

## CLITIC VERSUS AFFIX: MAITHILI *E* AND *O*

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### Introduction

Certain bound morphemes (e.g., clitics and inflectional affixes) in Maithili present analytic difficulties because they are neither clearly independent words nor clearly inflectional affixes. This phenomenon is not unique to Maithili; similarly problematic forms exist in many languages of the world, including English. In traditional descriptions, these forms have been treated as being a *catagorematic* in that they do not readily fit into a standard description of 'parts of speech'.

This article investigates the process of cliticization in Maithili, specifically, the question of clitic vs. affix.

The *dramatis personae* for the present presentation are: *e o; hi hu he ho*. Of these, *e* and *o* are the two most common markers of emphasis or focus in Maithili.

The emphatic markers can be either inclusive or exclusive. The exclusive emphatic *e* translates into English as 'only', 'alone', while the inclusive emphatic *o* translates as 'even', 'also', 'too'. These markers attach to the end of a host word and are clearly enclitic, e.g.:

ram – e	ram – o
'only Ram'	'even Ram'

*e* and *o* are not the only markers of emphasis in Maithili. *hi, hu, and he, ho* also attach as emphatic markers, e.g.:

ham – hi	ham – hu
'only I'	'even I'
o – he	o – ho
'only be (NH)'	'even he (NH)'

This paper, taking cue from Zwicky and Pullum (1983), demonstrates that *e* and *o* alone should be described as clitics, and that *he*, *ho* and *hi*, *hu* should be treated as inflectional affixes.

### Clitic vs. Affix

Zwicky and Pullum (1983) list a set of criteria for distinguishing clitics from inflectional affixes and arrive at an unconventional conclusion that the English contracted negator *n't* behaves like an inflectional affix rather than a clitic. Zwicky and Pullum's prominent criteria are:

- (A) degree of selection
- (B) arbitrary gaps in the set of combinations
- (C) morphophonological idiosyncrasies

Zwicky and Pullum's findings are briefly summarized below:

- A. The degree of selection between the clitics and the words preceding them is low; in other words, clitics can attach to words of virtually any category, e.g.:
1. Any answer not entirely *right's* going to be marked as an error.  
Adjective
  2. The drive home *tonight's* been really easy. Adverb
  3. The person I was talking *to's* going to be angry with me.  
Preposition
  4. *They've* all seen this movie before. Pronoun

The inflectional affixes, by contrast, are quite particular in their selection of stems. For instance, the past attaches only to verb stems; the superlative attaches only to adjective and adverb stems.

The contracted negator *n't* is highly selective, attaching only to auxiliary verbs, indeed only to the finite form of these verbs, e.g.:

5. I don't try not to pay attention; I just can't help it.  
\* tryn't
6. Well, for her not to understand is the last straw.  
\* hern't
7. \* Would the police haven't been informed?
8. It would be a shame to have not EVER had a chance to see it.  
\* haven't

- B. Arbitrary gaps within a single category exist with regard to *n't* e.g.:
- \* mayn't
  - \* amn't

No positive counterpart is available for *ain't*. In addition, *ain't* also serves as the negative form of *have*, *has*, *sin*, and *are*, and *is* on an optional basis in varying dialects and styles.

C. *n't* also displays a number of morphophonological idiosyncrasies, e.g.:

do	don't	u → o	(vowel change)
will	won't	l → Ø	(deletion and vowel change)
		i → o	
shall	shan't	l → Ø	(deletion, but no vowel change)
must	musn't	t → Ø	(deletion accompanied by syllabicity)

### The Maithili Data

Looking at the Maithili data (Table 1), it is immediately evident that the emphatic markers *e* and *o* can attach with virtually any category, i.e., they can attach with pronouns, nouns, adjectives, numerals, verbs, adverbs, etc.

