CHAPTER - I
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1.0 Languages differ in various ways in their structure and content. As a consequence the languages are grouped and sub-grouped. These groups are popularly termed as families by the linguists. The linguists examine the languages from their structure. Those languages having similar structural properties are regarded as belonging to the same structural class. Thus, after careful examination of the different features the languages of the world are structurally divided into three types. The three types of languages are agglutinating, inflecting and isolating. This is based mainly on the role of affixes in the structure of the language

1.1. The types of languages:

It has been mentioned above that languages are grouped into three types according to their structure. It is also mentioned that the types of languages are agglutinating, inflecting and isolating. This type of
classification is known as typological classification of the languages. Since Manipuri is an agglutinating language it has become necessary to illustrate the different structural features of the languages mentioned above.

1.1.1 The Agglutinating type of languages:

The languages coming under this type allows the affixes to occur simultaneously. In other words in these languages the affixes can go on adding with little morphophonemic changes in successive orders. Manipuri language belongs to this category of languages. Examples from Manipuri language are given below:

Examples:-

In ca- 'root eat' the suffix -ri can be added to form the word cari 'eat realize/continue'. The suffixes -be, -du, -di etc. can be added to cari to form the words caribe 'the eating item/the eater', caribedu 'that thing which is eating/that person who is eating', caribedudi 'that thing which is eating (particular)'. Here it is seen that
the suffixes are added to ca 'root eat' has little to do with morphological changes in the word.

1.1.2 The inflecting type of languages

In these languages the affixes are inflectional and the affixes usually merge in part with the base. According to David Crystal, the term refers to a type of LANGUAGE established by COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS using STRUCTURAL (as opposed to DIACHRONIC) criteria, and focusing on the characteristics of the WORD. In this kind of language, words display grammatical relationships morphologically: they typically contain more than one MORPHEME but, unlike AGGLUTINATIVE languages, there is no one-to-one correspondences between the morphemes and the linear SEQUENCE of MORPHS. In languages such as Latin, Greek, Arabic, etc., the inflectional forms of words may represent several morphological OPPOSITIONS, e.g. in Latin amo ('I love'), the form simultaneously represents present TENSE, ACTIVE, first PERSON singular, INDICATIVE. This 'fusing' of properties has led to such languages being called FUSIONAL, and has motivated the WORD-AND-PARADIGM MODEL of analysis. As always in such
classifications, the categories are not clear-cut: different languages will display the characteristic of inflection to a greater or lesser degree.

From what has been stated above we can have a clear idea of inflecting languages. In these languages the affixes are indicative of the categories of the word.

1.1.3 The Isolating type of languages:

In these languages the words mostly occur in isolation i.e. all the words are invariable and their syntactical relationship is shown primarily by the order in which the words occur in larger constructions. Further the grammatical categories are not precisely clear-cut in these languages and these languages display different but distinct characteristic features of isolation in a greater or lesser degree. These languages are also termed analytic by some scholars engaged in linguistic research. This is opposed to synthetic languages, such as agglutinating and inflecting, as in these languages words may contain one or more morpheme. In short, in the isolating type of languages the words
contain only one morpheme. Vietnamese language is one of the languages of this type.

The types of languages classified and discussed above are based on the structural differences and similarities of the languages. There are other classifications of the languages by the Historical and Comparative Linguists. Their classification is based on the relationship of the languages. This helps us in ascertaining the family of the languages and also the various changes that has occurred in the language from an earlier time. In other words it helps us to understand the origin and development of the particular language although we are not in a position to tell explicitly how the human language developed and when it was introduced by the human people. This kind of classification of the languages is known as Genealogical classification of languages.

1.2 The Genealogical Classification of the languages:

Under this classification the languages are grouped according to their similarities mainly based on the vocabulary and grammar. Therefore,
cognates have been established and changes that have been occurred in the languages have been explained. In this process the method of Reconstruction is employed wherever it is necessary. Thus the languages are grouped into families and sub-families. The known language families of the world so far are – the Indo-European (Indo-Germanic), the Sino-Tibetan, the Semito-Hamitic, the African, the Japanese, Other Asian Languages, the Ural-Altaic, the Malayo-Polynesian, The Papuan, The Australian, the Khoisan, the Caucasian, the Dravidian, the Basque and the Amerindian, etc.[West,1975] Still there are disagreements among scholars on the correct family classification of the languages. Even the name Tibeto-Burman for the languages spoken mostly in the North East India and some areas of Myanmar (Burma) is a matter of controversy. However, we have to be content with the existing name until and unless we are able to find out suitable name as its alternative.

