CHAPTER-IV

LANGUAGE AND POWER
4.0 Language and power

4.1 Introduction

Speech reflects the social relations between the speaker and the addressee, most particularly the power and solidarity manifested in that relationship. These terms and the related concepts were introduced into sociolinguistics by the social psychologist Roger Brown (Brown and Ford 1961 and Brown and Gilman 1960, the “Classic papers on linguistic markers of social relations”).

Power refers to the authority or the superiority of one person over another. As far as communication is concerned, the speaker may have power over the addressee or vice-versa. This is fostered by social factors like age, caste, race and occupation. It is therefore non-reciprocal, in that two people may not have the same power over each other (in the same direction). According to Brown and Gilman, the person that wields power over the other uses T(u) and receives the deferential V(ous) from the addressee who is supposed to have no power.

Solidarity, by contrast is inherently reciprocal. It is invoked between equals, people who are close or have certain level of intimacy. In this relationship, two or more people reciprocally use the same pronoun Tu.

Power is a complex term and the subject of a great deal of debate as regards its nature and forms (Galbraith 1983; Janeway 1981; Korda1975; and McClelland 1975). Within the wide range of research on language and the sexes, only Henley (1977:19) provides a working definition of power: “Power is thus based on the control of resources, and their defense”. She distinguishes power from the other related terms such as dominance (like power, but with a connotation of more blatancy), authority (power that is somehow legitimized, such as through law or tradition) and status (social position) (19-20).
Galbraith (1983:20) introduces his discussion of power by defining it as follows: "Power is: the possibility of imposing one's will upon other person." Webster’s Third international unabridged dictionary contains the following subentry (one of many) for power: "2. The possession of sway or controlling influence over others; authority; command; government; influence ascendancy, whether personal, social or political also occasionally, permission or liberty to act." Valentine believes that power in language, is not a measure of dominance, control and influence but a measure of "the ability to effectively communicate and to accomplish successful discourse" (Valentine 1986: 75). She sees power as "effective communication, an accomplishment understood to be satisfying in itself" (1985:196) and as "a strategy that affirms the patterns found in females' and males' speech" (1986:75). Brown and Levinson define power as "an asymmetric social dimension of relative power" (1978: 82). This means that in an interaction, the speaker can be characterized as relatively more or less powerful than the addressee.

4.2 Relationship between Language and power

Language and power are intimately related. Language indexes the power relationships of a society and naturalizes them. It reinforces power relationships. Language is a tool in the creation and recreation of power. Because of the constant unity of language and other social matters, language is entwined in social power in a number of ways: it indexes power, expresses power and language is involved wherever there is a contention over and challenge to power. Power does not derive from language, but language may be used to challenge power, to subvert it and to alter distributions of power in the short or in the longer term.

As society conditions and shapes language, language in turn serves to confirm and consolidate the organizations which shapes it. It is also being used to
establish and maintain and establish them in convenient roles and statuses as well as power structure. Language provides the most finely articulated means for a nuanced registration of differences in power in social hierarchical structures, both as a static system and in process. All linguistics forms which can be used to indicate relations of distance and forms and those which can indicate “state” or “process” serve the expression of power.

4.3 Methodology and Domain of Study

The present study is mainly descriptive. Data were derived from short radio and T.V. plays and from direct observation of actual usage, followed by unobtrusive note-taking at every opportunity, to record the terms used by dyads in every situation. In addition questionnaire was formulated. The information thus obtained was supplemented by my own introspection as a native Meiteilon speaker. The use of plays is consistent with the earlier practice in the literature (Brown and Gilman 1960, Brown and Ford 1961, Ervin-Tripp 1972, Adeniran 1990). The motivation for using radio and T.V. plays was the need to collect reliable data in natural social situations. These plays deal mostly with contemporary issues and their conversational text is true to life as much as possible. There are more instances of address in plays than in any other form of literature. The supplementary data from the questionnaires were used as additional checks on the rules induced from the plays and also to test several particular hypotheses.

Meiteilon has many features in which power is inscribed. Appropriate address terms are not the only genres of power, performance of other verbal forms like using suffixes - can also include culturally defined hierarchies of status. In this chapter the concept of power will be explored through an in-depth analysis of address terms and Meiteilon morphological suffixes namely -bi ~ -pi, -ca ~ -ja and
-si. It is designed to examine the relationship that language has with power. We will discuss address terms and suffixes as these are some of the aspects of Meiteilon that carry power implications.

Among the various genres of power, performance of verbal forms like using suffixes can also include culturally defined hierarchies of status. Meiteilon morphological suffixes not only produced polite speech form but also constitute cultural categories of rank and power relations. Linguistic and interactional data are here combined with ethnographic data about Meitei society and cultural beliefs, to show how micro-interactions which index status are linked both to larger cultural ideologies about power.

Speakers of Meiteilon organize relationships into different categories using an elaborate system of morphological markers -bi ~ -pi, -ca ~ -ja, -si. These markers provide data for understanding the importance of rank to schemes of cognitive organization in Meitei society, as well as cultural ideologies of the interdependent relationship between high and low status. When Meiteilon speakers shift into status indexing speech, different suffixes are used than in common speech. The difference between polite speech forms and non-polite speech forms will be discussed and see how Meiteis or Meiteilon speakers constitute the two different speeches forms and how power relations between the interlocutors is reflected in the speech forms.

The following are the hypotheses that will be tested during the course of the study:

1. Persons who are senior to the speaker are addressed by the corresponding terms of kinship while the juniors either in generation or in age are addressed by name.
2. Juniors (in age) do not address seniors (in age) by personal name even if the addressee is lower in social status than the speaker.

3. Age is an important factor in determining the choice of address term.

4. Second and third person pronominal are not used by juniors (neither in age nor in social status) to seniors.

5. A senior person (in age) does not use the second person and third person pronominal to junior having a high social status/position.

6. Women do not use personal names to address or to refer to their husbands.

7. Women do not use second person and third person pronominal while addressing or referring to their husbands especially in the presence of other senior members.

8. Personal name as well as second person and third person pronominal can be used by husbands to address or to refer to their wives.

9. The non-reciprocal usage of personal name, second person and third person pronominal between husband and wife reflects the subordinate position of woman.

10. Forms of address in Meiteilon are most often rule-governed.

4.4 Social and Cultural Factors Determining the Usage of Address Terms

An attempt will be made here to investigate the various social and cultural factors determining the usage of address terms in Meiteilon. If we look at what is involved in addressing another person, it seems that a variety of social factors usually governs our choice of address terms: generation, age, sex, occupation, education, economic status, power and status etc. Speech is a social phenomenon so the pattern of usage of address forms is governed by the different social factors.
4.4.1. Generation

The Meitei kinship system is based upon a generational classification of relations. They are (i) Members of the first ascending generation are referred to as ima-ipa ‘parents’ khura/koka ‘paternal uncle’ indomea ‘maternal aunt’ and ine ‘paternal aunt’ (ii) Members of the second ascending generation are referred to as ipu-iben ‘grand-parents’ (iii) Members of ego’s generation are referred to as icin-inaw ‘siblings and cousins’ (only parallel cousins). Cross cousins are termed as ibay ‘elder male cross cousin’ for a male ego while itay is for female ego. While itayma elder female cross cousin’ is for male ego, inama is for female ego. Others are inaw-nupi ‘younger male cross-cousin for a female ego, inaw-nupa ‘younger male cross-cousin’ for a male ego and icen-nupi ‘younger female cross cousin’ for a female cross cousin. (iv) Members of the first descending generation are referred to as ica (my) ‘child’ imak ‘nephew’ for a male ego and iya ‘nephew’ for a female ego. (v) Members of the second descending generation are referred to as isu ‘grand-children’.

4.4.2 Age

As Meitei society is kin-based society, power is heavily reflected in the use of address terms. Age is one of the major criteria taken into account for choosing an appropriate form of speech in Meitei speech community. Age is crucial in determining social distance between the speaker and the addressee and it plays a significant role in reflecting power relationship between them. Respect is prescribed for older one. Most young Meiteis are taught to be respectful to elders who are regarded as endowed with knowledge and experience. The elders are expected to set good examples in life for the young. Age, then is an important underlying factor differentiating speech participants into adults and non-adults. the
elders and the younger. The (+adult) and the (+age) undoubtedly belong to the (+power and status) social category in Meitei society.

Age is an important deciding factor for terms of address in Meitei society among the non-kins and also among the kins of the same generation. Even one day old is taken into consideration. In some South Asian systems also, even ‘one day’ makes a person socially older. The kinship terms are extended to address non-kin. Appropriate kin term is chosen according to the person’s relative age.

That age is a deciding factor for terms of address can be exemplified, from the similar address terms that are used to address kin and non-kin who are senior in age. The kinship terms usually employed are pabuiq ‘father’ to an elderly man, ima ‘mother’ to an elderly woman. Either of these is used if the addressee seems approximately of the same age or older than one’s parents. An addressee who is not as old as someone’s parents but is certainly older than oneself is addressed as koka/khura/mamme ‘uncle’ in case of male ego and ine/indome ‘aunt’ in case of a female ego. And if the addressee is approximately or same age as ego’s brother and ego’s sister they are addressed as tada/tamo/dhe ‘brother’ and ice ‘sister’ respectively.