Table 1

Pronouns			
<b>1 person 'I'</b>		<b>2 person (MH/NH) 'You'</b>	
ham	Nom.	tō	Nom.
hamra	Acc/Dat.	torā	Acc/Dat.
hamr-e		tor-e	
hamr-o		tor-o	
*hamrā-e		*torā-e	
*hamrā-o		*torā-o	
hamar	Poss.	tohar	Poss.
hamr-e		to(h)r-e	
hamr-o		to(h)r-o	
<b>3 person (N) human 'He/She'</b>		<b>Proximate</b>	
<b>Remote</b>			
o	Nom.	i	Nom.
hunkā	Acc/Dat.	hinkā	Acc/Dat.
hunk-e		hink-e	
hunk-o		hink-o	
*hunkā-e		*hinkā-e	
*hunkā-o		*hinkā-o	
hunkar	poss.	hinkar	Poss.
hunkar-e		hinkar-e	
hunkar-o		hinkar-o	

**3 person (H) 'He/She'**

Remote		Proximate	
o	Nom.	i	Nom.
okrā	Acc/Dat.	ekrā	Acc/Dat.
okr-e		ekr-e	
okr-o		ekr-o	
*okrā-e		*ekrā-e	
*okrā-o		*ekrā-o	
okar	Poss.	ekar	Poss.
okr-e		ekr-e	
okr-o		ekr-o	

**Nouns**

ram 'Ram' rām-e rām-o; leru 'calf' leru-e leru-o;  
 betā 'son' bet-e bet-o \*betā-e \*betā-o

harre 'a herb' harre-e harre-o  
 sairso 'mustard' sairso-e sairso-o  
 Pō 'dawn' Pō-e Pō-o

**Adjectives**

ũc 'high' ũc-e ũc-o; lal 'red' lal-e lal-o;  
 untā 'opposite' unte unt -o  
 \*untā-e \*untā-o

**Numerals**

ek 'one' ek-e ek-o; du 'two' du-e du-o; tin 'three' tin-e tin-o

**Verbs**

aich 'is (3NH)' cha-l-āh 'was (3H)  
 aich-e cha-l-āh-e  
 aich-o cha-l-āh-o

ge-l-āh 'went (3H)' paḥ-t-āh 'will study (3H)  
 ge-l-āh-e paḥ-t-āh-e  
 ge-l-āh-o paḥ-t-āh-o

**Adverbs**

tar 'under' tar-e tar-o; upar 'above' upr-e upr-o; lag 'near' lag-e lag-o;  
 bāhar 'outside' bāhr-e bāhr-o; bhitār 'inside' bhitr-e bhitr-o

## Compound Verbs

khā	le-l-ainh 'ate up (3H)'
eat	take-Pst-(3H)
khā-e	le-l-ainh
khā-o	le-l-ainh
uth-ā	di-a 'cause to lift'
rise-Caus	give-Imp
uthā-e	di-a
uthā-o	di-a
cail	ge-l-āh 'went away (3H)'
walk	go-Pst-(3H)
cail-e	ge-l-āh
cail-o	gel-āh
la	ge-l-āh 'took away (3H)'
take	go-Pst-(3H)
la-e	ge-l-āh
la-o	ge-l-āh

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Inflectional affixes, on the other hand, are selective with the host to which they can be attached. For instance, the future affix *t* can attach to verb stems of the 3 person subjects alone, e.g.:

9. o	le-t-āh
he(H)	take-Fut-(3H)
'He will take.'	

and not to the first or second person subjects, e.g.:

10. *ham	le-t
I	take-Fut-(1)
'I will take.'	
11. *tō	le-t-e
you (NH)	take-Fut-(2NH)
'You will take.'	

The correct affixes are:

12. ham	le-b
'I will take.'	

13. tō le-b-e  
'You will take'

Secondly, no idiosyncratic morphophonemic changes occur in our data; only those phonological changes occur which form a part of the general phonological properties of the Maithili language.

