

## Morphosyntactic Analysis of Noun Phrase in Manipuri

Dhanapati Shougrakpam, Ph.D.

---

---

### Abstract

Morphosyntactic is a term in linguistics used to refer to grammatical categories or properties for whose definition the criteria of morphology and syntax both apply, as in describing the characteristics of words. (Crystal - 1980:234)

Manipuri is a morphologically rich agglutinative language, in which words are inflected with various grammatical functions. The language has no watertight compartment between morphology and syntax: the concept of subject is not so distinct (in other words, subject can be deleted or understood) and different word classes are formed by affixation of the respective markers.

**Key words:** Manipuri language, morphosyntactic analysis, agglutivative, subject, affixation

### Introduction

Noun phrase (NP) is a prototypical part of every sentence and a vital topic in any natural language processing task. The description of NP is implicitly based on the idea that constituents are built up of a continuous sequence of words.

A formal representation of noun phrase based on speaker's syntactic knowledge includes:

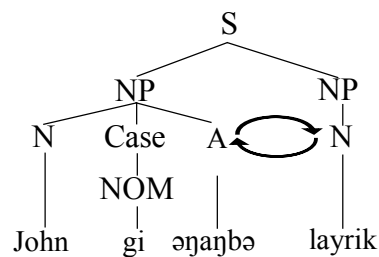
- A. Morpheme identification.
- B. Aspects of syntactic analysis are explicitly represented:
  - i. Hierarchical structure of the syntactic category in a tree diagram.
  - ii. The syntactic structure into sequences of syntactic categories or classes established on the basis of syntactic relationships linguistic items have with other items in a construction.

## Analysis of Noun Phrase - Morphosyntax

Morphosyntactic information are represented not only for the target noun phrase contexts but for the whole sentence.

### 1. Head Noun (HN) Identification

jon- gi əŋaŋbə layrik  
 John-GEN red book  
 'John's red book'.

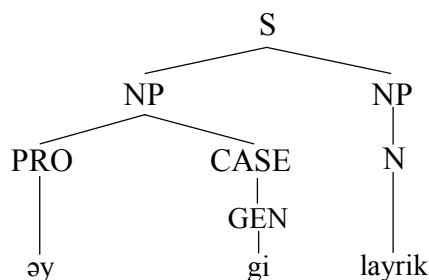


Here in  $[_{NP}[N \text{ John}]][_{Case}[NOM \text{ gi}]][_{A} \text{ əŋaŋbə}]][_{NP} [N \text{ layrik}]]$

- The HN is layrik 'book'.
- Proper names precede HN.
- Adjective əŋaŋbə 'red' can either precede or follow HN.
- Case is used to indicate the link between noun phrases.

### 2. Case in NP

əy- gi layrik  
 I-GEN book  
 'My book'.



Here in  $[_{NP}[PRO \text{ əy}]][_{Case}[GEN \text{ gi}]][_{NP}[N \text{ layrik}]]$ ,

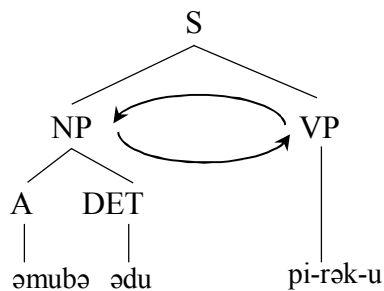
- Genitive case linked two NPs.
- Possessive pronouns precede HN

### 3. Headless Noun Phrase

This is context sensitive and is possible only when the context is understood both by the speaker and the hearer and there is enough referent capable of standing for the deleted head noun.

The different types of constructions that lacks a head noun, that is noun phrase with only modifying words are drawn as below:

- 3.i. əmubə ədu pi-rək-u  
 black DET give-DTC-CMD  
 ‘Give that black one’.