A conflict between generation and age can be noticed in the recent decades as far as address terms are concerned (Pramodini, 1989). In the traditional Meitei society generation was the main determining factor of the kin terms but recently some changes are being noticed in using the kin terms. Relative age seems to be playing a greater role in deciding the kin terms of address instead of generation. An uncle may be addressed by his personal name if he is of the same age or younger than the ego. Such a usage was not allowed in the past as the traditional kin mode of address was based primarily on generation. In addition, an
uncle or aunt who is younger than the ego may address the ego by the kin term *dāda/tamo* ‘elder brother’ or *ice/icema* ‘elder sister’. These are actually the address terms used by the younger brother and younger sister to the ego. Ego may address his uncle and aunt by their respective personal name in case they are junior to him.

The following is the list of address terms that are used to address kin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example:</th>
<th>Address term</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pabuŋ</td>
<td>‘father’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ima</td>
<td>‘mother’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>khura/kak/o/mamo</td>
<td>‘uncle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dāda/tamo/dada</td>
<td>‘brother’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ice</td>
<td>‘sister’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ine</td>
<td>‘aunt’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.4.3 Sex

There are special linguistic markers indicating male and female speakers in Meiteilon. Sex is specified in each address term. The extended use of kinship terms of address involves the distinctions of sex of the addressees and sex of the speaker. That is while addressing a male acquaintance (elder brother’s friend) that is in the age group of one’s elder brother, the address term to be used is *tada/tamo/dāda* ‘elder brother’. While addressing a female acquaintance that is in the age group of one’s elder sister, one uses the term *ice* ‘elder sister’.

Regarding the age of the speaker, there is also a distinction between a male ego and a female ego. For example when a female speaker addresses her elder sister-in-law (elder brother’s wife) she must address her as *inamo* ‘elder sister-in-law’
where as a male speaker must address her (elder sister-in-law) as itayma ‘elder sister-in-law’.

4.4.4 Occupation

Occupational differences distinguish one group of people from another, a group that is socially and economically bound by common occupations and interest. Occupational rank can be divided into two groups: (i) Officers and (ii) Non-officers. Here kinship is extended depending upon the relative age of the speaker and the addressee as given in the following:

i) Official rank (addressed by juniors)
   pabuŋ - Fatherly old
   tamo - Elder brotherly old
   icemə, icebemə - Elder sisterly old
   imay-bemə - Motherly old.

ii) Non-official ranks (addressed by juniors)
   This group includes namely - clerks, peons, attendants and orderlies. When they are addressed by the juniors in age, the following terms of address are used:
   khura/mammə - fatherly old
   tadə - elder brotherly old
   ima - motherly old
   ice - sisterly old
   ine/indon - aunt type

Apart from the kinship terms of address, other occupational titles like daktər saheb ‘doctor sir’, injniər saheb ‘engineer sir’. Sir, miss or madam are used to address people who are professional teachers.
4.4.5 Economic Status

This may be divided into two groups – (i) High economic group (ii) Low economic group. The term of address used to economic group (high or low) has made a similarity with that of occupational rank. That is official rank and high economic group belong to the same category while non-official rank and low economic group are grouped in one category. In other words, the speaker uses the same terms of address to both official and high economic group, in the same way the speaker uses the same extended kinship terms to both the non-official and low group.

4.4.6. Education

Education or the educational status is another crucial determinant in the proper usage of address terms. This can be divided into two groups (i) High educational status (ii) Low educational status. Roughly a person having a master’s degree and other higher degrees would be regarded as of high educational status and others of low educational status. In the present society if a person has achieved higher educational status then he or she will be addressed by the kin terms which were used for addressing royal people or by their appropriate titles. The older speakers do not address the juniors who have high educational status by their personal name only. Honorific terms of address such as such as ibujo ‘Sir’ and ibema ‘madam’ is used with or without their personal names.

4.5 Address Terms in Meiteilon

In the 40 years since the appearance of Brown and Gilman’s article on “Pronouns of power and solidarity” (1960), the amount of attention paid by sociolinguists to forms of address has been steadily increasing. In addition to hundreds of books and articles on the address systems of individual languages,
between various members of a family. In the Meitei society the importance of appropriate address terms is profound. Addresses without proper address terms are considered as uncultured speech forms coming out from an uncultured person. In the Meitei society a person has a choice among several terms to identify his kinsmen and describe broadly the kind of relationship he has with them both consanguineous and affinal.

Most Meitei kinship terms have variant forms and the social contexts of their use reflect the traditional hierarchical structure of the Meitei society. Kinship terms are primarily used either for address or reference to kinsfolk.

4.6.1 Husband and Wife

In the Meitei society one of the most unequal relationships within a family is the relationship between husband and wife. Husband normally has more authority than wife. Meitei women are traditionally supposed to use more deferential speech style in addressing their husbands than husbands are expected to use with them. Parallel feature of this is found in Javanese too (Kartomihardjo 1979: 63; Keeler 1987: 53; Nancy J. Smith-Hefner 1988). The asymmetric pattern reflects the traditional Meitei status hierarchies according to which woman’s status is ranked below that of the husband within the family. The pattern of asymmetric speech level use between husband and wife is found in certain especially important linguistic exchanges such as terms of address. As far as the term of address between husband and wife is concerned, age does not play an important role as a social factor. Rather it is the conventionalized norm which is important.

In the Meitei society, husbands are considered superior to their wives. So, regardless of their actual ages, in the Meitei society a man calls his wife by her first name or by a nickname whereas the woman would address her husband as
tamo/dada meaning 'brother'. Women indeed use more polite speech in addressing and referring to their husbands than they do with their wives.

In the familial contexts Meitei women are the ones who offer more and receive less respect - marked speech in everyday interactions with their husbands. Men are the recipients of polite speech from their wives but are not constrained to respond in kind. Phrasal expression like tábiriba or 'Do you hear me (+Hon.)?' by women to attract their husband's attention. But the husband use táribra or 'Do you hear me (-Hon.)?' In this way, a wife regardless of their actual ages, consider her husband as superior, thereby following conventional social norm.

But however, not addressing the personal name of the husband is considered traditional and is slowly giving way to naming. One of the possible reasons for such a change could be the influence of modern concept that men and women are equal and women are not inferior in any field. With several fast changes in the patterns of family life and the modes of social life, people do not seem to be so serious and particular about not calling the name of the husband, as it was in the early society. Contrary to the normal pattern in traditional Meitei society/home, where a husband is venerated and addressed with deference by his wife, some modern elite homes nowadays show no rigid attachment to this rule. Personal name is used reciprocally between husbands and wives. Education and modernity seem to be the variables in bringing about such a change. In some educated non-orthodox Meitei families belonging to the younger generation, women may also use the shortened form of their husband's personal name for making reference to them. But whatever be the innovations, even today such a change is not very significant and not felt in the Meitei society at large. Using of personal name of the husband for reference is little more common than taking the
names directly thereby acknowledging the superior status of men. An orthodox Meitei woman also addresses her husband by using teknonymous terms. For example a woman calls her husband as moy baba meaning his/her father, if the couple has children or moy tamo meaning your brother, if the couple has brother/sister. Such teknonym are used by woman to indicate that the husband has more power than her.

4.6.2 Parents and Children

Another asymmetrical relationship within a family is that of parents and children. A typical Meitei family consists of husband, wife and children. Without children a family has no reality for all purposes. There are cases where a husband has more than a wife for begetting his child. There are a number of pre-Hindu and Hindu methods which are supposed to be efficacious in blessing the couples with child through worship.

The physical proximity of parents and children to each other makes the relationship a close one. Parents normally address their children by their personal names or by their pet names and they receive appropriate kinship terms in return. The terms used by children to address their parents are pabuŋ/baba ‘father’ and ima ‘mother’.

However, there are few families particularly of the younger generation in which the terms papa ‘father’ and mama ‘mother’ are used for reference and address to their father and mother respectively. These English words ‘papa’ ‘daddy’ and ‘mama’ are used in families that have varying degree of fascination for western orientation.
Children right from their young age are being taught by their parents to be respectful to them and to others particularly to elders. As the children grow up they are required in their culture to behave in a respectable way and also to be respectful to others, especially a person who is of higher status either in age or in social position. Thus, an act of respect may be performed verbally by using linguistic devices such as using appropriate term of address to their elders.

4.6.3 Siblings

Relationship between siblings is also an asymmetrical relationship. A child who is born earlier has more power and commands more respect than the rest of the other sisters/brothers. Age is crucial in determining the social distance between siblings. Respect is prescribed for older ones. Children are taught by their parents to use appropriate kinship terms to their brothers/sisters. An elder brother is addressed as *tamo/dada/tada* ‘elder brother’ by his sister but the brother will use personal name to address his sister as the brother has more power than his sister by the virtue of seniority in age. Similarly, if the sister is elder, she would be addressed as *ice* ‘sister’ or more affectionately *cece* by her brother/sister. The elder sister would address her younger siblings by their personal names or by pet names because being elder she commands respect and power.

Here relative age seems to be the most important factor in identifying the relative power between siblings. Whoever is older commands authority over the other. But in some cases however, relative age does not seem to be always important in determining the power relation between the siblings. For instance, we take the case of twins. They are born on the same day, same time but the last born child is considered to be socially older and has more power and hence he/she commands more respect than the first born child. Here, the conventional belief that
the last born child is older is playing more important role than relative age in determining the power relationship between the siblings.

