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Conditional suffixes in Assamese: Structure and function

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to analyze and discuss some important concepts relating to the conditional conjunctions in Assamese, an Indo-Aryan language spoken primarily in Assam. This study explores the form, function and distribution of conditional conjunctions which are used to describe a condition. Conditional conjunctions enable non-finite forms to express conditionality and temporal circumstances. The study focuses on one important way of introducing the structure of condition in Assamese by suffixation to the verb root. The verb of the dependent clause of a conditional sentence carries the inflectional morpheme as a non-finite form, which is not fully inflected for tense and person. The non-finite forms which are used to indicate the function of conditional marker will be discussed. While discussing the function of conditional conjunction as part of sentence structure, the subject-verb agreement of the dependent clause and the temporal expression of the inflectional form will be examined. Most of the examples in this paper are taken from the author's own native speakers introspection, but some of the examples were first observed in The CIIL-Lancaster Assamese Corpus.

KEYWORDS

Assamese, Indo-Aryan, conditional, non-finite

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1 Introduction

In Assamese, conditionality can be marked in two ways, inflectionally and lexically. Both strategies play an important role in the formation of conditional sentences. A complex conditional sentence that expresses an imagined situation or condition and the possible result of that condition generally consists of two types of clauses: the independent or main clause and dependent or subordinate clause. The dependent clause, also known as the protasis, expresses the condition and thus, corresponds to the antecedent, whereas the main clause, known as the apodosis, expresses the consequence and hence corresponds to the consequent.

In the conditional dependent clause in complex sentences, some bound non-finite morphemes, are suffixed to the verb root of dependent clauses expressing factual implications or hypothetical situations which lead to the consequences expressed in the main clause. For example,

(1)   *tumi*   *ah-ile*   *mɔi*   *za-m*
        2SG(FAM)   come-COND   1SG   go-FUT+1
        'I will go if you come.'

In the sentence above, the validity of the main clause *mɔi* zam 'I will go' is dependent on the existence of a particular circumstance expressed in the conditional clause *tumi ahile* 'if you come'. Here, the suffix *-ile* is added to the verb root ah 'to come'.

Again, the sentences that express the sense of conditionality lexically, take the help of some lexical items which are correlative in nature. For example,

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(2) *zɔdi* *tumi* *ah-a* *tenehɔle* *mɔi* *za-m*
   if 2SG(FAM) come-PRES+2(FAM) then 1SG go-FUT+1
   'I will go if you come.'

In example (2), the main clause is *mɔi zam* 'I will go'. The correlative structure *zɔdi…tenehɔle* 'if…then' is added to the sentence to express a condition. Though correlative structure is a structure that joins the two clauses and is not solely part of the subordinate clause, nevertheless in a conditional construction it functions as a part of the dependent clause.

The present work is intended as a brief analysis of the structure, function and distribution of conditional sentences formed inflectionally in Assamese. The first section provides an introduction of the forms used as conditional suffixes in Assamese. The next section is devoted to a discussion of the temporal relation between the conditional clause and the main clause. The presence of temporal relation exists between the main clause and the dependent clause in Assamese. The dependent clause with the conditional conjunction presents a hypothetical situation as a condition for the realization of the situation in the main clause. Different functions of conditional suffixes are then examined. This is followed by a brief discussion showing the distribution of dependent clause that carries the form signaling the sense of condition in a sentence. And finally, a brief analysis of different patterns observed in the language is done.

2 Form of the inflectional conditional suffix

The first issue we need to consider concerns the inflectional forms expressing conditions. No independent marker is used to indicate conditional suffix in Assamese and hence the language permits certain non-finite forms to function as conditional markers that are added to the verb root of the dependent clause in a sentence. The five non-finite suffixes that are considered as different forms of inflectional conditional marker are :

  (a) *-le/-ile* (b) *-lɔt/-ilɔt* (c) *-ʋte* (d) *-at* (e) *-i*

 -le/-ile and *–lɔt/-ilɔt* ,these two forms are attached either to the vowel-ending verb roots or to the consonant-ending verb roots, while other three forms can be attached to both vowel-ending and consonant-ending verb roots. The application of these forms is presented with examples in Table1.