Among the family of languages the most widely analyzed and widely spoken group of language is Indo-European Family while the largest numbers of languages fall under the Sino- Tibetan Family. Genealogical Classification of languages helps in finding out the
parent languages and relationship among the languages by comparing, and examining the changes that has occurred in the languages from time to time as well as reconstructing the proto-forms, in case the written records are not available for the languages. This is a very important study in the preparation of dialect atlases and in the survey of the languages. Modern linguistics such as structural linguistics, generative and transformation have very little to do with the classification of the languages into families. Any attempt to conduct a survey for preparation and classification of languages including the preparation of a dialect atlas under the above methods of language analysis cannot be considered as a simple mistake because it is a blunder. It is also pertinent to mention here that the structural relationships among the languages are not sufficient enough to claim that the languages belong to the same family. Similarly, the transformation and rewriting or generating sentences and the strings or rules cannot contribute anything at the identification of the different varieties, the extent up to which the varieties have extended, i.e. dialect atlas of the languages.
1.3 About the people and the language

1.3.1. The name of the language

The name of the language is traditionally known as Meitei Ion, or Meiteiron¹ or Meetei Ion or Meeteiron² and the name of the people is Meitei or Meetei. The Shans and the Burmese (Myanmarese) called them *kethe* while the Ahoms called them *mekhali*. This is seen from the old writings of Makar Singha and others including T.C.Hudson. The name of the first Manipuri primer for class A (similar to the present first Nursery or KG) was *Miteilongi Mapi Lairik* /miteilongi mai lairik/. In the earlier records available at different parts of the world including British Museum the name of the language is written as Meeteilon ‘miteylon’ or Meiteilon ‘meyeylon’ or Meiteiron ‘meyevron’ or Meetei Lon ‘mitey lon’ or Meitei Lon ‘meyey lon’. It must be mentioned here that in Manipuri all intervocalic /ɪ/’s change to /ɛ/ so the traditional name of the language if spelled in combination of the two formatives mevity/mitey ‘name of the people’ and lon ‘language’ preferably bemeyeviron or miteviron. Further, in pronouncing miteylon ormeyeylon there is a
transition between mitey/meytey and lon in the continuum. This is an
issue with some groups of people about Meetei 'mitey' and Meitei
'meytey' as well as in the case of Meiteiron or Meeteiron 'meyteyron or
miteyron' and Meiteilon or Meeteilion 'meyteylon or miteylon'. Here it is
emphasized again that there is a pause in the continuum in the case
of the pronunciation of miteylon or meyteylon but in the case of the
pronunciation of miteyron or meyteyron there is no notice of the pause
in the continuum.

One of the probabilities with regard to the change of the name of
language from Meeteiron or Meiteiron to Manipuri may be from the
name of the state i.e. Manipur as in the case of Bengali, Assamese
(assami), Rajasthani, etc. due to the Aryan influence. A fact of the
case which shall be remembered is the recognition and inclusion in the
syllabus of the Calcutta University. The Calcutta University included the
language as one of the Major Vernaculars sometime in the early years
of the 20th century under the name of Manipuri and started entering
Manipuri in the Marks sheets, Broad sheets, etc. Earlier to that one is to
offer Sanskrit or Bengali as the Major Vernacular (Thoudam 2006, because Manipuri was not a Vernacular subject.

1.3.2 The people

The Meiteis are brave people. They are simple and straightforward. They are fond of games and sports. The world reknowned game of polo was started from Manipur with their ponies. They are artistic. The Meitei Jagoi popularly known as Manipuri dance shows their rich cultural heritage of Manipur and its people. They are neat and clean. They love their sovereignty. As a consequence, they fought with the British Government in India, even though they are well aware of the superior strength of the British army in terms of number, arms and armnunitions and in weapons training. They know they will be defeated but they fought for the motherland. This has shown their love for sovereignty.