4.6.4 Other close relatives

Under this heading we have all the members of the household having asymmetrical relationships. The members are relatives who live in the same house or who are close to each other. It includes a wide range of individuals with varying degrees of social distance between them. Within the household younger persons are addressed by names or by nicknames. And older persons are addressed by kinship term. In the traditional Meitei society, generation was the main determining factor of the kin terms as well as kin relationships. Those who did not follow the traditional usage of the kin terms of address were considered to be ill-mannered and disrespectful.

According to the forms of address, members who belong to the same age group or even those who are junior to ego but who belong to the first ascending or the second ascending generations are addressed by kin terms irrespective of the ego being elder than them. Here the person who is junior in age is more powerful than the ego by virtue of belonging to the first ascending or second ascending generation. Therefore, according to the conventional sociolinguistic rule an uncle who is actually junior in age is addressed by the kin terms khura/kaka ‘uncle’. That is, ego is considered to be socially younger than his uncle. In return, the latter would address the ego by his or her personal name, regardless of his or her age being older than his or her uncle.

Regarding some of the affinal kins, relative age may not be very significant in determining the kin terms of address and kinship behaviour. It is the
relative age of the linking relative and not that of the age of the ego which is important in determining the kin term of address. For example, even though ego’s wife elder brother is younger in age than the ego, he commands respect or is more powerful being the elder brother of ego’s wife, therefore, ego will address his wife’s elder brother by the kin term ibay ‘brother-in law’ irrespective of the relative age of the two. In return, wife’s elder brother will address ego by his personal name as he is considered to be junior by virtue of being the younger sister’s husband. Similarly, if the elder brother’s wife is younger than the ego, then ego should call her itayma ‘sister-in-law’ for male ego or inama ‘sister-in-law’ for female ego. Relative age however, is not very significant in determining the kin relationship and kin terms particularly, very close affinal kin. Here it is the relative age of the linking relative which is important in determining power relations. But relative age becomes significant in the case of distant affinal kins such as brother-in-law’s brothers and sisters. If the distant affinal relations are junior in age than the ego, the ego is more powerful and commands more respect than the relatives.

However, recently in the new generation, some changes are being noticed in the kinship behaviour. Relative age seems to be playing a greater role in deciding the kin terms of address instead of generation. An uncle may be addressed by his personal name if he is of the same age or younger than the ego. Such a usage was not allowed in the past as the traditional kin mode of address was based primarily on generation. In addition, an uncle or aunt who is younger than the ego is found to be addressed by the kin term dada/tamo ‘elder brother’ or ice/icema ‘elder sister’ by the ego. These are actually the address terms used by the younger brother and younger sister to the ego. Ego may address his uncles and aunts by their respective personal names if they are junior to him. Here the person who is older in age is more powerful than his junior.
4.7. Asymmetrical Relationship Outside the Kin Groups

We now turn to the asymmetrical relationship that we have outside the kin group. The asymmetrical use of address terms is a marker of power relationships. As Meitei society is a kin based society, the ability to identify a person by using an appropriate kin term is the lesson of great importance acknowledged by all groups of people. Meitei society is a society which accords age. It is a general norm in Meitei society that elders are considered superiors and are respected. Meitei kin terms are adopted among non-kins including non-acquaintances to solidify interpersonal relationship and to establish congenial personal relationship.

In Meitei, there is a common practice to use kinship terms while addressing non-kin friends and acquaintances and even strangers at times. This phenomenon, however, is not a peculiar feature of Meitei alone. Thomas’s study of Australian kinship terms suggested that kinship terms did not always indicate ties of blood but might be used to express status or to refer to matters of obligations or privileges (Thomas, 1960, Chap. 12). Bean offers an explanation about a similar feature in Kannada: “when a kinship term is used metaphorically, in address to no-kin, the genealogical components are replaced by components of social distance and seniority” (Bean, 1978:124). In every situation involving affection (formal or informal), a kinship term of address is always the preferred forms of address. Meitei custom does not allow persons who are superior to or older than the speaker to be addressed by their personal names, except when one is angry or trying to show disdain (Pramodini, 1989).

Meiteis who constitute the main bulk of the population of the state are by common consent polite people with rigid and elaborate rules of etiquette and polite interaction. In the patriarchal Meitei society, deference and obedience are widely
accorded to age. Any younger person who as a habit does not use a kin term towards his older kins/non-kins is looked down by the society as ill-mannered. The right choice of an appropriate term to address and refer to a kin is expected, encouraged, insisted and emphasized for long in the Meitei society.

In addressing an older person with whom one is involved in dyadic relationship, one therefore uses a generic kinship term. The kinship term usually employed are pabuŋ ‘father’ to an elderly man, ima ‘mother’ to an elderly woman. Either of these is used if the addressee seems approximately of the same age or older than one’s parents. An addressee who is not as old as someone’s parents but is certainly older than oneself is address as kāka/khura/mamma ‘uncle’ in case of male ego and ine/indomca ‘aunty’ in case of female ego. And if the addressee is approximately of same age as ego’s brother and ego’s sister they are addressed as tada/tamo/dāda ‘brother’ and ice ‘sister’ respectively. Children learn to address elders by lumping them in the context of a generation. Any male in father’s generation would be addressed as khura ‘uncle’ or pabuŋ ‘father’ and a female in mother’s generation would be called ine/indomca ‘aunt’ or ima ‘mother’. Outside the kin group the most respectable way to address a woman is ice ‘sister’ but for an elder woman it should be ima ‘mother’ or ine ‘aunt’. For a young man it should be tada/dāda/tamo ‘brother’, for an older man pabuŋ ‘father’ or khura ‘uncle’.

An older person addresses a younger person by name but the latter dares not reply in the same way. The older person is more powerful by virtue of seniority in age. It is considered impolite, rude and grossly insolent to address an older person by name among the Meiteis. Such an act at times evokes a curse or uncharitable remarks about the speaker and his or her family. Relative age plays
an important role in determining the power relationship between the addressee.

Whether occupation prevails over age or vice versa in determining status
depends upon the nature of the dyadic situation. This type of situation can be seen
in the Meitei speech community. An officer in an established officialdom would
be addressed as *saheb* ‘Sir’ by a peon, even though the peon is older (in age) than
the officer. In the official domain, the officer has more power and commands more
respect than the peon. The peon would adopt deferent or even servile attitude.
Brown and Ford have made a significant observation in this area: “It is expected
in a society whose values are more strongly linked to achieve personal attributes
than to ascribed attributes that occupation would prevail over age in the
determination of deference” (Brown and Ford, 1961: 237). But however the
power may be reversed if the peon happens to be a Brahmin whose ritual service is
required at the house of the officer, the officer would adopt the deferent attitude.
In this case it is the peon who commands more respect in his capacity as the ritual
performing Brahmin. In the first case, the officer is more powerful than the peon
and here it is the achieved status which is playing more important role in
determining the power relation between the two persons. However, in the latter
case it is the peon who is more powerful and here it is the ascribed status of the
hereditary group membership (*i.e.* belonging to Brahmin group) which is
important. Thus we can see that achieved status and ascribed status come into
conflict at this juncture. Therefore, we can conclude that power is a value attached
not to age or individuals but to roles or role-sets.

Appropriate kinship term is used to right person at the right time, for
example - when one wants to extend the kinship terms to high ranking official, one
would use the term *pabuj* ‘father’ to refer to someone who is equal to one’s father
But while addressing a non-official staff, for example, a peon, one would use the term **khura** ‘uncle’. The address term **pabuq** once associated with royal families, is still considered the most polite and prestigious term of addressing a person who is placed in high government position and of approximately one’s father age. The term **khura** is used in rural areas by rural folks and if it is used, it is used to refer to low-ranking people. It is considered to be less prestigious and is not used to refer to high ranking people.

4.8 Non-kin Terms of Address and Its Asymmetrical Usages

We now take up the non-kin terms of address in Meiteilon.

4.8.1 Names

Perhaps the most common mode of non-kin terms of address is to address a person by his or her name with or without title. Names function both as an individualizers as well as classifiers indicating on the one hand traits of personality and temperament peculiarly belonging to the individual concerned and on the other group consciousness and solidarity of family and kin group which label them unmistakably as members of certain specific groups with shared group characteristics.

The study of names as the term of address has some importance because it symbolizes a man’s social position in relation to the people around him, so that, by the use of one or the other of them, the status of the speaker to the person addressed is readily recognized. Like kinship terms, this mode of address thus emphasize social relationship and serve to evoke the response implied in the particular relationship so indicated.

In all cultures, names are symbolic signs of individual identification. These cultural indexes belongs to the universal category of characterizing signs i.e. nouns. Out of the different groups of nouns, here a sub - category of proper
nouns as anthroponomy (a set of personal names) is taken into consideration. Like all other cultural codes, personal names are also constructed diachronically and socially maintained by the speech communities in general, as having the reference function of individual identification. Normally such a universal category is bearing some ethnographic attributes specific to ethnic groups too (Imperial Gazetteer).

In the traditional Meitei social set up, name was much more than a mere mark used to identify the individual. To the Meitei people names were given or selected because of certain reasons or circumstances. It was enough to know one’s name in order to have power over him. The sudden end of Puremba’s life (the hero of Moirang) confirmed the belief about Thonglen’s psychic and will power upon his victim’s name (Kirti, 1993: 174).

The mode of naming or calling names and actions of a superior family and princes are described in a different style from that of the rest of the people. They are disturbed when disrespect is implied in address. However, in the present scenario, with the abolition of monarchy and the early titles, the formal terms of address and excessive venerations of the princes, Brahmins etc. are not very much liked by the people. The prestige was derived not so much from the favour of the King as from social approbation. The gradual disappearance of such social valuation along with polite expression probably is because of Manipur’s connection with the western civilization.