	Form	Suffixed to	Example in Assamese with verb root *ga* 'to sing'and *ah* 'to come'
1.	a. *-le* b.- *ile*	v-ending verb root c-ending verb root	*ga+le>gale* *ah+ile>ahile*
2.	a. *-lɔt* b.- *ilɔt*	v-ending verb root c-ending verb root	*ga+lɔt>galɔt* *ah+ilɔt>ahilɔt*
3.	*-ʋte*	both	*ga+ʋte>gaʋte* *ah+ʋte>ahʋte*
4.	*-at*	both	*ga+at>gowat* *ah+at>ɔhat*
5.	*-i*	both	*ga+i>gai* *ah+i>ahi*

Table 1: Inflectional conditional markers

Some non-finite verbs in conditional sentence in Assamese are the resultant forms of various morphophonemic changes. This happens when the root morpheme is suffixed by some particular non-finite forms functioning as conditional suffix, such as *–at*, for example, *gowat* (*ga+at*) and *ɔhat* (*ah+at*), presented in Table 1. The following examples show the use of non-finite forms as conditional conjunctions in Assamese.

(3) *tai*　　　　*ah-ile*　　　*mɔi*　*za-m*　　　　　　　　　　　[use of *-ile*]
　　　3SG(F)　　　　come-COND　1SG　go-FUT+1SG
　　　'I will go if she comes.'

(4) *tai*　　　　*ah-ilɔt*　　　*mɔi*　*za-l-ʋ*　　　　　　　　　　[use of *-ilɔt*]
　　　3SG(F)　　　　come-COND　1SG　go-PST-1SG
　　　'I went when she had come.'

(5) *tai*　　　　*ah-ʋte*　　　*kitap-kʰɔn*　*an-ib-ɔ*　　　　　　　[use of *-ʋte*]
　　　3SG(F)　　　　come-COND　book-CL.SG　bring-FUT-3SG
　　　'She will bring the book when she will come.'

(6) *tai*　*ah-at*　　　*kɔtʰa-tʋ*　　　　　<u>*gɔm pa-l-ʋ*</u>²　　　[use of *-at*]
　　　3SG　come-COND　matter-CL.SG　　know-PST-1
　　　'We knew the matter as she arrived.'

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² Underlining indicates sequences of forms that combine for a single meaning or function.

(7) *tai*   *skul-ɔɹ pɔɹa* *ah-i-he*   *ḅat*   *kʰa-i*   [use of -i]
     3SG(F)   school-ABL   come-COND-EMP   rice   eat-PRES+3
     'She has her meal only after coming from the school.'

The instances given show that though basically, *-ile/-le*, *-ilɔt/-lɔt*, *-ʋte*, *-at* and *-i* have been identified as non-finite forms in Assamese, they can also be treated as conditionally suffixed, depending on the sentence pattern. *-ile/-le*, *-ilɔt/-lɔt*, *-ʋte*, *-at* and *-i* are suffixed to the verb roots functioning as non-finite ones in the dependent clauses while the finite verb forms occur with the main clauses. These suffixes have multiple functions depending on context. They can be used in non-conditional clauses with non-finite functions, as in the following two examples:

(8) *tumi*   *ah-ile-i*   *kam-tʋ*   *hɔ-b-ɔ*
     2FAM(SG)   come-COND-EMP   work-CLS   be-FUT-3
     'The work will be over when you come.'

(9) *tumi*   *ah-ile-i*   *hɔ-b-ɔ*
     2FAM(SG)   come-NON.FIN-EMP   be-FUT-3
     'Your coming is enough.'

But when those suffixes are used in conditional clauses, they function as conditional suffixes.

3 Temporal relation between the conditional clause and the main clause

This section deals with one important objective of this paper: presenting the temporal relation between the conditional clause and the main clause. Conditional sentences are used to indicate hypothetical situations generally, with different degrees of probability and certainty. At the same time, they express different periods of time. A temporal relationship between the conditional clause and the main clause is observed while using the markers functioning as conditional conjunctions in dependent clauses.