Two types of morphophonemic changes are found to occur in the data. The first ones, marked by asterisks, relate to the examples listed in Table 1. A general phonotactic constraint disallows the attachment of a vowel (in this case, the emphatic markers *e* and *o*) to a stem of more than one syllable and ending in an unstressed *ā*:

\*hām(a)ra – e  
o

I - Acc/Dat-Emph

\*tō ra – e  
o

you (NH) - Acc/Dat-Emph

\*ó k(a)ra – e  
o

he (NH) - Acc/Dat-Emph

(Comments: (i) Maithili is basically a CVCV language. (ii) Vowel clustering within a syllable is permissible, but it tends to diphthongize. (iii) Closing diphthongs ending in *i* or *u* are the most common ones, e.g., *bhāi* 'brother'; *laṛāi* 'war'; *bāu* 'father'; dear boy'; *kaṭ-ā-u* 'have (it) cut')

The second morphophonemic change relates to a highly productive (almost exceptionless) rule of schwa deletion (of the type ... VCaCV → VC Ø CV):

(a) The rule says that the final schwa of a verbal/adverbial or nominal stem is deleted if that stem is followed by a vowel initial morpheme, e.g.:

hamar-e	hamre	(Pronoun)
my-Emph	'only mine'	
kamar-o	kamro	(Noun)
waist-Emph	'even the waist'	
pajar-ā-eb	pajraeb	(Verb)
light fire-Caus-Inf	'cause to light fire'	
bāhar-e	bahre	(Adverb)
outside-Emph	'only outside'	

(b) Schwa syncope does not occur if the schwa is preceded by a consonant cluster, e.g.:

Pustak + ālae	Pustakālae	'library'
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- (c) Schwa syncope does not occur if the schwa is followed by a consonant cluster:

Palang-o	Palango
cot-Emph	'Even the cot'

- (d) Even though schwa syncope does apply to a suffixed stem, it does not apply to a prefixed stem, e.g.:

a-samae	'inopportune'
be-parhal	'uneducated'
an-kahal	'stupid'

With inflectional affixes, idiosyncratic morphophonemic changes are quite common:

Kar-l-ainh	Kaelainh	r→∅
do-Pst-(3H)	'did (3H)'	∅→e
jā-t-āh	jaetāh	ā→a
go-Fut-(3H)	'will go (3H)'	∅→e

Finally, the data listed under 'Compound names and Proper names' deserve attention (Table 2). They are interesting because in such examples the clitic is positioned after the first element of a larger unit with which the clitic is semantically associated. That is, say, in *Kāṭhomāṇḍu* 'Q pertains to, i.e., emphasizes, *Kāṭhmāṇḍu* 'even *Kathmandu*', yet it is positioned after only the first constituent of *Kāṭhmāṇḍu*. This is reminiscent of Latin *Que* 'and' whose semantic effect is to conjoin an expression X to some earlier expression, even though it is positioned after the first constituent of X:

boni	pueri	bellae-que	puellae
		X	
good	boys	pretty-and	girls
		'good boys and pretty girls'	

Table 2

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**Compound Place and Proper Names**

rāmpur rām-epur rām-opur rāmpur-e rāmpur-o  
 rājnagar rāj-enagar raj-onagar rājnagr-e rājnagr-o  
 Kāṭhmāṇḍu kāṭh-emāṇḍu kāṭh-omāṇḍu kāṭhmāṇḍu-e kāṭhmāṇḍu-o

**Proper Names and/or Family Names**

rām misr rām-e misr rām-o mise rām misr-e rām misr-o  
 jhā jhā-e jhā-o yādab yādb-e yādb-o

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The Maithili data further show (Table 3) that *hi hu* and *he ho* are attached to no grammatical category other than pronouns. There is thus a high degree of selection. Looking at their distributional properties, *he* and *ho* attach only to demonstrative pronouns, indeed only in the nominative case forms. *hi* and *hu*, on the other hand, attach only to demonstrative pronouns in the accusative-dative case forms, 1 and 2 HH, H, MH, NH in the nominative case forms, and to 2H,HH in the accusative-dative and possessive case forms. To sum up, like inflectional affixes, *he ho* and *hi hu* show a greater degree of selection, and they are extremely particular in their selection of hosts to which they can attach. Obviously, there are arbitrary gaps in the set of combinations even within a single category.