Meitei names consist of different components and can be written in various patterns, as given in the following:

i) surname + middle name/personal name + last name

Keisham  Chaoba  Singh/Meitei
kaysam  cawbø  siŋ/məytəy
ii) Surname + middle name/personal name
Keisham  Chaoba
kɔysam  cawbɔ

iii) Middle name/personal name + Surname
Chaoba  Keisham
cawbɔ  kɔysam

iv) Surname+Ningol (daughter of) + middle name/personal name+last name
Keisham  Ningol  Bala  Devi/Chanu
kɔysam  niŋol  bɔla  devi/ĉanu
(Ningol is optional for unmarried daughter)

In Meitei society in general, surname is not used for addressing people. What people regard as “name” is the middle name or the personal name. As concerned the structure in this society, it has its own tradition that surname should precede the personal name or middle name. The last name / part are Singh/Meitei for male while Devi/Chanu is for female. The last name for both male and female are optional – some use it and some drop it. The last name Singh/Sharma/Devi is not used while addressing people in the Meitei society. An outsider can address a Meitei by using the last name but a Meitei will not use the last name in addressing another Meitei. The reason for dropping the last name is that everybody is either a Singh/Sharma (male) or Devi/Chanu (female). In the case of married woman it has the following two structures:

i) Surname + Ongbi (one married to) + surname (father’s) + PN + LN
Nongthombam  ongbi  Keisham  Bala  Devi
nɔŋthɔmbɔm  ongbi  kɔysam  bɔla  devi
ii) Surname+Ningol (daughter)+Surname (husband’s)+Ongbi (married to) +PN +LN

Keisham Ningol Nongthombam Ongbi Bala Devi
kaysam niqol noqthombam oŋbi bala devi

Meitei woman on marriage takes her husband’s family surname by inserting a word oŋbi between the surname of her husband and her personal name thereby demonstrating the importance of man. The combination of two names of the families for a woman is recognized by Meitei custom - kaysam niŋol noŋthombam bala devi which means a daughter married to a man of Nonthongbam family.

4.8.1.1 Asymmetrical Usage of Personal Names

Meiteis are ceremonious people and in their intercourse with persons acquainted with the niceties of the etiquette adhere to certain rules. Personal names are the most widely and commonly used term of address. Meitei society permits to use personal name reciprocally among equals, and non-reciprocal use between elders and youngsters. The reciprocal use of personal name is the rule among intimate friends, particularly where friendship was struck in early childhood and to a very infinitesimal minority of educated people. It is used among closed associates, members of the same peer (or age group) and also to inferiors in age. However, the non – reciprocal use of personal name is constrained by age and status factor (achieved and ascribed). An older person addresses a younger person by personal name, but latter dares not reply to the former in the same way as the younger person is less powerful since he is junior in age. It is considered impolite, rude and grossly insolent to address an older person by name among the Meiteis. Such an act at times evokes a curse or uncharitable remarks about the speaker and his or her family. Fadipe (1970: 129) is quite clear on this:
If a younger person failed in his duty ... ... ... and mistakenly addressed the older person with familiarity or by name, any junior would call him to order, even if he himself is younger than the one who is being discourteous. And the one who upholds principle will be warmly supported by others. Indeed, if the person with whom liberties are being taken happens to be acquainted with younger person’s family, he might tell off sharply by saying: when you get home tell so and so (referring to the cheeky person’s father by name) that I am not his equal.

According to the Meitei traditional values, it is also forbidden to address people who are older than the speaker by their personal names. In some situation, for example in social gathering etc. where it is essential to use the personal name of an older person, phrasal expression such as miŋ oyŋə pəŋjarəbə̀da ‘to mention the name’ is used. Such kind of expression is more on the line of taking permission from the concerned person to allow using the name. The older person has more power and hence can use personal name to his juniors. This indicates that seniority is a compliment in the Meitei society. For example, whenever there is a conflict, the older ones have the authority to settle the disputes. Hence, a person is considered to be highly impolite and ill-mannered if he addresses his elders by their respective names. The position can thus be summed up in the words of Emily Post, “It is also effrontery for a younger person to call an older by his or her personal name without being asked to do so. Only a very underbred, thick-skinned person would attempt it”.

Husband and wife also do not address one another by their respective personal name which shows a clear indication of asymmetrical relationship between them. Husbands however, are permitted to use the names of their wives but it is considered to be a sin for a wife even to pronounce the name of her
husband. This is apparently because in Hindu-Meitei custom, a husband is believed to be next to God.

It is possible that this custom has been primarily borrowed by the Meitei society through Hinduism. In the Hindu scriptures a husband is always stated to be superior to his wife. “*In India among Hindus, the name of a husband is a taboo to his wife*” (Masani 1966: 88). Therefore, a wife as a rule does not pronounce her husband’s name but calls him by some ejaculations or teknonyms. This also holds among the Muslims of India, who are mostly converts from Hinduism (Masani 1966: 88). Jain’s doctoral dissertation (1973) presents a discussion on what he calls “no naming” defined as a strategy by which Hindi speakers avoid having to say the name (*i.e.* first name) of the addressee or referent. Normally, a wife will not utter the name of her husband (regardless of age) or her father-in-law, although this restriction may sometimes be expanded to include a husband’s entire elder affine. This restriction is probably because of the belief that men are superior to women. Jain discusses several formal devices that can be used by a wife to avoid uttering the name of her husband (1973: 137-138)

Amongst the Meiteis too, wives use some displaced words instead of the husband’s name. For example, a wife generally draws the attention of her husband by using words like *tábiribra* ‘Do you hear me?’ This is really not a word/term for addressing but a term for attracting husband’s attention without using any address term. In this way the wife is being respectful to the husband.

Nowadays, due to factors like education and westernization, some changes are noticed amongst the educated and westernized circles of the society. Husbands are found to be referred to by their personal names. But whatever be the innovations, even today such a change is not very significant and not felt in the
Meitei society at large. Using personal name of husband for reference is much more common than taking the names directly and thus acknowledges the superior status of men.

4.8.2 Pronouns

From the sociolinguistic point of view, the whole question of pronouns in Meiteilon is much more complicated than the traditional linguistic literature admits. In grammar, pronouns are regarded simply as noun substitutes. However, as far as the second person pronoun is concerned, they cannot be regarded as noun substitutes because their distribution is rather strictly limited by participant relationship, that is, in an asymmetrical pattern, the sociolinguistic rule prohibits the lower-status speaker from using pronouns to call or refer to the higher-status addressee unless an insult is meant. Pronouns display unusual properties of emotional expressiveness, logical abstraction and frequency in dialogue. Pronominal sets are linked into both the linguistic matrix of social paradigms and the cultural matrix of social statuses and group categories. In several studies of pronouns in different languages, there seems to be much concerned over clear-cut categorization of the modes of address. Attempts have been made to dichotomize these modes on the universal planes of ‘power’ and ‘solidarity’ and to show how these characteristics are distributed differently in different languages, significant among these studies are of Brown and Gilman (1960) and Friedrich (1966).

Among the many symbols of status in Meiteilon the 2nd person singular pronoun is the most pervasive and profound in its implications. Pronouns signalled the relative position of each pole in hundreds of dyadic relationships.

Second person’s pronouns have been analyzed from various points of view. Social psychologists have shown how pronominal usage is connected with
attitudes and behaviour (Brown and Gilman 1960). Philologists have produced accurate and carefully documented histories of the usage in German, French and other languages (e.g. Fay 1918: 20). Linguists such as Jesperson have inferred the distinctive attributes shared by pronouns, such as the degree of abstraction and freedom of distribution.

Table No. 8
Personal pronoun of Manipuri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st person</th>
<th>2nd person/honorific</th>
<th>3rd person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>aıy, aıyhak</td>
<td>nən, nəhak/som/ədom</td>
<td>ma, məhak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>aıykhoy</td>
<td>nəkhoy</td>
<td>məkhoy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8.2.1 Symmetrical and Asymmetrical Usage of Pronouns

The forms aıy ‘I’, nən ‘you’ ma ‘he/she’ are used in colloquial speech and informal situations. The use of pronouns nən ‘you’ and ma ‘he/she’ are generally avoided in the case of elder kins. If nən ‘you’ is used in addressing to older kins, it directly express a momentary shift in the attitude and behaviour. The third person ma ‘he/she’ is also not used while referring to the elders. If it is used, it may express solidarity between the dyads on one hand and disrespect, irritation and estrangement on the other. Children use the second person pronoun nən and third person pronoun ma to address and refer to elders when they are young, but as they grow up they are taught not to use it or they stop using the second and third person pronouns to elders as the second and third person pronoun are considered to be disrespectful.

The informal second person pronoun nən is used to address a person who has no status with reference to the speaker, i.e. no power over him or her-such as the speaker’s servant or child-or else a person whose social distance from the
speaker is so slight that considerations of power and status do not apply such as a close friend of approximately the speaker’s age. It can also be used to status superior only when strong solidarity prevails between the interlocutors for example between a clerk and officer who are very close friends.