3.1 *-le/-ile*

With this form used in dependent clause, the finite verb of the main clause can carry past, present and future tense markers. The time assigned to the subordinate clause is context- dependent. If the main finite verb is in past tense form, then the conditional clause also show the past time. If the main clause exhibits the present time, then the conditional clause also will express the present time; and if the verb of the main clause takes future tense marker, then the conditional clause indicates the sense of futurity.

(10) *agɔte*   *teʊ-lʊk*   *ah-ile*
earlier   3SG(HON)-CL.PL   come-COND

     hat-ɔt   *laʊ-tʊ*   *beŋena-tʊ*   *lɔ-i*   *ah-is-il*
     hand-LOC   guard-CL.SG brinjal-CL.SG bring-NON.FIN   come-IMPV-PST+3
     'Whenever they visited us earlier, they brought guard, brinjal with them.'

Here, the verb root of the main clause *ah* 'to come' takes the past tense marker and hence, the non-finite verb form of the conditional clause *ahile* shows that the time of the dependent clause is also past.

(11) *gɔɹ-ɔloi*   *ah-ile*   *tai-ɹ*
house-DAT   come-COND   3SG(FAM)-GEN

     ɹɔtʊn-ɔlɔi   *bɔɹ-kɔi*   <u>*mɔnɔt pɔɹ-e*</u>
     Ratan-DAT   much-ADV   remember-PRES+3
     'Whenever she comes home, she remembers Ratan very much.'

The finite verb form *mɔnɔt pɔɹe* 'to remember' is carrying a present tense marker, and it has influenced the context of the conditional clause here, by indicating that the incident occurred in the dependent clause is also an expression of present time.

(12) *ijaloi* *ah-ile*   *tumi*   *pakʰi-k*   *lɔ-i*   *ah-ib-a*
here   come-COND 2SG(FAM)   Pakhi-ACC   bring-CONJT come-FUT-2
'Bring Pakhi here with you, whenever you would visit next time.'

The future tense marker is used in the finite verb here and thus it conveys the fact that the work assigned to the dependent clause is also associated with futurity.

    It should be mentioned here that Assamese permits some expressions where such type of temporal relationship between the conditional clause and the main clause is not observed. For example,

(13) *ħei*   *ɹum-tʊ-t*   *ɹɔn* *guwahati-loi*   *ah-ile*
that   room-CL.SG-LOC   Ron Guwahati-DAT   come-COND

     tʰak-ibɔloi   *di-aɹ*   *kɔtʰa* *as-il*
     stay-NON.FIN give-NON.FIN plan be-PST+3
     'It was planned that whenever Ron would come to Guwahati, he would stay in
     that room.'

(14) *kabjɔm-e*   *ħaḍɔn*   *ah-ile*   *putʰi*   *pɔɹʰ-ibɔ*
     Kabyam-NOM   Sadhan   come-COND   book   read-NON.FIN

     buli   *ɔkɔle*   *bɔh-i*   *as-il*
     that   alone   sit-CONJT   be-PST+3
     'Kabyam was sitting alone thinking that when Sadhan would come, he would read the book.'

The instances above show the temporal relationship between the main clause and the dependent clause. Each of these sentences has two non-finite forms *ahile* and *dijaɹ* (13) and *ahile* and *pɔɹʰibɔ* (14) along with the finite verb form *as-il*. In both cases, *ahile* is the conditional verb form, whereas *dijaɹ* and *pɔɹʰibɔ* are not functioning as conditional verbs. Instead, they are functioning as non-finite verb forms here. Thus the use of two non-finite verbs proves that when a conditional verb is followed by another non-conditional non-finite verb in a single sentence, then the conditional verb acts as a time-impersonal form or remains neutral to the time factor.

3.2   *-lɔt/-ilɔt*

This form can be suffixed to the verb root of the dependent clause only when the finite verb of the main clause carries past tense marker in it. For example,

(15) *beli*   <u>*maɹgolɔt*</u>   *sɔɹai-bɔɹ*   *bah-ɔloi*   *uḍɔt-il*
     Sun   set+COND   bird-CL.PL   nest-DAT   return-PST+3
     'When the Sun set, the birds returned to their nest.'

