

## **Borrowing or Loanwords in Manipuri**

**Mayengbam Bidyarani Devi, Ph.D.**

### **Abstract**

The present paper contributes to the study of the borrowing in Manipuri, a Tibeto-Burman language. There are large numbers of borrowed words or loanwords that are being used in present day Manipuri. Linguistic borrowings became a practical necessity as well as socio-cultural and religious changes that took place to expand the existing vocabulary in Manipuri. Loanwords or borrowing from other languages contain certain phonemes which are non-existent in Manipuri after that the native speakers naturalized loanwords by substituting the foreign sounds by the nearest equivalent sounds available in Manipuri. From different sources, Loanwords are borrowed in day to day activities. It analyses the borrowing which enriches Manipuri vocabulary i.e. lexical development.

**Keywords:** Manipuri, Borrowing, loanwords, vocabulary and lexical.

### **1. Introduction**

Linguistic borrowing involves the taking up of words from another language and making them a part of its own vocabulary. These words are called loanwords.

According to A.S. Dil, (1972), borrowing is defined as ‘the attempted reproduction in one language of patterns previously found in another’ and the reproduced words may be either loanwords (show morphemic importation without substitution), loan blends (show morphemic substitution as well as importation) or loan shifts (show morphemic without importation).

According to R.L. Trask (2000), borrowing is defined as ‘lexical copying, sometimes also lexical change, narrowly, the transfer of a word from one language into a second language, as a result of some kind of contact (language contact)’.

According to David Crystal (1985), borrowing is defined as ‘a term used in comparative and historical linguistics to refer to linguistic forms being taken over by one language or dialect from another: such borrowings are usually known as loanwords’.

One language may possess words for which there are no equivalents in the other language. There may be words for objects, social, political, and cultural institutions and events or abstract concepts which are not found in the culture of the other language. The royal chronicle Cheitharol Kumbaba maintains an uninterrupted historical record of the land and its people since 33 A. D. Throughout the history, the Manipur valley was the core region where the distinctive Manipuri culture and way of life took shape and where political developments having repercussions throughout the Indo-Aryan is traced as far as the 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D., during the regime of king Kiyamba (1467-1508) of Manipur. Some Sanskrit scholars from outside came to Manipur and settled there (Jhaljit 1965). Until the year 1891 A.D., Manipur continued to remain as a sovereign kingdom. But after the defeat of Manipuri king Kullachandra by the British forces in the Anglo-Manipuri War in 1891, Manipur lost its sovereignty and it came to be under dominion of British Government of India which already ruled

the mainland of India. Until India regains its independence from the British on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947, Manipur was also ruled by the British Government during the period of 57 years (1891-1947 A.D.) of British ruled in Manipur. During the same period, some British missionaries like Pettigrew (1912) started spreading education in Manipur with English as the medium of instruction and thus, the English language started entering into the Manipuri lexicon.

Most of the loanwords in Manipuri originate from the Indo-European family of languages and only a few loanwords in the language originate from families of languages other than the Indo-European family. Indo-European family has three subfamilies, namely, the Indo-Aryan sub-family (Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Assamese); the Iranian sub-family (Arabic, Persian, Turkey, Pashto) and the European sub-family (English, Portuguese, French, Spanish). The maximum number of loanwords came from the Indo-Aryan and European sub families. The numbers of loanwords imported to Manipuri from both the Indo-Aryan and European sub-families of languages are nearly equal. The languages of the Iranian sub-family also contributed significantly a number of loanwords in Manipuri, but the number of such loanwords is much lesser than the number of either the Indo-Aryan loanwords in Manipuri or the European loanwords in Manipuri.

No complete survey of the exact number of loanwords in Manipuri and no study regarding the etymological affiliation of the loanwords have been reported in the literature as yet; even the relative ratio between the number of loanwords in Manipuri and the native words is not known as yet. Even the proper names have been affected due to linguistic and cultural borrowing; many proper names of Manipuri are found to be Indo-Aryan and English origin.