The use and non-use of the second person pronoun reflects the relative position of the addressor and the addressee. Meiteilon does not possess an honorific second person pronoun (comparable to āp of Hindi). So, it is the non-use of the second person pronoun which is considered to be highly respectful to the addressee. For instance the asymmetrical relationship between husband and wife is reflected in the use of second person pronoun. The wife avoids using naŋ ‘you’ while talking to her husband especially in the presence of others while the husband is free to use it thereby indicating the superior status of the husband. This non-reciprocal use of pronouns is a strategy to show respect or deference to one another (Promodini, 1989).

To the superior (not formal relation) father, mother etc. an inferior in age (i.e. children) do not use the second person pronoun naŋ, rather they used the kinship terms such as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin-terms</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pabunŋ</td>
<td>‘father’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ima</td>
<td>‘mother’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ice</td>
<td>‘sister’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dōdō/tamo</td>
<td>‘brother’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Meiteilon, there is no polite form of pronoun as such that can be used to superiors reflecting the status of the addressee. Yet, people have another way of
expressing the status of the addressee namely—the total avoidance of the second person pronoun while addressing the superiors.

The asymmetrical relationship between the person who has higher status and those who do not is being reflected in the non-reciprocal use of the informal second person pronoun. Since there is no suitable pronoun which can be used to the superiors, people use the kinship terms of address for such purposes.

However, a conflict can be seen between status and age (Pramodini, 1989). For example, when an officer talks to a clerk who is as old as his father, he is not likely to use the informal second person pronoun because of the fact that the latter is much older than the former. The clerk also will not be using the informal second person pronoun to the officer because of the fact that the officer has got superior status. In such a situation, ascribed as well as achieved status play an important role in determining the usage of the informal second person pronoun. In this context, the officer will use the kin term khura ‘uncle’ and the clerk will use the term saheb ‘Sir’.

A sampling survey was conducted about the reciprocal and non-reciprocal usage of second person pronoun. The sample taken in Imphal west district comprised 90 informants, among them 45 were men and 45 women: 52 were aged 30-60 (we classify them as middle-aged and elderly); 38 were 18-30 (we classify them as young). With respect to cultural background, 37 informants had a college education, 53 had primary or middle school education, 29 informants had regular income (high income group) while 61 informants belong to low income group.

Table No. 9 and Table No. 10 is the statistical data about the use of second person pronoun by people belonging to different dyadic relationships.
Table No. 9 is the representation of the percentage of the reciprocal usage of pronoun in formal relationship between different dyads. From the tables it can be inferred that in formal relationships the usage of second person pronoun is very less compared to its usage in informal relationships.

Table No 9  
Percentage of the reciprocal usage of ուն in formal relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of dyads</th>
<th>Type of dyadic relationships</th>
<th>% of the usage of ուն</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husband and wife</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and children</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer and clerk</td>
<td>Formal/distant</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. 10  
Percentage of the non-reciprocal usage of ուն in informal relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of dyads</th>
<th>Type of dyadic relationships</th>
<th>% of the usage of ուն</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husband and wife</td>
<td>solidarity</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and children</td>
<td>solidarity</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer and clerk</td>
<td>solidarity</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The honorific second person pronoun som/ədəm is used only for addressing strangers, preferably of the same age group and / or of almost the same status as a polite form of address. They indicate distance and deference of the addressee who is a stranger. They cannot be used to a person whose status is known to be higher than that of the speaker. The use of these forms (pronoun) amongst friends and acquaintances indicates that the speaker is trying to be sarcastic and ironical with the addressee and the usage of this pronoun has deep
impact on the addressee. For example, under normal circumstances, the second person pronoun ɴəŋ is used between friends belonging to the same age group but situation where some confrontation exist between them they may switch from second person pronoun ɴəŋ to honorific second person pronoun som/ədom showing indifferent attitude towards the addressee.

According to Meitei custom, younger ones are supposed to be respectful to older persons, so the use of second person pronoun is to be avoided by the younger persons. However, it is quite often found that men use it while talking to older women. Here a conflict arises between the two parameters namely-age and sex. Such a use is often interpreted as a case of being affectionate and intimate in the case of men, whereas in the case of women such a use is often interpreted as showing bad manners.

4.8.3 Titles

People are also addressed by titles. Various types of titles are recognized in the Meitei society. These titles reflect the power relationship between an addressor and an addressee.

4.8.3.1 Caste Titles

The following are the caste titles used in Meitei society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bamon</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>օygya</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thəwrani</td>
<td>Brahmin(female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bamon-ibuŋo</td>
<td>Brahmin (male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bamon-ibemọ</td>
<td>Brahmin (female)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Brahmins play an important role in the social organization of the Manipur society. In Meitei society only Brahmins have caste titles. The title bamon (derived from the Sanskrit Brahmin) is used only for reference purpose. The other four titles are used for addressing the Brahmins. The title aygya is used for addressing male Brahmins who are older than the speaker and those who are a bit younger than the speaker. It is also used for addressing female Brahmins who are very old to show more respect than otherwise. The title thawrani ‘female Brahmin’ is used for addressing female Brahmins who are older than the speaker. The two blend titles namely bamon-ibuño ‘male brahmin’ and bamon-ibema ‘female Brahmin’ are used for addressing Brahmins who are younger than the speaker. Addressing by these titles indicates that the speakers are being respectful to the addressees who are younger than themselves; otherwise they may use their personal names. These caste titles which apparently associated with the Brahmins during monarchy, is still retained in the present times. Although the importance of Brahmins has considerably reduced with the coming of the revivalist movement, the titles of Brahmins are still used reflecting the fact that people are respectful to them.

4.8.3.2 Family Titles

In the Meitei society only people belonging to the royal family have family titles. As monarchy declined, these family titles are no longer used in the present times. These titles have become obsolete but people still used the honorific forms of address terms to address or refer to the descendants of the King.

The following are the titles used for addressing to kings:

i) layniŋthow

ii) liklay-ibuño
iii) nanaybu-loybiriba inithaw
iv) nanaybu-loyba-loymaba
v) modyinu-ninthawren athoybe
vi) niinthem
vii) srijut maharaj

The following are the titles used for referring to and addressing queens:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Queen titles</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) lonyma-len/onyma-ren</td>
<td>‘chief queen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) lonyma</td>
<td>‘queen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) moyatry lonyma</td>
<td>‘chief queen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) maharani</td>
<td>‘chief queen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v) rani</td>
<td>‘queen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi) panbi-held</td>
<td>‘second wife of king’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii) panbi-noha</td>
<td>‘third wife of king’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii) lonymakhubi-held</td>
<td>‘fourth wife of king’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix) lonymakhubi-noha</td>
<td>‘fifth wife of king’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the legitimate queens were referred to as lonyma and rani, while the queen who was the most powerful was not allowed to be referred to by these titles she was referred to and addressed by the titles moyatry-onyma/maharani/onyma-len. This indicates that she held the most prestigious position.

However, with the abolition of monarchy these family titles are no longer in used in the present Meitei society. Even though these titles are no longer in use,
royal descendants are still honoured using the honorific terms. Despite their lowered status with the decline of monarchy, the royal descendants still hold onto their sense of superiority.

4.8.3.3 Honorific Titles

This is a form of address used for addressing people of higher status in the past (when monarchy was there). In Meiteilon, the noun-phrase sonakhuya-kha ‘under your majesty’s feet’ was used while addressing the kings, queens, princes, princesses and nobles (who were royal descendants and also who were immediate relatives of king such as his brothers). Similar honorific form of address is found in language like Chinese (Chao 1956: 220). The idea is that the speaker does not dare to address these persons directly. Furthermore while addressing such people, the speaker refers to himself as nanay ‘your slave’ showing that the addressee is more powerful than the speaker. Use of such terms is also found in Persian (Jahangiri, 1980 cited in Hudson 1980).

In the present society, however, the further contracted form namely somkha(<sonakhwa<sonakhya<sonakhuya-kha) is being used for addressing male members belonging to the R.K group (royal) by friends of the same age group or of a lower age group and also by people belonging to the same rank and age group. This indicates that the speakers are being respectful to the addressee acknowledging the superior position once held by the addressee/by his relatives.

There are also other honorific terms used in the present society irrespective of hereditary status. It is based on the achieved status. The honorific terms used in the present society are the following:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) saheb/sab</td>
<td>‘Sir’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) sôr/sar</td>
<td>‘Sir’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The term **saheb/sab** was generally used for addressing the Europeans. At present the use of **saheb** (in Hindi) is closely linked with the profession, pursuit and lifestyle which is westernized (Mehrotra, 1985:50). We find almost the same situation in Meitei society too. They are frequently used as address term deferentially by people who are of almost same age and status group as the addressee and by people who are older than the addressee. **saheb** when used in isolation without a name or title preceding it, it operates like ‘sir’. In one particular sense the use of **saheb** when employed independently is different from its use when followed by a name. In the former case it is unidirectional, *i.e.* used always by a junior or subordinate while addressing his senior or boss acknowledging the superiority of the addressee. The reverse is not possible. It is however possible in the latter case. Even a senior officer or boss often uses **saheb** along with the name while addressing his junior or subordinate. The independent use of **saheb** is indicative of the speaker’s inferiority on the one hand and addressee’s superiority on the other and speaker attitude of deference for the person addressed.

The second term **sôr/sar** is generally used to high officials by their juniors in the office and also by strangers. It is also found to be used between two high officials of almost the same status and age group. However, the use of term **sôr/sar** is not as frequent as the other terms. It is frequently used amongst police staff. Any person who has the superior rank is found to be addressed by this term.
4.8.3.4 Occupational Titles

It is a general practice in Meitei society that people of higher status are addressed along with their occupational specialties with or without kin terms. This may be divided into two categories (i) High occupational titles and (ii) Low occupational titles. It may be a government job or private one.