(16) *teʊ*   *kɔtʰa-kʰini*   *kɔ-lɔt*   *ħɔkɔlʊ-e*   *buz-i*
     3SG(HON)   matter-DET   say-COND   all-NOM   understand-CONJT

     pa-l-e
     get-PST-3
     'Everybody understood the matter, when he disclosed it.'

In the instances cited above, it is observed that the non-finite form *-lɔt/-ilɔt* functioning as conditional suffix is only found in sentences having verbs signaling past tense, and it indicates that the action being performed is always related to the past time.

3.3   *-ʊte*

When *-ʊte* is used in the dependent clause, the time of the conditional construction expresses dependency on the particular time realized through the tense markers used in the finite verbs. If the finite verb form takes past tense marker, the conditional clause also exhibits past time. The same situation is observed in the circumstances where the finite verb forms take present and future tense markers in the main clauses.

(17)   *tai*   *gan   ga-ʊte*   *ħɔkɔlʊ-e*   *hattali maɹ-is-il*
       3SG(NON.HON)   song   sing-COND   all-NOM   clap-IMPV-PST+3
       'Everybody clapped when she sang.'

(18)   *pɔtʰaɹ-ɔɹ*   *maz-edi*   *gɔɹ-ɔloi*   *ʊḅɔt-ʊte*
       field-GEN   middle-INSTR   home-DAT   return-COND

       ħi   *ħɔdaj*   *gaḅɔɹu-zak-ɔk*   *dekʰ-e*
       3SG(NON.HON)   always   young.girl-PL-ACC   see-PRES+3
       'Whenever he returns home through the field, he observes the young girls.'

(19)   *gɔɹ-ɔloi*   *za-ʊte-he*   *tai*   *nɔtun   sʊla-tʊ*   *piṇḍ-ib-ɔ*
       home-DAT   go-COND-EMP   3SG(NON.HON)   new   frock-CL.SG   wear-FUT-3
       'She will wear the new frock only when she will go home.'

3.4   -at

If the main clause has a finite verb having past tense marker in it, then only the dependent clause can take at form as suffix to the verb used in it, as in

(20)   *saki-tʊ*   *teʊ*   *lɔ-i*   *za-at*
       lamp-CL.SG   3SG(HON)   take-CONJT   go-NON.FIN

       kʊtʰa-tʊ   *anḍaɹ*   *hoi pɔɹ-il*
       room-DET   dark   become-PST+3
       'When she took the earthen lamp away, the room became dark.'

3.5   -i

With *-i* as conditional suffix, the finite verb forms carry either past or present or future tense marker. The tense expressed in the finite verb influences the time of the action of the dependent clause, i.e., if the main clause is in past tense, the conditional clause indicates that the incident happened in the past time. Again, the use of the future tense marker in finite verb suggests that the dependent clause is also related to the future time. The same rule is applicable to the conditional construction with a main clause having present tense marker.

(21)   *ħehɹati*   *ḅʊz*   *ḅat kʰa-i*   *ħɔkɔlʊ*   *gɔr-ɔloi*   *ʊḅɔt-il*
       late.night   dinner   eat-COND   all   home-DAT   return-PST+3
       'All people returned home after having dinner at late night.'

Here, the use of the finite verb *uḅɔtil* expresses the result of the action *ḅat kʰai* that occurred in the past.

(22) *ħi* *dupɔɹija-ɹ* *ḅat-ħaz* *tat-e* *kʰa-i-he*
3SG(NON.HON) noon-GEN lunch-DET there-EMP eat-COND-EMP

ħɔnḍija *zʊɹhat-ɔloi* *ɹaʊna hɔ-b-ɔ*
evening Jorhat-DAT go-FUT-3
'He will go to Jorhat evening only after having lunch there.'

ɹaʊna hobɔ and *kʰaihe*, in the sentence above, talk about a probable event and a condition happening in the future.

(23) *ɹam-e* *ħɔdaj* *ḅat* *kʰa-i* *skul-ɔloi* *za-i*
Ram-NOM always rice eat-COND school-DAT go-PRES+3
'Ram always goes to school after having food.'