Manipuri is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the North-Eastern state of India. Development of vocabulary in modern Manipuri shows various works of different ideologies aided by the expanding social base of participants in the cultural literature. Till now there is not much work on the lexical development in Manipuri, so there is an urgent need to research this topic from a linguistic perspective. The present paper would focus on the study of borrowing in Manipuri and also the development or enrichment of lexical items will be analysed.

## **2. Borrowing in Manipuri**

The etymology of loanwords in Manipuri may be traced through their original source language. Manipuri has a large number of borrowed words or loanwords imported from other languages. All the loanwords or borrowed words in Manipuri are categorized into two, namely (i) Direct Borrowing (loanwords which directly appear in Manipuri as source language as well as their extension, and adoption by immediate contact between the peoples through oral speech), (ii) Indirect borrowing (loanwords which appear in Manipuri via an intermediary language by indirect contact through written speech).

Through the study of etymology of loan words in Manipuri we find that most of the loanwords are derived from Indo-European languages namely Indo-Aryan family (Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali and Assamese); Iranian family (Arabic, Persia, Turkey and Pashto); European family (English, Portuguese) and other languages such as Tamil, Malaysia, Chinese, Japanese, etc. Number of loanwords in Manipuri is more than four thousand (Binodkumar Hajarimayum, 2006).

The Sanskrit loanwords in Manipuri are either direct borrowing from the Sanskrit language itself or indirect borrowing from Sanskrit through Hindi and Bengali while Hindi, Assamese and Bengali loanwords in Manipuri are direct borrowing from the concerned languages. Among the Indo-Aryan family, maximum loanwords are found in Sanskrit and less number in Assamese language. All

of the Iranian loanwords in Manipuri are found to be indirect borrowing taking place via Hindi and Bengali. They are fewer in number. Among the European loanwords in Manipuri, English language contributes the maximum. All of the English loanwords in Manipuri are found as direct borrowing while other European loanwords in Manipuri except English are regarded as indirect borrowing and they got their entry into Manipuri lexicon via Bengali, Hindi as well as English. Other languages such as Tamil, Malay, Chinese and Japanese are found very few in number as compared to the above languages mentioned and they are found through direct borrowing. The following table 1 shows the loanwords in Manipuri, but do not mention the whole loanwords borrowed from the other languages.

**Table 1: Loanwords in Manipuri**

	Source Language	Loanword in Manipuri	Gloss
<b>Sanskrit</b>	arth $\partial$	arth $\partial$	meaning
	asa	asa	hope
	atma	atma	soul
	b $\partial$ yri	b $\partial$ yri	enemy
	b <sup>h</sup> ugol	b <sup>h</sup> ugol	geography
	vidya	bidya	knowledge
	c $\partial$ m $\partial$ s	c $\partial$ m $\partial$ s	spoon
	dan	dan	offering/charity
	gun	gun	quality
	kalpana	k $\partial$ lp $\partial$ na	imagination
	<b>Hindi</b>	alu	alu
andol $\partial$ n		$\partial$ ndol $\partial$ n	agitation
bandi		b $\partial$ ndi	prisoner
bora		bora	a sack
c $\partial$ pp $\partial$ l		c $\partial$ pp $\partial$ l	saddle
cit <sup>h</sup> i		cit <sup>h</sup> i	letter
curup		curup	cigarette
d $\partial$ hi		d $\partial$ hi	curd
g $\partial$ m $\partial$ la		g $\partial$ m $\partial$ la	flower pot
dona		dona	a leaf-cup
<b>Bengali</b>	$\partial$ ᅇka	$\partial$ ᅇka	arithmetic
	almari	$\partial$ lmari/ $\partial$ mbari	almirah
	beson	beson	gram flour
	b $\partial$ n	b $\partial$ n/ bon	forest
	bond <sup>h</sup> u	bond <sup>h</sup> u	friend
	c $\partial$ uki	c $\partial$ ukri	chair
	cara	cara	young plant
	g <sup>h</sup> ot	g <sup>h</sup> ot	water pot
	jayga	jaga	place
	k $\partial$ l $\partial$ m	kolom	pen
<b>Assamese</b>	t $\partial$ mbu	d $\partial$ mbur	tent
	k $\partial$ bi	kobi	cabbage
	mek <sup>h</sup> ela	mek <sup>h</sup> $\partial$ la	lady's dress/wrapper
	puk <sup>h</sup> uri	puk <sup>h</sup> ri	pond
	k <sup>h</sup> orom	k <sup>h</sup> urum	wooden sandal

