnə tʰui

sau-nə	cət-kʰi-bə-nə	məhak	jam-nə	tʰu-i
be angry-ADV	go-PERF-NZR-ADV	he	very-ADV	be quick-ASP

'He is very quick since he has gone angrily'.

Considering the example in 10(a) it can be noticed that the subordinate clause functioning as adverb shows close grammatical relationships with the main clause itself. The main clause *məhak kʰərə tʰeŋŋi* 'he got something late' is modified by the subordinate clause *təpnə lakpənə* 'since he came slowly'. It expresses the reason for getting himself late that is, because of coming slowly and hence becomes a proposition which binds a reason for the occurrence of both the clauses.

Similarly, in 10(b), the subordinate clause functioning as adverb clause *saunə catkʰibənə* 'since he went angrily' modifies the main clause *məhak jamnə tʰui* 'he is very quick' expressing the reason why he is very quick, that is, because of going angrily and hence a close relation with each clauses.

It is clear that subordinate noun clauses being used in subject and object positions perform the functions of a noun. Subordinate adjective clauses, on the other hand, are prenominal embedded clauses that modify the NP which occurs in the same sentence. In some other case, the order of the position of the adjective clause is also possible to occur after the NP. But the adjective clause precedes the matrix (main) clause. Subordinate clause functioning as adverb in Manipuri is found as causal clause, conditional clause as well as permissive clause under semantic classification.

Case markers such as associative (*-kə~-gə*), genitive (*-ki~-gi*), locative (*-tə~-də*) and ablative (*-təgi~-dəgi*) derive clausal subordinators following a pattern that is common in Tibeto-Burman languages, as noted by Konow (1909).

The associative case marker *-kə~-gə* is use to create an adverbial clause which signals a temporal sequence of events. The genitive marker *-ki~-gi* can be suffixed to a nominalized verb to indicate a clause of purpose. The locative marker *-tə~-də* may be suffixed to a nominalized verb to indicate a time clause with the meaning of 'when verb+ing'. The ablative marker *-təgi~-dəgi* is used to form a subordinate clause which gives an explanation for a current state that has just come into being. It can be translated as 'resulting from verb'.

11(a). [məhak lakpəgə] kəpkʰre

məhak   lak-pə-gə   kəp-kʰə-re
she   come-NZR-ASS cry-DEF-PERF
'She started crying as she arrived'.

(b). [nəŋnə haibəgi] əi lakpəni

nəŋ-nə   hai-bə-gi   əi   lak-pə-ni
you-ERG   say-NZR-GEN   I   come-NZR-COP
'I have come as you said'.

(c). [nəŋ lakpədəgi] imuŋsi nuŋŋaire

nəŋ   lak-pə-dəgi   imuŋ-si   nuŋai-re

you   come-NZR-ABL   house-DEM   be happy-PERF

'This family became happy after you have come'.

All these clauses marked with bracket are the subordinate clauses denoting the time to express the matrix clauses. The case markers *-gə*, *-gi*, *-də* and *-dəgi* as subordinators are held by adding to the clauses such as *məhak lakpəgə* 'as she has arrived' in 11(a), *nəŋnə haibəgi* 'as you said' in 11(b) and *nəŋ lakpədəgi* 'after you have come' in 11(c). These clauses signaling temporal of events are first nominalized with the morpheme *-pə~-bə* and then case markers are suffixed.

Conclusion

In the light of the above discussion, it is noticed that subordination in Manipuri takes nominalizers to construct embedded clauses. Nominalizers such as suffixal and lexical playing a significant role take part in the construction of embedded clauses. In embedded clauses formed by adding nominalizer along with case markers, the verb of that clause gets first nominalized and as a continuing process respective case markers are added. The entity that lies as the head NP can be kept disguised in subject and object positions of an embedded clause. Subordinate adjective clauses are prenominal. The verb in the matrix clause is modified by the embedded clause in subordinate adverb clauses signaling causal clause, conditional clause and permissive clause.

Abbreviations

2PP	second person pronoun
3PP	third person pronoun
ABL	ablative
ADV	adverb
ASP	aspect
ASS	associative
BEN	benefactive
COP	copula
DAT	dative
DEF	defective
DEM	demonstrative
ERG	ergative

GEN	genitive
IMP	imperative
INT	interrogative
INCT	inceptive
LOC	locative
NZR	nominalizer
NEG	negative
PERF	perfective
PL	plural
PROG	progressive

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