In the sentence given above, the conditional non-finite form *kʰai* and the finite form *zai* show the mutual temporal understanding between the two by talking about things that normally happen.

4   Function of the conditional clause in a sentence

In this section I will look at the function of the dependent clause in a conditional sentence. As the inflectional conditional clause is embedded bearing all the features of a pure non-finite clause, it is less tightly integrated into the structure of the sentence than is the main clause. In most such complex sentences, conditional clauses are optional and their selection does not depend on the presence of the finite verb of the main clause. It is observed that they can occur as peripheral dependent clause in a sentence structure and hence function as adverbial adjunct there. The following sentences exemplify the function of conditional clauses as adjunct.

4.1   *-le/-ile*

This form, when added to some verb roots in a dependent clause, functions as adverbial adjunct of reason and time, as observed in the sentences in the examples.

(24) *baɹiħa*   *muħɔlḍaɹe*   *bɔɹɔħun*   *di-le*   *noi-upɔnoi-ħɔmuh*
monsoon   heavily   rain   give-COND   river-tributory-PL

pani-ɹe   *upɔsi pɔɹ-e*
water-INSTR   overflow-PRES+3
'The rivers and tributaries are flooded with water when it rains heavily in the monsoon.'

baɹiħa muħɔlḍaɹe bɔɹɔħun dile: adjunct of reason

(25) *pukʰuɹi-loi*   *ah-ile*   *tai*   *ɹasta-ɹe*   *za-a*
pond-DAT   come-COND   3SG(NON.HON) road-INSTR   go-NON.FIN

gaɹi-bʋɹ   *sa-i*   *tʰak-e*
vehicle-CL.PL look-CONJT   stay-PRES+3
'Whenever she comes to the pond, she watches the vehicles on the road.'

pukʰuɹiloi ahile: adjunct of time

4.2   -lɔt/-ilɔt

The dependent clause having the suffix *lɔt/-ilɔt* in the verb form, function as the adjunct of result in a conditional sentence, as in

(26) *ɹima*   *nami ah-ilɔt*   *mɔi-ʋ*   *nami ah-il-ʋ*
Rima   come.down-COND   1SG-EMP   come.down-PST-1
'As Rima came down, I too came down.'

ɹima nami ahilɔt : adjunct of result

4.3   -ʋte

When -*ʋte* is suffixed to the verb root of the dependent clause, then the dependent clause functions as adjunct of time. For example,

(27) *bɔzaɹ-ɔloi*   *za-ʋte*   *manuh-zɔn-ɔk*   *lɔg pa-is-il-ʋ*
market-DAT   go-COND   man-DET-ACC   meet-IMPV-PST-1
'I met the person when I went to the market.'

bɔzaɹɔloi zaʋte: adjunct of time

4.4 *-at*

After the suffixation of the *-at* to the verb form, the dependent clause performs the function of adverbial adjunct of time and result in a conditional sentence. The sentences given here will illustrate this:

(28) ħɔɓa   ħeħ   hɔ-at   manuh-bʊɹ   gɔɹ-ɔloi   gol
      meeting   end   become-COND   people-PL   home-DAT   go+PST+3
      'The people went home when the meeting came to an end.'

   ħɔɓa ħeħ hʊwat: adjunct of time

(29) kesuwa-tʊ-e   kand-at   ma-k   <u>ħaɹ pa</u>-l-e
      baby-CL.SG-NOM   cry-COND   mother-KIN   wake-PST-3
      'The mother woke up as the baby cried.'

   kesuwatʊwe kɔndat: adjunct of result

4.5 *-i*

The addition of *-i* in the verb of a dependent clause makes it to act as an adverbial adjunct of time in a conditional sentence. For example,

(30) ħi   skul-<u>ɔɹ pɔɹa</u> ah-i-he   ɓat   kʰa-j
      3SG(NON.HON)   school-ABL   come-COND-EMP rice   eat-PRES+3
      'He has his rice only after coming back from school.'

   skulɔrpɔra ahi : adjunct of time

5 Distribution

In conditional sentences, the dependent clause precedes main clause in Assamese, as observed in the following instance:

(31) bɔɹɔħun   ni-di-le   mɔi   bɔzaɹ-ɔloi   za-m
      rain   NEG-give-COND   1SG   market-DAT   go-FUT+1
      'I will go to the market if it doesn't rain.'