	k <sup>h</sup> ar	k <sup>h</sup> ɔri	a kind of alkali powder used for preparation of dish
<b>Arabic</b>	baqi	baki	credit balance
	duniya	duniya	world
	galica	galica	carpet
	hɔk	hɔk	right
	hukɔm	hukum	order
	ijjɔt	ijɔt	honour
	jɔhaz	jɔhaj	ship
	Jila	Jila	district
	mal	mal	goods
	sabun	sapon	soap
<b>Persian</b>	ain	ain	law
	agur	ɔŋgur	grape
	andaz	ɔndaj	guess
	ɔynɔk	ɔnok	spectacle
	berfi	berp <sup>h</sup> i	a variety of sweet
	badam	badam	almond
	bazaar	bajar	market
	dag	dag	a mark
	dalan	dolan	building
	dukan	dukan	shop
<b>Pashto</b>	acar	ɔcar	pickle
	gɔrbɔr	gɔrber	tension
	gunɔda	gunda	dissolute person
<b>Turkey</b>	baba	baba	father
	begɔm	begɔm	lady of rank
	naspati	naspati	pear
	top	top	cannon
<b>English</b>	ɔpil	ɔpil	appeal
	fain	fain	fine
	fesɔn	fesɔn	fashion
	fi	fi	fee
	bol	bol	ball
	petrɔuliŋ	petrolin	patrolling
	tikit	tiket	ticket
	pravit	praibet	private
	hitar	hitɔr	heater
	glas	gilas	glass
<b>Portuguese</b>	armario	ɔlmira	cupboard
	eŋlis	ɔŋgrej	English
	alfinite	arpin	pin
	balde	baltin	bucket
	fita	fita	tape
	igreja	girja	church

	estirar	isti	iron
	kajju	kaju	cashew-nut
	mestre	misti	misti
	pistola	pistol	pistol
<b>Tamil</b>	dosa	dosa	rice pancake
	ideli	id̄li	stream rice-cake
	sab <sup>h</sup> ̄r	s̄mb̄r	a spiced lentil and vegetable curry
<b>Malaysia</b>	godon̄	godam	godown
	kampon̄	k̄mpaund	compound
<b>Chinese</b>	ca	ca	tea
	ciku	ciku	chichoo
	lyc <sup>h</sup> i	lici	litchi
<b>Japanese</b>	judo	judo	judo
	jinrikisha	rikso	rickshaw
	samurai	samurai	Japanese sword

From different sources loanwords are borrowed in day to day activities - words used as means of transport, names of equipment and instruments, names of elements and chemicals, words related to education, words used in administration and law, words used in games and sports, words used in measurements, words used in medicine, words used in art and culture, and words used in household commodities.

### 3. Conclusion

Borrowing is a consequence of cultural contact between two languages. In Manipuri, loanwords or borrowings are basically two types; they are direct borrowing and indirect borrowing. Among the languages Sanskrit and English contribute maximum number of loan words. All of the English loanwords, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Tamil, Malay, Chinese and Japanese loanwords in Manipuri are regarded as direct borrowing. The Sanskrit loanwords in Manipuri are either direct borrowing from the Sanskrit language itself or indirect borrowing from Sanskrit through Hindi and Bengali. All of the Iranian loanwords in Manipuri are found to be indirect borrowing taking place via Hindi and Bengali. Borrowing enriched Manipuri vocabulary.

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Mayengbam Bidyarani Devi, Ph.D.  
Department of Linguistics, Manipur University,  
Canchipur – 795003  
Imphal  
Manipur  
India  
[bidyaranimayengbam5@gmail.com](mailto:bidyaranimayengbam5@gmail.com)