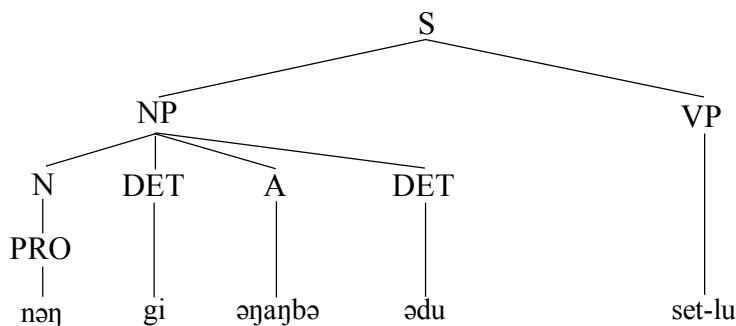


Here in [NP[A əmubə][DET ədu]][VP pi-rək-u]

- NP and VP can occur interchangeably.
- NP without HNs, when context understood both by the speaker and the hearer.
- the adjective əmubə ‘black’ is enough referent that can stand for the deleted HN.

- 3.ii. Adjective occurs with a possessive (which is also possible when the adjective is modifying a noun) and determiner.

- nəŋ gi əŋaŋbə ədu set-lu  
 you-GEN red DET wear-CMD  
 ‘Wear that red one of yours’.

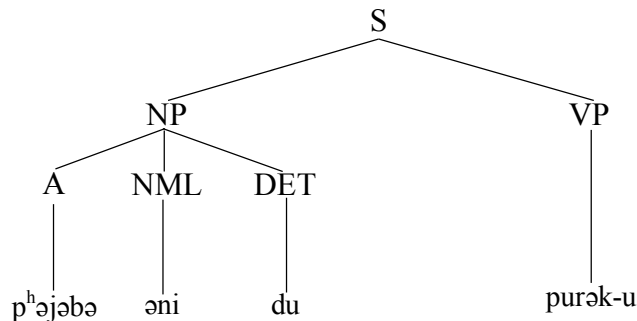


[NP[N[PRO nəŋ]][DET gi][A əŋaŋbə][DET ədu]][VP set-lu]

3.iii. Adjective occur with numeral, determiner and a verb form with a command suffix.

p<sup>h</sup>əjəbə      əni      du      purək-u  
 beautiful      two      DET      bring-CMD

‘Bring the two beautiful ones’.

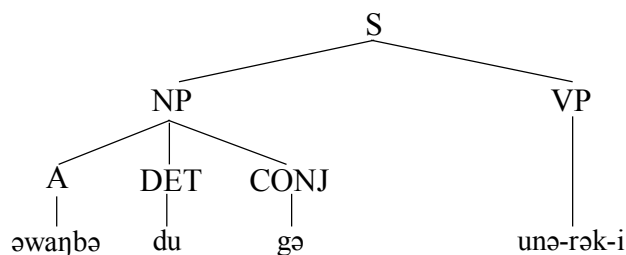


[NP[A p<sup>h</sup>əjəbə]][NML əni][DET du]][VP purək-u]

3.iv. NP consists of an adjective, determiner and a coordinate conjunction.

əwaŋbə      du      gə      unə-rək-i  
 tall      DET      CONJ      meet-DTC-ASP

‘I met with the tall one’.

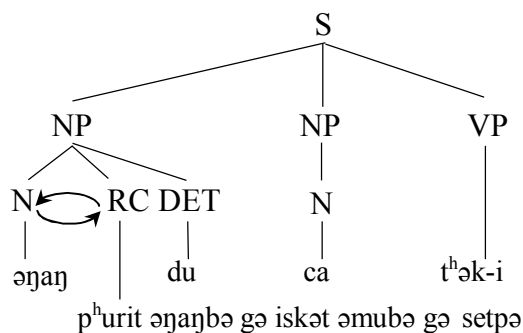


[NP[A əwaŋbə]][DET du] [CONJ gə]][VP unə-rək-i]

#### 4. NP Modified by Relative Clause

əŋaŋ    p<sup>h</sup>urit    əŋaŋbə    gə    iskət    əmubə    gə    setpə    du    ca    t<sup>h</sup>ək-i  
 child    shirt    red-CONJ    skirt    black-CONJ    wear    DET    tea    drink-PRG

‘The child wearing red shirt and black skirt is having tea.’