The Meiteis are animistic in the religious belief. They worship a variety of Gods and Goddesses including good, neutral and evil spirits. They were
converted into Hinduism sometime in the 18th Century during the reign of king Pamheiba who assumed the Hindu name Garibniwaj. The Meities still worship their ancestral Gods and Goddesses and even continued to worship their ancestors. They believe that anything large or old is like the God. They also worship the forest deities means the Umang Lais. These Gods and Goddesses are their ancestors. Each Meitei house has sacred place in the South West corner for Lainingdhou Sanamahi. From the religious point of view the Meiteis or Manipuris can be divided into three major groups. They are – the Vaisnaba Hindus, The Meitei Marup (the Sanamahi cult) and the Meitei Christians. The Vaisnaba people worship the Hindu Gods and Goddesses and they perform the Hindu rituals although they are modified to some extent. The people belonging to the Meitei Marup are more or less the revivalists and they did not accept the Hindu rituals and they did not allow the Hindu Brahmins to perform their rituals. They have their own priests. One this which must be kept in mind is their rituals etc. are almost similar with the Hindu rituals. The Meitei Christians are those who have converted to Christianity. Apart from this there are a few groups who claim themselves as Buddhists. Their number is very
few and the heads can be counted. In the same way there are Bahai
group. They are also very few in number.

The main occupation of the people and their main source of income is
agriculture and cottage industries. Handloom and Handicrafts is
another occupation and is the other source of income of the people.
The people are not habituated in begging and they dislike it very
much. Hardly any beggar is seen on the streets. If at all beggars are
found in the streets they will be definitely some mentally retarded
people or some abnormal being.

The Meitei Society is close-knit. They have a patriarchal society. They
prefer marriage among their community. There are restrictions in the
marriage alliance among the sages(clans). They have yek (blood
relation) among the different clans. Marriage among males and
females belonging to the same yek is not permitted. There are two
major forms of marriage. They are – (i) marriage in the usual manner
and (ii) Keina katpa. In the first one arrangement are made in a large
scale inviting many people. For this the boy’s father or family sent
marriage proposals to the girl’s father or family. When the parties agree
the horoscopes of the boy and girl are taken to the astrologer to ascertain the suitability according to the horoscope. If the astrologer gives a favourable sign then the marriage is arranged. If the astrologer has a negative opinion the marriage is dropped. But in the case of Keina Katpa there is a small gathering and everything is done in small way. This kind of marriage sometimes involves forced marriage as the bridegroom mostly tries to avoid the marriage after exploiting the bride before their marriage. In this kind of marriage the processes involved in arranged marriages are not followed. In all types of marriages an auspicious day is chosen for the marriage. Another kind of marriage is through elopement. The Bridegroom and the bride eloped without the knowledge of their parents. In such a case the bridegroom’s father normally approaches the bride’s father for marriage or otherwise and also informs that his/her daughter has been brought by his son as his daughter-in-law. In such cases if the party’s agree the marriage is arranged and the ceremony is performed with prompt and grandeur like the arranged marriage. In some cases if the party’s disagree the marriage is not held and the boy and girl is separated. This is common to the people of all the religious groups in Manipur. In the case of elopement there are certain dangers. There is always a risk, if the
parents do not come to an agreement. In such cases, many untoward incidents happen and the consequences are not encouraging.

Meitei or Manipuri Society has no class distinction. There is no Caste system. There are some outcasts, but they became outcasts as a punishment by the king. There is respect for age. If the subordinate staff is elder to the ego the officer will not address or call the subordinate staff by the first name. Rather he/she will call or address him with some prefix to the first name suitable for his age. In the case of individuals younger in age he/she will definitely address/call him by the first name. The senior or elderly subordinates however will not call or address the superior officer by the name but will address him by the term 'ibungo' or 'sahep'. As the years rolled by and with the influence of the neighbouring states and countries this tradition is losing ground and some young officers or people started the senior subordinates addressed/called by the first name. This is the changing scenario in the socio-cultural habits of the Meitei/Manipuri people in the Manipuri society. This change will definitely give an impact on the language and will result to some linguistic changes in Manipuri language.
1.3.3. The language