It was customary to address persons of higher status such as nobles by their respective occupational specialties, while persons of inferior ranks such as that of ठोंसोंबो ‘watchman’ were not addressed by their occupational specialties. They were addressed by kin terms of address, according to fictive relationship between the dyads, or kin terms along with the personal names of the person concerned, if the addressee is older than the speaker, whereas older speakers addressed them by their respective personal names.

In the case of high officials, addressing them only by the occupational specialties is not permitted according to Meitei sociolinguistic rules. Younger speakers would address the higher officials by the kin terms along with the occupational specialties. Addressing high official by the kin term along with their names is not allowed, as it is considered to be disrespectful. The older speakers would address them by the honorific terms इमुं ‘Sir’ and इबेम ‘Madam’ along with their occupational specialties.

Furthermore, the application of kin terms varies in accordance with the relative group affiliation. For example, if a high official is the husband of a राजकुमारी ‘female royal descendant in the male line’, he would be addressed by the kin term along with his occupational specialty as ठानज़ लाक्पा ‘elder brother overseer’, if he is the husband of a female लैयम ‘female royal descendant in the
female line’ he would be addressed as **taybuño lakpe** ‘elder brother overseer’. A king may address all high officials by their respective occupational specialties. However there is a general term that is used by the King - **idayrem** ‘my slave’, which is used for addressing all officials. This indicates that the relationship between the king and the officials was highly asymmetrical and the King was more powerful than the rest of the people.

Addressing by such occupational specialties is no more in practice as a new political system has been introduced since 1949. However, similar rules occur in the address system of the new social order as well. Persons who are employed in the prestigious services and those who have good economic standing are addressed by their respective occupational specialties.

In some Indian societies, people who are engaged in low occupations are addressed by their occupational titles (Mehrotra, 1986: 54). Where there is no specific term to designate a person engaged in a profession considered low in society, the particle **vale** is added to the name of the profession concerned to constitute a form of address. For example, **cay-vale** ‘tea vendor’, **aam-vale** ‘mango vendor’ etc. Unlike the other Indian societies, in the Meitei society, there is no specific term to designate a person engaged in an occupation considered low in the society. Persons who are engaged in less prestigious services such as peons who also repair bicycles etc. are not addressed by their occupational specialties as it is considered to be disrespectful to the addressee. Addressing these people only by their occupational specialties is considered highly insulting and objectionable in the Meitei society. This may be because of the egalitarian nature of the society. The kin terms along with the occupational specialties are always the preferred forms of address.
Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms of address</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ine insaŋyonbi</td>
<td>‘aunty vegetable seller’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tado sykøl sembo</td>
<td>‘brother cycle repairer’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8.3.5 Professional Titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>daktør/daktør-babu</td>
<td>‘doctor’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>injiniør saheb/injiniør-sab</td>
<td>‘engineer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ukil-saheb</td>
<td>‘advocate’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oja</td>
<td>‘teacher’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These terms are the most common forms of address for referring to persons having such occupational specialties. Such address terms are exchanged between two persons who are almost in the same status, same age group and also by people who are older than the addressee (but sometimes the speaker may be inferior in status) while talking deferentially. However, in the present context persons who are holding prestigious professions are addressed without kin or polite (ibuŋo, ibema) terms, if the speaker is on a higher social scale (social status or as well as with age) and by the speakers who are almost equal to the addressee. One probable reason for this usage is that they regard and respect each other and the positions they hold. Therefore, doctors, engineers, teachers etc. are sometimes addressed without kin terms/honorific forms in certain cases and this phenomenon is counted as a new trend in Meitei society. However, such address terms are not used by people who are younger than the addressee as it is considered inappropriate. Rather kin term of address such as tamo daktør ‘elder brother
doctor' is used. The use of kin terms softens the address term and is considered to be respectful and polite. As far as the usage of oja ‘teacher’ is concerned any native observer will know that there are in fact two different ojas – one oja being the genuine professional (status) marker and the other being an empty oja denoting formality and studied politeness. For example even to rickshaw puller people sometimes use oja as a term of address. Another point to be noted here is that saheb/babu is not attached to the title oja ‘teacher’. It is not used probably because of the humility of the profession. saheb is seldom used in the context of indigenous pursuits and since oja ‘teacher’ probably is considered an indigenous profession saheb/babu is not attached to the title.

4.9 Zero Address

Meiteilon directions or speech forms are possible without proper address. However general Meitei sociolinguistic rule consider such a form as rather impolite or uncultured. But there are certain cases whereby the directions without proper address form are demanded by the situations. There are situations of face-to-face address in which speakers avoid the use of any name or title either deliberately or unintentionally. When for instance, a man is required to interact with a stranger whose status is not known to him, he considers it safe not to use any term of address to him. He is afraid that if he uses a form which belongs to a status much lower than the one actually held by the addressee, he will inadvertently give insult. Conversely if the form used by him were the one generally used for a person of status and dignity and the addressee later turned out to be a mere menial with a considerably low status, the speaker would be placed in an embarrassing situation.

Few examples of Zero address are

1. karino ameta hajjge.
   ‘May I ask you something?’
2. əmukte ɛɲɨɛrɛke.

‘May I come in.’

Such a form of speech, though not regarded as exactly fitting to Meitei sociolinguistic rule, is considered rather polite. It can be used to strangers.

Wolfson and Manes have summed up the position thus: “by using the zero address form, speakers can politely avoid any classification of themselves or of the addressee with regard to social status” (Wolfson & Manes 1979: 15). It is however to be remembered that avoidance of this kind is of a temporary nature and disappears as soon as the identity of the addressee becomes known to the speaker. Another reason for the non-use of address terms can be to avoid conflicts as the speaker wants to show respect and deference (Pramodini, 1989)

Temporary avoidance of an address form also occurs when one interacting with a superior is in a state of anger or annoyance as in the case with a son interacting with his father, or office clerk talking to his boss. Avoidance is here an indirect means of expressing one’s anguish and sense of protest which, in a worse and more direct situation, is expressed by an abusive or insulting term.

There are other reasons why address terms are sometimes not used to particular person. The reason is not because of not knowing the age or social status of that person but more of not wanting to acknowledge the superiority of the person. If kin term that is used to address elder is used to a particular person, that particular person exercises his/her authority from that instance. He will consider himself as more powerful than the addressee. Sometimes the addressee refused to acknowledge the superior status of the addressee, thinking that the addressee is not old enough to be addressed by older kin term. In this type of situation no term of
address is used by the addressor and the addressee. This is called namhay tawbo or not deliberately using any address term. In Meitei society seniority is a compliment, whoever is senior has more power and commands respect from the junior. Acknowledging that a particular person is senior by using a kin-term is to mean that the person has more power. Therefore in order to avoid this unwanted superiority-inferiority relationship people sometimes avoid using address terms.

4.10 Politeness and Power

Politeness in brief, may be defined as the verbal strategies for keeping social interactions friction free i.e. it is a strategy to be maintaining to keep up the Conversational Contract view of Fraser (1990). He puts ‘being polite is taken to be a hallmark of abiding by the CP (co-operative principle), being co-operative involve abiding by the CC (conversational contract). Politeness in Meitei society is a form of social contract existing between groups as whole and individual members of the group. In order to achieve or enabling to entitle to get a reciprocal polite form of speech, one is supposed to be polite. Polite usage is reciprocal in Meitei society. As per the notion of politeness, one who is polite in Meitei society is considered a cultured person. A speaker is polite because he/she agree to the social norm prevalent in the society. A Meitei uses the polite form of speech to show his/her cultural refinement i.e. his intention on being polite is a means of letting people to evaluate him positively and to show that he is being respectful to the superiors.

Politeness is a linguistic strategy which the speaker uses for various pragmatic purposes: for example, “to facilitate interpersonal contacts by removing conflict of interest between the interlocutors, and promoting their cooperation” (Takahara 1986: 181). Politeness used by a status superior is
temporary avoidance of pressing an obvious power advantage to get a willing cooperation from the lower-status addressee. As such, it is found more often in making ‘high-cost’ request, that is, requests that are ‘trajectory’ of the addressee’s current activity (Ervin-Tripp et al. 1984).

People cultivate politeness for the purpose of expressing their superior status and authority. Respect is typically extended to persons higher in status-to the older from the younger, to men from women. In these cases, the status inequality is due to the relative positions individuals occupy in the hierarchy of social relations. Role relations are defined primarily in terms of status which makes the speaker superior, equal and inferior in relation to the person addressed. Respect is also typically employed between status equals who are unfamiliar with each other and is gradually ‘dropped’ if their relationship becomes that of close friends.

Politeness expression can be used to serve the purpose of the speaker. For example, a person will in general increase the degree of politeness of his utterance whenever he is eager to get something from the addressee or whenever his dependence on the addressee is very pronounced. Being in need of something may put one temporarily in a position of relative disadvantage in relation to a person who otherwise would considered one’s status equal or even one’s inferior. Thus, a person can go out of his way to act with respect toward those whose good will they wished to secure for specific reasons.