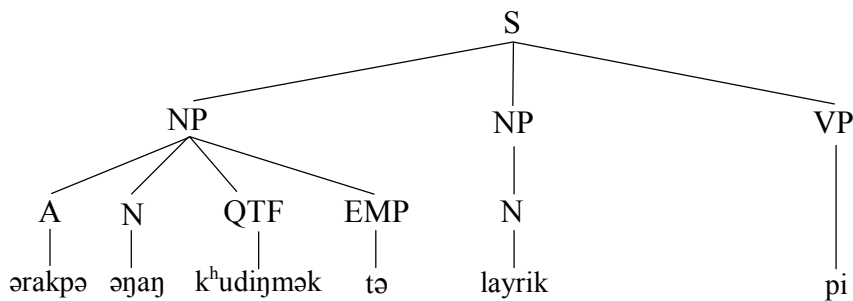


Here in [NP [N əŋaŋ] [RC p<sup>h</sup>urit əŋaŋbə gə iskət əmubə gə setpə] [DET du]] [NP[N ca]] [VP t<sup>h</sup>ək-i]

- The subject head noun əŋaŋ ‘child’ is modified by the relative clause p<sup>h</sup>urit əŋaŋbəgə iskət əmubə gə setpə ‘wearing red shirt and black skirt’.
- RC can either precede or follow the HN.

### 5. Relativized NP with Quantifying Words

ərakpə əŋaŋ k<sup>h</sup>udiŋmæk tu layrik pi  
 come child QTF DET book give  
 ‘Every child that came were given books’.

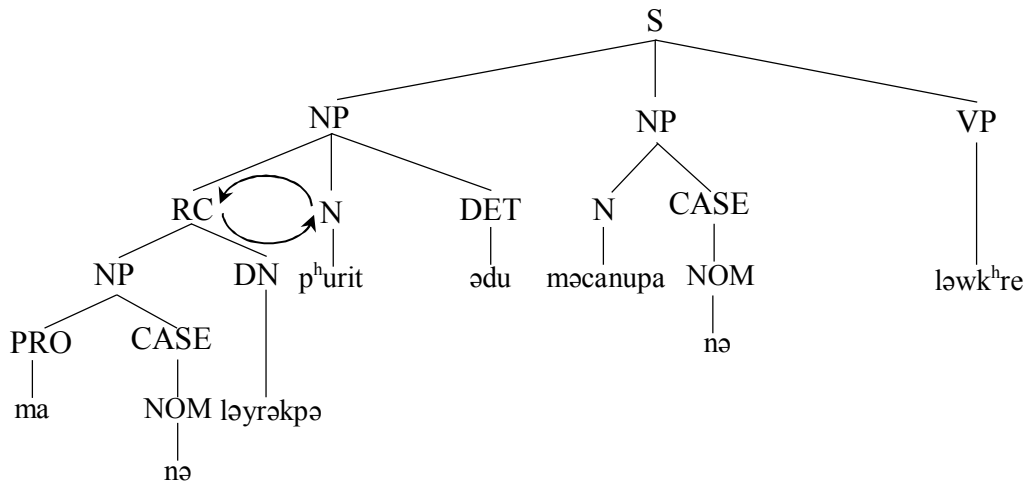


Here in [NP[A ərakpə][N əŋaŋ][QTF k<sup>h</sup>udiŋmæk][EMP tə]][NP[N layrik]][VP pi]

- Head noun is əŋaŋ ‘child’.
- The head noun əŋaŋ ‘child’ can either precede or follow the derived noun.
- The occurrence of quantifier is fixed; it can only follow the head noun.
- The head noun can also be deleted when there is sufficient referent capable of standing for the deleted head noun; this is context sensitive. Here, the quantifying word k<sup>h</sup>udiŋmæk ‘all/every’ is enough referent capable of standing for the deleted head noun.