Manipuri or Meiteiron/Meeteiron or Meitei/Meetei Lon is spoken mainly in Manipur. It is also spoken in Assam, Tripura and in some parts of West Bengal inside the country and in Myanmar (Burma) and Bangladesh outside the country. It is said that it belongs to the Tibeto-Burman sub-family of the large Sino-Tibetan family of languages. Different scholars grouped this language under the Kuki-Chin group of the Tibeto-Burman languages. Considering the several distinctive features different from other languages of the Kuki-Chin group as well as the other Tibeto-Burman languages it deserves to give the language a separate identity. Manipuri has shown the relationship with both the Naga and Kuki languages. This has prompted to state that Manipuri shall be given a separate identity. This is the most important, widely analyzed and well developed language of the family. It has a script of its own. It is an agglutinating language and it is monosyllabic. The affixes are playing the vital role in the morphology and the syntax of the language. Hence, special care and attention shall be given at the time of Immediate Constituents analysis and in the rewriting of the language for Transformational and Generative analysis. Because there is an
apprehension of wrong conclusions at the time of Immediate constituent analysis and incorrect identification of the strings and generating wrong structures (sentences, phrases, etc.) and also framing wrong or incorrect rewrite rules. This situation is further aggravated by the scholars analyzing the language. They tried to analyze the language from the point of view of the gloss utterly disregarding the function and the occurrence of the words in larger constructions. They employ their knowledge of the grammar of the alien language and put the Manipuri words in the slots for the form-classes and grammatical categories of the alien language. Thus, they are not writing a grammar of the language but they are writing a grammar of the other language with Manipuri examples. As a consequence they posited several categories and classes such as tense, number, gender, prepositions, post-positions etc., in their works. It may be noted here that the old theory of the Manipuri grammarians, which have been into our veins for a long time shall not be allowed to dominate whenever we are observing the data of the language and in the analysis of the language.
1.3.4. Status

Manipuri is one of the most important languages of the Tibeto-Burman family. It is the lingua-franca in the state of Manipur. It is one of the Scheduled languages of India. It is the official language of the state of Manipur from time immemorial and it still continues to be the official language of the state even after Manipur joined the Indian Union in the later part of the year 1949. It is the medium of instruction at all the levels of education in the state of Manipur while English is also used. At present the Assamese-Bengali Script is used for writing the language. This might have been due to the introduction of modern education. Printings of textbooks were convenient in an already existing script instead of developing fonts in a foundry. Keeping the expenses and difficulties the text books have been printed in Assamese-Bengali script. Thus Meeteiron was written and introduced in the Assamese-Bengali script. Most of the books are printed in this script and this script is used for writing in the examinations as well. The Manipuris want to keep their ancestral tradition. Hence, there is demand for using the Meitei Script i.e. reviving the script. The Government has conceded to it and some progress is seen in this direction. But because of lack of planning and
standardization several shortcomings are noticed in the script. This is an uphill task. All concerned shall take special care and precaution. It shall not be done in a hurry.

Manipuri language is not planned properly. Although it has been included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian constitution some decades ago, it can be stated that nothing has been done for its development by the Government of Manipur. The works undertaken by the Central agencies are also not up to the mark as the right and more competent people are left out in choosing incumbents to work on those projects. Further works by foreigners abroad also committed similar mistakes like the Central agencies. They depend on misleading publications and cooked up information of the interested persons whose wisdom is in question. One such example was the development of the Unicode font for the Manipuri Script at Berkeley, California and the works done at the IIT, Guwahati. The Manipur Government has established a Language Cell in the Directorate of Education. It is unfortunate the Cell is not going in the right direction. Instead of advising the Government in the planning and standardization of the language, they have gone astray and they are undertaking the works
to be carried out by the University departments and research organizations.

1.3.5. Dialects

Manipur has several dialects. However, due to improved transport and communication as well as free mixing among the various groups and clans including marriage alliances have made the differences negligible now. Some of the dialects such as the speech variety of the Cachar district of Assam and Jiribam sub-division of Manipur which were clearly distinct at one time have become almost similar to the Standard Imphal Dialect because of frequent interaction, intermixing and interpersonal communication with the speakers of the Standard dialect.