Here, the dependent clause expressing the condition *bɔɹɔħun nidile* 'if it does not rain' has preceded the main clause expressing the consequence *ami bɔzaɹɔloi zam* 'We will go to the market'. The subject verb agreement is observed only in main clause. If both the main and dependent clauses have the same element functioning as their subjects, then the subject can precede any of the clauses, i.e., either main or subordinate. For example,

(32)   *g̊ɔɹ-ɔloi*   *go-le*   *ɹam-e*   *kapʊɹ-kʰini*   <u>*loi za-b-ɔ*</u>
       home-DAT   go-COND   Ram-NOM   cloth-CL.PL   take.away-FUT-3
       'Ram will take the clothes away when he goes home.'

It is a complex construction consisting of two independent clauses with the same subject: *ram g̊ɔɹɔloi zabɔ* 'Ram will go home.' and *ɹame kapʊɹkʰini loi zabɔ* 'Ram will take the clothes away.'. But after combining them into one, it is observed that the subject has been omitted in dependent clause and it functions as subject in the main clause. It is also possible to make a sentence by treating the subject as a part of the dependent clause, as in:

(33)   *ɹam*   *g̊ɔɹ-ɔloi*   *go-le*   *kapʊɹ-kʰini*   <u>*loi za-b-ɔ*</u>
       Ram   home-DAT   go-COND   cloth-CL.PL   take.away-FUT-3
       'Ram will take the clothes away when he goes home.'

In (32), the proper noun Ram, carrying the nominative case marker *-e* with it, is functioning as the subject of the main clause and thus showing the subject-verb agreement in a mono-transitive clause, whereas in (33) it shows the agreement with the non-transitive verb which is the antecedent of a conditional statement.

      Unlike this, if both the clauses have two different subjects, then both the subjects are obligatory for the sentence, as in,

(34)   *ɔɹun*   *za-at*   *ami*   *g̊ɔɹ-ɔloi*   <u>*gusi ah-il-o*</u>
       Arun   go-COND   1PL   home-DAT   leave-PST-1
       'We left for home as Arun had left.'

This conditional construction carries two clauses, the first part being the dependent clause *ɔɹun zʊwat*, having the subject *ɔɹun* 'Arun' and the second part being the main clause *ami g̊ɔɹɔloi gusi ahilʊ* 'We left for home.', having the subject *ami* 'we'.

6   Pattern of using conditional marker

      The structure of conditional sentence, in Assamese, can be observed in three categories depending on the use of the conditional marker. While analyzing the patterns of using the non-finite forms as conditional marker, focus is primarily given on the verbs used in those patterns. Pattern 1 is what we have been looking at in this paper, but for the convenience of comparing it with Patterns 2 and 3, it is observed under this heading. Based on the constituents under verb phrase, the following patterns are observed:

6.1   *Pattern 1*

      Dependent clause: verb root+ conditional suffix
      Main clause: verb root in finite form

This type of structure is used to talk about things that are always true or normally happen or a probable event happening in the future. Depending on different non-finite forms, it can also relate some condition of the past to the result of that situation in past. For example,

(35) *ħɔnɖija*   *hɔ-le*   *sɔɹai-bʊɹ*
      evening   become-COND   bird-CL.PL

      bãh-ɔloi   *ʋḅɔt-i*   *ah-e*
      nest-DAT   return-CONJT   come-PRES+3
      'The birds return to their nests when it becomes dark.'

(36) *ħi*   *kɔ-at*   *kɔtʰa-tʊ*   *ami* *buz-i*   *pal-ʋ*
      3SG   speak-NON.FIN   matter-CL.SG   1PL   understand-CONJT   get-PST-1
      'We understood the matter when he said(about it)'.