### 6. Relativized NP Formed Derived Noun

manə ləy-rək-pə p<sup>h</sup>urit ədu məcanupa nə ləw-k<sup>h</sup>re  
 he-NOM buy-DTC-NZR shirt DET son-NOM take-ASP  
 ‘The son took the shirt that he bought’



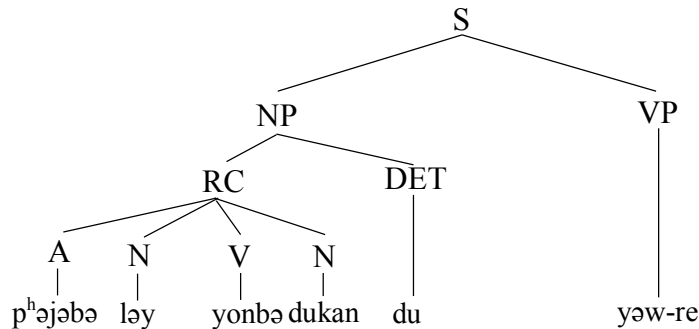
[NP[RC[NP[PRO ma][CASE[NOM nə]]][DN ləyrəkpə]][N pʰurit][DET ədu]][NP[N məcanupa][CASE[NOM nə]]][VP ləwkhre]

- Here, the noun ‘pʰurit’ shirt can either precede or follow the relative clause ‘manə ləyrəkpə’ that he bought.
- The NP ‘məcanupa nə’ by the son can either precede or follow the relativized noun phrase ‘manə ləyrəkpə pʰurit ədu’ the shirt that he bought.
- An instance of headless RC can also be drawn;
  - (i) This is possible when the context is understood both by the hearer and the speaker, i.e., context sensitive.
  - (ii) When there is sufficient referent for the deleted head noun.
  - (iii) Here, the derived noun ləyrəkpə ‘bought’ is a sufficient referent capable of standing for the deleted HN.

## 7. Ambiguous Noun Phrase

pʰəjəbə ləy yonbə dukan du yəw-re  
 beautiful flower sell shop DET reach-ASP

‘( ) reached the shop that sells beautiful flowers’.



Here in [NP[A pʰəjəbə][N ləy][V yonbə][N dukan][DET du]][VP yəw-re]

- There is no clear indication as to whether the adjective p<sup>h</sup>əjəbə ‘beautiful’ modifies the noun ləy ‘flower’ or the HN dukan ‘shop’.
- This may sometimes create ambiguity in the implied meaning. It could either mean ‘a beautiful shop that sells flowers’ or ‘a shop that sells beautiful flowers’.
- Several interpretations can be drawn:
  - i. ləy p<sup>h</sup>əjəbə yonbə dukan du  
It only means ‘the shop that sells beautiful flowers’.
  - ii. dukan p<sup>h</sup>əjəbə ləy yonbə du  
It could either mean ‘the beautiful shop that sells flowers’ or ‘the shop that sells beautiful flowers.’
  - iii. p<sup>h</sup>əjəbə dukan ləy yonbə du .  
It only means ‘the beautiful shop that sells flowers’.

## Conclusion

The NP structure analysed as above is a clear indication that an exhaustive morphosyntactic analysis of Manipuri noun phrase can be envisioned. It will be possible to devise an NP model of the language by knowing the pattern of NP in Manipuri. The NP pattern may be used to envisage or relate various NP constructions.

An attempt has been made to conceptualize the NP morphosyntax as fundamental element in the construction of Manipuri sentences. The present paper provides possible linguistic cues and a detailed examination could be managed to come up with some categorization.

---



---

## Abbreviations

A	-	Adjective
ASP	-	Aspect
CMD	-	Command
CONJ	-	Conjunction
DET	-	Determiner
DN	-	Derived Noun
DTC	-	Deictic
EMP	-	Emphatic

GEN	-	Genitive
HN	-	Head noun
N	-	Noun
NML	-	Numeral
NOM	-	Nominative
NP	-	Noun phrase
NZR	-	Nominalizer
PRO	-	Pronoun
RC	-	Relative clause
V	-	Verb
VP	-	Verb phrase

---



---

### References

Crystal, David (1985) '*A First Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics.*' Service Book Syndicate, New Delhi.

---



---

**Dhanapati Shougrakpam, Ph.D.**

Department of Linguistics

Manipur University

Canchipur

Imphal – 795 003

Manipur

India

**dippi1117@yahoo.co.in**