Still the form of speech in Tripura, Bangladesh and Myanmar clearly show the dialectal variation. The differences have become more because of the regional or local influence. It has been noticed that there are influences of Bengali language in the speech varieties of
Tripura and Bangladesh while Myanmarese (Burmese) influence is noticed in the variety of speech in Myanmar. It has become difficult to call the variety of speech found in Cachar, Jiribam and other parts of Assam dialects because the differences from the Standard dialect has become minimal i.e. the differences are very narrow now.

Many Aryan and Iranian words are found in Manipuri but it has started vanishing gradually. These words are being substituted by the English words or by the newly coined terms/words or by the archaic Manipuri forms. The main reason behind this substitution is the Bishnupriya Manipuris, who are taking advantage of these borrowed vocabularies in claiming that they are the original inhabitants of Manipur. The Bishnupriya Manipuris made this claim through concocted evidence altogether ignoring the written records. They were the captives of war kept at Lammangdong (Bishnupur) present Bishenpur to take care of the royal horses in the stable. Their claim is far from reality.
1.4. *The present Analysis:*

The present analysis aims at describing morphologically the different processes of word formation in Manipuri and the classification of the words in the language. In this analysis the Manipuri sentences are transcribed phonemically and the words are classified according to their function in the sentences as well as the position they occupy in the larger constructions. In other words the description is carried out after examining the function and the occurrence of various entities in the larger constructions such as phrases and sentences employing the sound principles of linguistics analysis. Further, the Principles of Nida in the identification of Morphemes have been given utmost importance as several discrepancies are noticed in the existing works with regard to the identification of the morphemes. As for example, some scholars whose names will be kept anonymous identified gəni as future tense marker disregarding the contents of this particle and keeping aside the principles of Nida. It must be known by all that gəni is a combination of two morphemes - gə ‘non-realization’ which means the act has not been performed or done or realized or not seen, etc. and ni ‘the copulative verb’ indicating something like ‘is’ but which function as the
finite or main verb in sentences. They have done this to support their wrong notion of tense in the language. They thought it as future because the act is not realized or performed. Non-realization or action yet to perform and future are two different propositions and realization or non-realization are aspects. There are several such other misconceptions but are not discussed here because the amount of such misconceptions are very large.

1.4.1. *Formation of words*

In the formation of words care has been taken to find out the roots and affixes. The different types of roots found in the language are identified. The types of roots found in the language are *free* and *bound*. Thereafter, the words are divided into roots and affixes. In the process examples of words having prefix+ free root, prefix +free root+suffix(es), prefix+bound root, prefix+bound root+suffix(es) are given. This enables us to understand clearly the different morphemes present in a word. This has helped us in the identification of the morphemes. Further, the words having more than one root and
prefixes and or prefixes and suffix(es) are examined and illustrated. This has shown the type of word formation through compounding. This is followed by the examples derivation in which word class maintaining and word class changing derivations are illustrated. Thus the three different types of word formation – affixation, compounding and derivation are shown with adequate examples.

This has enabled us not only to understand how words are formed in Manipuri but also which is the most important entity in the process of Word formation. So far it has come to our notice that affixes play the most important role and it is vital in the process of word formation. The number of free roots is very small while the number of bound roots is very large. So, the majority of the words are having affixes. Further, these affixes are morphologic as well as syntactic. Hence most of the grammatical functions are performed by them. This also has made us difficult to have a clear-cut demarcation between morphology and syntax.
1.4.2. The classification of words

Words in Manipuri are classified according to their function and position i.e., occurrence in the sentences. Those words occurring in subject and object slots in sentences and also function as head in the Noun Phrase (NP) are regarded as nouns. Utmost care is essential in handling this part of the grammar of Manipuri language because several factors have to be examined from different standpoints in ascertaining the category or the class of the word. One of the major problems is the distinction between adjective and adverbs. This has been further aggravated by the position occupied by the noun in the noun phrases and the acceptance of the affixes by the different entities. For the present analysis the words are classified as Substantives, Pronouns, Verbs and unclassified (Thoudam, 2006), as this has been considered as the most reasonable way classifying the words in the language. The reasons for accepting the classification with logical arguments are given in the thesis which Thoudam has not done in detail.