The instance no 35 given above, talks about a situation which is habitual in nature whereas, in instance no 36 the result of the action expressed through the main clause depends on the condition occurred in the past. In both the sentences, the verb of the dependent clauses and the main clauses can be structured in the way presented in Table 2:

Sentence #	Dependent clause	Main clause
	Verb root+ non.finite form	Verb root+ finite form
35	*hɔ-le* become-NON.FIN	*ah-e* come-PRES+3
36	*kɔ-at* speak-NON.FIN	*buz-i pa-l-ʋ* understand-CONJT get-PST-1

Table 2: Pattern 1

6.2 *Pattern 2*

Dependent clause: verb root + non.finite form/ conditional suffix
Main clause: verb root in finite form+ *heten/ -hɔj*

This type of structure is used to express dreams, unreal situations, and things that are counterfactual. In this type of conditional sentence both the dependent clause and the main clause describe situations that are generally hypothetical or unreal. It expresses an unreal past condition and its probable result in the present or an unreal present condition and its probable result in the past. For example:

(37) *lɔtaɹi zik-ile*   *mɔi*   *ḍɔni*   *hɔ-l-ʊ-heten/ -hɔj*
      Lottery win-NON.FIN   1SG   rich   be-PST-1SG-COND
      'If I had won the lottery, I would be rich.'

The sentence above talks about a past hypothetical or unreal situation with a present result.

(38) *tumi*   *buḍijɔk*   *hɔ-le*   *zʊwa* *bɔsɔɹ-ei*
      2SG(FAM)   intelligent   be-NON.FIN   last   year-EMP

      pɔɹikʰja-t   *uttiɹnɔ hɔ-l-a-heten / -hɔj*
      examination-LOC   pass-PST-2FAM-COND
      'If you were intelligent, you would have passed the examination last year.'

Examples (37) and (38) above talk about a past hypothetical or unreal situation with a present result and a present hypothetical or unreal situation with a past result respectively. In both the cases, the verb roots of the dependent clauses take non-finite forms which function as conditional suffixes here and the conditional marker *-heten / -hɔj* is added to the finite verbs of the main clauses. The verbal constituents can be analyzed as presented in Table.

Sentence #	Dependent clause	Main clause
	verb root + non.finite form	verb root in finite form+ *-heten/ -hɔj*
37	*zik-ile* win-NON.FIN	*hɔ-l-ʊ-heten* be-PST-1SG-COND
38	*hɔ-le* be-NON.FIN	*uttiɹnɔ hɔ-l-a-heten* pass-PST-2FAM-COND

Table 3: **Pattern 2**

In the structures examined above, it is observed that the finite verb in the main clauses exhibit subject-verb concord clearly.

6.3 *Pattern 3*

Dependent clause: verb root + *a* + *-heten*
Main clause: verb root in finite form + *-heten*

The conditional sentence having such construction expresses situation that are likely to be unreal where the main clause is in the past tense and the conditional marker *-heten* is attached to the finite verb. This pattern is different from Pattern 2 in its structure. We have

observed that in Pattern 2, conditional suffix is added to the verb root of the dependent clause and *-heten* is not added to it. On the other hand, the verb of the dependent clause, in Pattern 3, is a blend of three elements- the verb root, the non-finite marker *-a* and *-heten*. This type of conditional sentence also talks about past hypothetical or unreal situation with a present result or a present hypothetical or unreal situation with a past result. For example:

(39) *lɔtaɹi-t*   *zik-a-heten*   *mɔi*
      lottery-LOC   win-NON.FIN-COND   1SG

      ḍɔni   *hɔ-l-ʊ-heten*
      rich   be-PST-1SG-COND
      'If I had won the lottery, I would be rich.'

An unreal past condition and its probable result in the present has been identified in this sentence.

(40) *tumi*   *buḍijɔk*   *hɔ-a-heten*   *zʊwa*   *bɔsɔɹ-ei*
      2SG(FAM)   intelligent   be-NON.FIN-COND   last   year-EMP

      pɔɹikʰja-t   *uttiɹnɔ hɔ-l-a-heten / -hɔj*
      examination-LOC   pass-PST-2FAM-COND
      'If you were intelligent, you would have passed the examination last year.'