Table 3

Pronouns	
<b>1 person 'I'</b>	<b>2 person (MH NH) 'You'</b>
ham Nom.	tõ Nom.
ham-hi	tõ-hi
ham-hu	tõ-hu
<b>2 person 'You'</b>	<b>Honorific</b>
<b>High Honorific</b>	
apne Nom.	āhā
apni-hi	ā-hi
apna-hu	ā-hu
*apne-hi	*āhā-hi
*apne-hu	*āhā-hu
apne ke Acc/Dat	āhā ke
apna-hi ke	ā-hi ke
apna-hu ke	ā-hu ke
*apne-hi ke	*āhā-hi ke
*apne-hu ke	*āhā-hu ke
apne-k Poss.	āhā-k
apna-hi-k	ā-hi-k
apna-hu-k	ā-hu-k
*apne-hi-k	*āhā-hi-k
*apne-hu-k	*āhā-hu-k

Secondly, the idiosyncratic morphophonemic changes that occur in the attachment of *he ho* and *hi hu* are most typical of inflectional affixes rather



than of clitics, e.g.:

i-	he	→ e	he
	ho		ho
	i	→ e	
i -	hi ke		→ ahike
	i	→ a	
i -	hu ke		→ ahuke
	i	→ a	
āhā-hu			→ āhu
	hā	→ ∅	
āhā-hi			→ āhi
	hā	→ ∅	
ohi-hu ke			→ ohu ke
	hi	→ ∅	
ohi-hi ke			→ ohi ke
	hi	→ ∅	

### Conclusion

Analysis of the Maithili data calls for a 'mixed' analysis of emphatic markers of Maithili. It is suggested that *e* and *o* should be treated as clitics, while *hi hu* and *he ho* should be treated as inflectional affixes.

Also, *hi hu* and *he ho* might be thought of as synthetic (inflectional) expressions of emphasis, while *e o* are analytic expressions of emphasis in Maithili. Comparison with the English *er* and *more* as synthetic and analytic markers of adjectival comparison might provide further support to this analysis.

Finally, one further independent motivation to treat *e* and *o* as clitics, rather than as inflectional affixes, comes from the following phonological fact of the Maithili sound system.

An important feature of the lexical phonology of Maithili is the  $\bar{a} \rightarrow a$  rule which occurs regularly and systematically upon addition of a suffix containing a vowel, e.g.:

kāṭh	'wood'	kathgar	'woody/hard'
māus	'meat'	mausgar	'meaty'
kām	'work'	kamāi	'wages/earning'
hāthi	'elephant'	hathini	'female elephant'
pākal	'ripe'	pakalhā	'the ripe one'
kāri	'black'	karikki	'the black one (female)'
māṭi	'soil'	matīā	'soily'
pāgal	'mad'	pagli	'mad woman'
		paglā	'mad man'

Note, however, that cliticization does not participate in the lexical phonology involving the a Æ a rule, e.g.:

kāṭh	'wood'	kāṭh-e	'only wood'
		kāṭh-o	'even wood'
		*kāṭh-e	
		*kāṭh-o	
bhāt	'rice'	bhāt-e	'only rice'
		bhāt-o	'even rice'
		*bhat-e	
		*bhat-o	
ācār	'pickle'	ācār-e	'only pickle'
		ācār-o	'even pickle'
		*ācar-e	
		*ācar-o	
		*ācr-e	
*ācr-o			
cāur	'rice'	cāur-e	'only rice'
		cāur-o	'even rice'
		*caur-e	
		*caur-o	

### Reference

Zwicky, A.M. & G.K. Pullum 1983. "Cliticization vs. inflection: English *n't*," *Language* 59:3, 502-513.

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