Meiteilon has many features that correlate with power relationships. Among these features are the uses of verbal suffixes, which relate to culturally defined hierarchies of status. Meiteilon morphological suffixes not only indicate politeness but also manifest cultural categories of rank and power relations.
Speakers of Meiteilon organize relationships into different categories using an elaborate system of morphological markers such as alternations between -\textit{pi} $\sim$ -\textit{bi}, -\textit{co} $\sim$ -\textit{ja}, -\textit{si}. These markers reveal information about rank and status. When Meiteilon speakers shift into status indexing speech, they use different suffixes than in common speech.

i) The suffix -\textit{bi} $\sim$ -\textit{pi} is an honorific suffix in Meiteilon. When -\textit{bi} is followed by command suffix, it both indicates a request and functions as an honorific marker.

3. cak cá-bi-ro
   rice eat -HON -COMD
   'Please have your meal'

When -\textit{bi} is followed by the intensive suffix -\textit{ge} $\sim$ -\textit{ke}, it functions as benefactive marker.

4. oy thąbąk-ādu təw-bi-ge
   I work-DET do-BEN-INTN
   'I will do the work (for you)'

ii) cə-\textit{ja} is the reflexive suffix in Meiteilon.

5. tombi-\textit{na} isiŋ-ādu thąk-cə-y
   Tombi-NOM water-DET drink-REF-PRT
   'Tombi drank the water herself'

6. cawbə-\textit{na} layrik-ādu pa-ja-y
   chaoba-NOM book -DET read-REF-PRT
   'Chaoba read the book himself'
When reflexive suffix -ṣo ~ -jɔ occurs with intensive suffix -ge ~ -ke, it functions as politeness marker, as in

7. əy cak ca-jo-ge
   I rice eat-POL-INTN
   ‘Let me eat the meal’

8. əy isiŋ thɔk-ca-ge
   I water drink-POL-INTN
   ‘Let me drink water’

Suffix -si is the suggestive suffix in Meiteilon and marks an action to be performed.

9. ca thɔk-si
   tea drink-SUG
   ‘Let’s drink tea’

4.10.1 Suffix -bi ~ -pi

The -bi ~ -pi is an honorific or politeness markers in Meiteilon morphology. In general the suffix -bi ~ -pi is used to make request to a person of supposedly higher status. However, as a general rule in the Meitei speech community, this honorific suffix -bi ~ -pi is required in any situation, whatever may be the relationship between the interlocutors. The form is used for youngsters and individuals of lower status; in these cases it indicates politeness but without the usual tone of deference. Using of this form of speech in such a context may be visualized from the conversational contract view of politeness of Fraser (1990). In this approach, politeness is an ongoing process, it is socially expected norm of
behaviour and participants in conversation are generally aware that they are required to act within the dictates of this code of expected behaviour. Being polite is not predicted on making the hearer make feel good but rather on conforming to socially agreed codes of good conduct. The Meiteis are ceremonious people and in their intercourse with persons they adhere to certain conventions. Meiteis who generally use polite forms are regarded as cultured.

10. əy-gi ce-du əmuk-tə yeŋ-bi-yu
    I - POS paper-DET. once only look-BEN-COMD
    ‘Please look at my paper’

11. əy-ne háy-ri-bə-si tə-bi-yu
    I -NOM say-PRG-INF-DET listen-BEN-COMD
    ‘Please listen to me’

12. cə-si əmuk-tə thək-pi-yu
    tea-DET once only drink-BEN-COMD
    ‘Please drink the tea’

In the, examples (10), (11) and (12) -bi ~ -pi politeness marker is used, in two situations: one, when a speaker makes a request to a person from whom a favor is sought and another, when a speaker talks to a person higher in status.

13. əy-gi ce-du yeŋ-u
    I - POS paper-DET look-COMD
    ‘Look at my paper’
14. əy-(nc)  hāy-ri-bə-si  tā-w
    1-NOM  say-PRG-INF-DET  listen-COMD
    ‘Listen to me’

15. ca-si  thək-u
    tea-DET  drink-COMD
    ‘Drink the tea’

Examples (13), (14) and (15) are without the politeness marker -bi ~ -pi. The omission occurs when the speaker is relatively more powerful than the addressee either in age or in social position.

There is another usage of -bi ~ -pi form which is volitional politeness (Ide 1989), which is intended to use linguistic acts to achieve specific goals. In this case the politeness marker is used independent of social position. The use of polite form is manipulative as the user’s intention here is to attain specific objectives and goals. This strategy has certain level of effectiveness within Meitei society because even though this usage may be recognized as manipulative, the use of politeness marker -bi ~ pi still makes the hearer feel good, as his status is a bit raised.

16. ibuŋo  ice-gi  thəbək-tu  əmək-tə  təw-bi-yu
    dear brother  sister-POS  work-DET  once only  do-BEN-COMD
    ‘Dear brother please do your sister’s work’

17. ibuŋo  ice-gi  thəbək-tu  əmək-tə  təw
    dear brother  sister-POS  work-DET  once only  do (COMD)
    ‘Dear brother do your sister’s work’
In examples, (16) and (17) the addressee in the (16) is likely to do the work sooner than addressee in example (17). The speaker has used politeness marker -bi ~ -pi and thus enhanced the status of the addressee who is younger than the speaker. In example (17) the addressee may feel that the speaker while asking for a favour is trying to control or manipulate the addressee and this may serve as a reason for the hearer in delaying or neglecting the work of the speaker.

The usage of -bi ~ -pi suffix here may be treated as a softening device (Brown and Levinson, 1978, 5). Here politeness is temporary avoidance of pressing an obvious power advantage to get a willing co-operation for the lower status addressee (Hwang, 1990). The politeness marker -bi ~ -pi used here served as what Milner has called “verbal lubricants ... soothing the vexation of wounded pride and imagined or genuine grievances” (Milner; 1961: 304).

The politeness marker -bi ~ -pi is utilized either to elevate or to lower the position of the speaker in social hierarchical scale. This use derives from its function as a polite/request marker. While making polite/request forms, the status of the addressee is elevated, i.e. the using of ‘hearer-oriented’ -bi ~ -pi raises the status of the addressee.

18. ice-nə thokpə təw-bi-khro
   sister-NOM as you please do-BEN-DEF(COMD)
   ‘Sister, do as you please’

19. əy-bu kəw-bi-rək-u
   I-ACC call-BEN-DTC-COMD
   ‘Please call me’
20. naŋ-na thokpa taw-ro
   you-NOM as you please do-COMD
   ‘Do as you please’

21. øy-bu kaw-rak-u
    I-ACC call-DTC-COMD
    ‘Call me’

Examples (18) and (19) are requests directed toward the addressee, who has a higher position than the speaker. Examples (20) and (21) are directed toward an addressee of lower status than the speaker.

Again, in contrast to the earlier examples, there is the usage of -bi ~ -pi, which is ‘speaker-oriented’. This marker raises the status of the speaker above that of the addressee. The politeness marker -bi ~ -pi when used in connection with the actions done by the speaker, it is to be perceived as speaker oriented speech form, whereby the position of the speaker is elevated above that of the addressee.

22. naŋ-gi thəbək-tu øy taw-bi-ge
    your-POS work-DET I do-BEN-INTN
    ‘I will do your work’

23. wari-du øy həw-dok-pi-yu-rə
    Story-DET I start DIR-BEN-COMD-INT
    ‘Shall I open the matter?’

24. cak-tu øy thon-bi-ro-rə?
    meal-DET I cook-BEN-COMD-INT
    ‘Shall I cook the meal?’
In examples (22), (23) and (24), the morphological suffix -bi ~ -pi is used with the implication that the speaker has more power and greater ability in performing some actions than the addressee does. In these cases, the speaker intends to show that he has more power and strength and the action to be performed is usually not for the benefit of the speaker himself but for the addressee.

25. nga gi thabak-tu ay taw-ge
   you-POS work-DET I do-INTN
   ‘I want to do your work’

26. wari-du ay haw-dok-u-re
    story-DET I start-DIR-COMD-INT
    ‘Shall I open the matter?’

27. cak-tu ay thon-u-re
    meal-DET I cook-COMD-INT
    ‘Shall I cook the meal?’

In examples (25), (26) and (27), the speaker may or may not be more powerful than the addressee. If the speaker is equal or inferior to the hearer, then solidarity prevails between the interlocutors. But whatever be the relationships between them, unlike in examples (22), (23), (24), the act which the speaker is going to perform may or may not be for the benefit of the hearer.

The polite suffix -bi ~ -pi has another usage in (28), (29), (30) and (31). In these cases, the addressee has more power, and thus has the capacity to do favours for the speaker.
28. khurd iba-de can-bi-ba dagi ay-su kanna-jore
dear uncle-NOM favored-BEN-INF from I-also benefited-BEN-PFT
‘I am benefited as I was favoured by uncle’

29. icemalak-pi-ba dagi ey nua-jore
sister come-BEN-INF from I happy-BEN-PFT
‘I am happy indeed as you favoured me by coming’

30. isor-na thawjan-bi-ba dagi ey niqba thu-jore
God-NOM blessed-BEN-INF from I hope reach-BEN-PFT
‘My dreams are fulfilled as god blessed me’

31. no-bu nuqsi-du-na hay-bi-ba-ni
you-ACC love-DET-NOM say-BEN-INF-COP
‘I said it because I love you’

4.10.2 Suffix -ca ~ -ja

The -ca ~ -ja suffix in Meiteilon is also one of the very productive morpheme having manifold functions and in general contrasting with the -bi ~ -pi suffix. Usually these two suffixes are used reciprocally, i.e. if one interlocutor in a speech act uses -bi ~ -pi, the other responds with -ca ~ -ja in formal situations.