An unreal present condition and its probable result in the past have been identified here. The conditional marker *heten* in dependent clause can be substituted by another conditional marker *-hɔle* without making any changes to the whole structure, as shown below:

(41) *lɔtaɹi-t*   *zik-a-hɔle*   *mɔi*
      lottery-LOC   win-NON.FIN-COND   1SG

      ḍɔni   *hɔ-l-ʊ-heten*
      rich   be-PST-1SG-COND
      'If I had won the lottery, I would be rich.'

The analysis of the verbal constituents presented in the Table 4 shows the subject-verb agreement in the finite verbs of the main clauses:

Sentence #	Dependent clause	Main clause
	verb root + *a* + *heten*	verb root in finite form + *heten*
39	*zik-a-heten* win-NON.FIN - COND	*hɔ-l-ʊ-heten* be-PST-1SG-COND
40	*hɔ-a-heten* be-NON.FIN-COND	*hɔ-l-a-heten* pass-PST-2FAM-COND
41	*zik-a-hɔle* win-NON.FIN-COND	*hɔ-l-ʊ-heten* be-PST-1SG-COND

Table 4: **Pattern 3**

All these patterns are observed in complex clause structure in Assamese. But Assamese allows simple clause to express a condition which is purely context-dependent. In simple clause structure past-conditional is available and it can be recognized by the suffixation of *heten*, the conditional clause marker to the finite verb form. For example,

(42) *tai*   *nɔ-kɔɹ-il-e-heten*
      3SG(NON.HON)   NEG-do-PST-3-COND
      'She would not have done this.'

7 Conclusion

Conditionality is both inflectionally and lexically realized is Assamese. The lexical realization can be observed in two ways, first, with the help of correlative structures, and second, with the help of some particular words that are used to indicate conditions. For example,

(43) *zetija-i*   *tai*   *kɔ-b-ɔ*
      when-EMP   3SG(NON.HON)   speak-FUT-3

      tetija-i   *mɔi*   *za-m*
      then-EMP   1SG   go-FUT+1
      'Whenever she will say, I will go.'

(44) *misa   kɔtʰa*   *nɔ-kɔ-b-a*
      lie   speech   NEG-speak-FUT-2HON

      ɔnjɔ tʰa   *bipɔd-ɔt*   *pɔɹ-ib-a*
      otherwise   danger-LOC   fall-FUT-2HON
      'Don't tell a lie, or you will fall in trouble.'

In (43), the phrase *zetija-i...tetija-i* (when... then) is an example of correlative structure indicating conditionality expressed in the sentence. Again, the words *ɔnjɔ tʰa* are functioning as a conditional term in (44).

The study of conditional clause in Assamese provides a large field to be engaged intellectually. Not enough significant work on this area has been done till now. The writer of this paper has briefly addressed some important concepts related to the conditional sentence realized inflectionally, such as structure, function, distribution, subject-verb agreement and so on. As far as the study is concerned, there is a vast scope for further research and analysis in this area.

8 Notational convention

The deep or underlying forms are usually shown in the data line. But there are certain cases some particular words are not divided into smaller constituent parts, i.e. the base form has not been indicated. In such cases the sequence has been treated as words, not morphemes, and those words are indicated with a '+' sign while glossing.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABL	ablative	LOC	locative case
ACC	accusative case	NEG	negative
ADV	adverb	NOM	nominative case
CL.SG	classifier(singular)	NON.FIN	non-finite
CL.PL	classifier (plural)	PL	plural
CLS	classifier	PRES	present tense
COND	conditional	PST	past tense
CONJT	conjunctive	1	first person
DAT	dative	1SG	1st person singular
DET	determiner	2	second person
EMP	emphatic marker	2SG(FAM)	2nd person familiar
FUT	future	3	third person
GEN	genitive	3SG	Third person singular
IMPV	imperfective	3SG(HON)	3rd person singular familiar
INSTR	instrumental case	3SG(NON.HON)	3rd person singular non-honorific
KIN	kinship marker	3SG(F)	3rd person (female)