

Abstract

The thesis experimentally studies the phenomenon of productivity in the Assamese morphology. Human language is facilitated by the phenomenon called ‘productivity’, through which they are able to produce an infinite number of linguistic expressions from a finite number of linguistic signs. This is the reason why people can produce sentences or words they have never heard before. It is considered as a fundamental characteristic of language which separates human language from the primate language. When talked about morphological productivity, it correlates with the mechanisms of forming words through different morphological or word-formation processes.

Assamese, an Indo-European language, and a dominant language of the state of Assam of the North-Eastern region of India, is equipped with several word-formation processes including derivation, compounding, blending, coinages, clipping, acronyms, loan words, borrowings, and reduplication. However, among these, derivation or affixation turns out to be one of the most productive word-formation processes and this study examines the same in a few derivational affixes of Assamese. Among them, there are six commonly used negative prefixes *ɔ-*, *ɔpɔ-*, *dur-*, *ku-*, *ni-* and *bi-*. The selected fifteen nominal and adjectival suffixes are *-ɔk*, *-ɔn*, *-ɔna*, *-ɔti*, *-ɔni*, *-ɔnija*, *-ɔruwa*, *-al*, *-alu*, *-aru*, *-ami*, *-ahi*, *-ia*, *-ua*, *-ual*. It has employed both corpus-driven and dictionary-based approach to collect the data of the study. To measure the productivity of the affixes, the variables of Baayen’s probabilistic measuring methods are used independently or in combination.

Despite being a common morphological phenomenon, the issue of productivity is rarely addressed quantitatively in Indian languages. That is why, considering the difficulties in obtaining resources and data collection techniques in the lack of fully developed substantial digital corpora, the study attempts to throw some light on how the affixes behave in the context of productivity nature and where they stand in relation to each other. It aims to shed light on the relative productivity of affixes by measuring their productivity and explores various factors influencing productivity. It also tries to find out

the affixes that would be more dominating in shaping the future vocabularies. It studies the area-wise dominant affixes and makes a comparative assessment of the productivity of prefixes and suffixes. A comparison of the results by different methods in two different samples is also made to see how it may affect the overall output of the productivity.