

## An Analysis of a verbal suffix *chəi* in Meche

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This presentation analyzes a verbal suffix *chəi* in Meche, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Jhapa, Eastern part of Nepal (Bodo group), giving a brief outline of the morphosyntactic properties pertaining to tense, aspect and modality. The suffix *chəi* in Meche corresponds to *səi* in Bodo, Assam. Bhattachariya (1965) describes *səi* as assertive and M.R. Baro (2001) as imminent future. The suffix *chəi* in Meche could be described the same way, but when we look at some discourse-oriented data, the functions of the suffix are more complex than assertive or imminent future. The interpretation of the suffix varies depending on the tense/aspect markers on the verb. The properties and functions of *chəi* are summarised as follows:

1. The suffix *chəi* may be added to almost all the verb forms except the perfect *-bai*.
2. The basic function of the suffix is to encode a recognition of the situation as a newly established one, presupposing the opposite situation at the previous stage.
3. The above property gives rise to interpretations of imminent future with the future suffix *-nai*; a newly started situation with the continuous suffix *-dəŋ*; a newly acquired habitual situation with the habitual suffix *-ur*; and in negative imperative a prohibited action which is presupposed to have been done before the utterance; with the past negative *-a khə*, an ‘after all’ type of negative situation, implying no more possibility for the situation to occur.

The suffix *chəi* has a discourse oriented function too. In this use the suffix may be added almost all the verbs in the discourse.

1. In narrative discourse, it is used with the past marker *-a* in assertive way. The suffix is optional in this function, but the suffix is used to mark the information which may call for the hearer’s attention for understanding the story.
2. In procedural discourse, it is used with the future marker *-nai* to show how to do something in a fixed order, not imminent future.

Those discourse-oriented functions may be explained in terms of assertivity: the speaker draws the hearer’s attention to the important information according to the discourse type.