32 (a) ay-gi cithi-si emuk-ta yei-bi-yu
I-POS letter-DET once only look-BEN-COMD
‘Please look at my letter’

(b) yani ey yei-jore
yes I look-POL-INTN
‘Yes, I will see it’
In examples (32), (33) and (34), both the participants in the speech act acknowledge the status and power of the other. The initiator begins with a polite form and the respondent also replies politely. Either, the initiator raises the status of the addressee while the respondent lowers his /her status by using -ca ~ -ja suffix, or the interaction may be considered reciprocal i.e. since the respondent feels is that as he/she had been shown respect, so it is his/her duty to pay respect towards the addressee.
(b) ᵂʸ ṣẹ́n-ge

I see-INSN
‘I will see it’

36 (a) ṣẹ́si-di mọpan cọt-ọ-nu
today-DET outside go-DUR-NEG
‘Do not go outside today’

(b) ᵂ’y ṣẹ́si cọt-ọ-roy

I today go-DUR-NEG
‘I will not go out today’

37 (a) mọtọm saŋọ lọw-ọ-nu
time long take-INSN-NEG
‘Do not take much time’

(b) mọtọm saŋọ lọw-roy
time long take-NEG
‘I will not take much time’

In the examples (35), (36) and (37), both the participants in the speech act are of equal status and even though the interlocutors are not of equal status, solidarity prevails between them and hence no politeness markers are required. But non-polite speech forms are generally not used to the superiors.

When -ẹ̀ọ́ ~ -jọ́ suffix is used in addressee oriented situation, it indicates that the status of the speaker is lower than the addressee. The speaker uses -ẹ̀ọ́ ~ -jọ́ to show respect to the addressee.
38. әй тәәәәк-ту тәәәәв-жә-ге
   I work-DET do-POL-INTN
   ‘I wish to do the work’

39. әыкхой қәңәәә-жә-ри
   we discussing-POL-PROG
   ‘We are discussing (the matter)’

40. мә-нә тәәәәк-ту тәәәәв-жә-ге әй
    he-NOM work-DET do-POL-INTN say
    ‘He says he will do the work’

In the examples (38), (39) and (40), the speaker recognizes the superiority of the addressee. He therefore acknowledges the addressee’s presence or power at the time of the interaction. This usage is appropriate for use with superiors like one’s elders, boss, teachers and other status superiors. But this does not mean that such speech forms are completely reserved for those of higher status. This speech form can also be used to the youngsters and people of a lower status. In such cases, it indicates politeness without the usual tone of deference.

41. әй тәәәәк-ту тәәәәв-ге
    I work-DET do- INTN
    ‘I will do the work’

42. әыкхой қәңәәә-ри
    we discussing-PRG
    ‘We are discussing (the matter)’
43. ma-nya thɔɓɛŋ-tu tɔw-ɡe hæy

he-NOM work-DET do-INTN say

‘He says he will do the work’

In the examples (41), (42) and (43), the speaker may be higher or equal in status than the addressee. This pattern is usually directed towards inferiors and if directed toward someone of equal status then it usually occurs in informal setting where solidarity prevails.

The -ca ~ -ja suffix can also be used in addressor’s oriented situation. When it is used in such a situation, it signifies that the status of the speaker is superior to that of the addressee.

44. nɔŋ phurit-tu lɔw-ja-ro

you shirt-DET take-BEN-COMD

‘You have the cloth’

45. cak-tu nɔŋ cá-ja-ro

meal-DET you eat-BEN-COMD

‘You eat the meal’

46. thɔɓɛŋ-tu ma tɔw-ja-sænu

work-DET he do-BEN-COMD+ wish

‘Let him do the work’

In the examples (44), (45) and (46), the addressee is of lower status. The -ca ~ -ja suffix is used here not as a politeness marker but to give permission to have the shirt, eat the meal, do the work. It is used by people higher on the social
scale (either in age or in social position). Among equals the use of this form is rare.

47. ṇəŋ phurit-tu lów-ro
    you shirt-DET take-COMD
    ‘You have the cloth’

48. cak-tu ṇəŋ cá-ro
    meal-DET you eat-COMD
    ‘You eat the meal’

49. thəbək-tu ma təw-sənu
    work-DET he do-COMD
    ‘Let him do the work’

The examples mentioned in (47), (48) and (49) is also similar to the examples (44), (45), (46) cited above. The speaker is higher in status than the addressee. The only difference is that the suffix -ca ~ -ja is not used here. Such type of speech forms are usually directed towards those of a lower status.

4.10.3 The Suffix -si

The suffix -si or proposal marker in Meiteilon morphology has the meaning ‘let’ but it also has additional uses. If we analyze this marker -si semantically, we may conclude that it is directed toward equals and toward those of higher status irrespective of social status and age on formal occasions. The point to be made here is that for equals this -si marker is found to be used without politeness marker (-bi ~ -pi) and for the higher status this polite marker is obligatory.
50. cak cá-si
   food eat-SUG
   ‘Please have a meal’

51. ca thək-si
   tea drink-SUG
   ‘Please have tea’

In the examples (50) and (51), the speaker is asking the addressee to have a meal or tea. The statements can carry two interpretations: it can be speaker inclusive or can be speaker exclusive i.e. the action of having a meal or having tea can be with or without the speaker. Here the speaker is equal in status with the addressee.

The suffix -si is speaker dependent. Certain social parameters need to be taken into consideration for example, if the speaker happens to be a close friend of the addressee but has a different social status (education, economic etc.), the speaker would use -si suffix in order to show that one sense he is equal of the addressee (because they are close friends), but at the same time acknowledging the superiority of the addressee in some other sense (e.g. social status).

52. cak cá-w
   food eat-COND
   ‘Have a meal’

53. ca thək-u
   tea drink - COMD
   ‘Have tea’
In the examples (52) and (53) mentioned above, the speaker is superior in status to the addressee. The statement is speaker exclusive i.e. the speaker will not participate in the action of having a meal or drinking tea. These statements are usually directed towards those of inferior status and rarely among those of equal status; and if it is used with equals then it occurs only in informal settings where solidarity prevails. But if the speaker is addressing a superior person then, honorific marker -bi ~ -pi is used along with suffix -si.

54. imaybemɔ ɲayhaktəŋ phәm-bi-si
   mother(+HON.) sometime sit-HON-SUG
   ‘Mother, please be seated for a while’

The suffix -si when used along with the honorific marker -bi ~ -pi indicates a high degree of respect toward the addressee. This pattern is used to a high status addressee in formal settings, as for example in interview situation wherein the addressor wants an answer from the addressee. It is also used in talk shows in radio and TV, announcements, public gatherings etc.

55. pabuŋ-na māna-si kəmdəw-na phәŋ-bi- rək-pə-no
   father-NOM award-DET how-NOM get-HON-DTC-INF-COMD
   amuk-tə tak-pi-si
   once only tell-BEN-SUG
   ‘Father, would you please tell us how you got this award?’

56. imaybemɔ lęŋsin-bi-si
   mother move(+HON)-HON-SUG
   ‘Mother, please be seated.’
The examples in (55), (56), (57) are the most polite speech forms in Meiteilon. Using of suffix -bi – -pi along with suffix -si is the most polite speech form in Meiteilon.

There are categories of nouns which are also made polite by the addition of suffix -si. These categories are considered more polite and are used with the descendants of the King by the commoners. In the earlier time when monarchy was the prevalent form of government in Manipur, such a form was usually directed towards royal people and nobles. Suffix -si was added to nouns in order to address or to refer to king’s primary and secondary kins.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin-term</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pabuŋ si</td>
<td>‘father’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ima si</td>
<td>‘mother’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iton si</td>
<td>‘uncle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>icem si</td>
<td>‘sister (elder)’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, with the abolition of monarchy, the power exercised by the royalty has been considerably reduced. Nonetheless, royal descendants are still honoured despite their lowered status. Suffix -si is still used along with the kin term in addressing the royal descendants.
4.11 Analysis and Interpretation

On the basis of the data obtained after collecting from short plays along with actual observation and from the data collected by preparing questionnaires, certain findings have been reached. The hypotheses which have been formulated have been justified by the findings. Given below are some of the observations that have come to light in the course of the study:

1. Husbands addressed their wives by their respective names (personal name or nicknames) while the wives addressed their husbands by their kin term for brother or by teknonyms but not by their names.

2. Kin terms are used for addressing seniors (in age) by all the juniors. Kin terms are used for addressing father, mother, sister, brother etc. Kin terms are also used to address non-kin. But this finding is only 93 percent correct. The remaining 7 percent do not use kin terms while addressing non-kins. This may be probably due to the influence of westernization or modernization. Earlier Meitei society was a kin based society but due to modernization the society is no longer completely kin based.

3. The informal second person pronoun and the third person pronoun is not used by juniors (either in age or in social position) to address or to refer seniors. Here, again the findings are not cent percent correct. In some cases where solidarity prevails ‘nəŋ’ and ‘ma’ are used by juniors to address and refer to seniors. Husbands used these pronouns to address or to refer to their wives but not the vice-versa in the presence of other people but women do sometimes use these pronouns to their husbands when nobody is around.

4. Second person pronoun (+HON) is used to address a stranger who is approximately equal (in age or in status) to the speaker. This pronoun is not used in addressing a senior. Seniority is a compliment in the Meitei society. For example in a social gathering like feast where there are seniors a certain social decorum is maintained. Juniors do not get up until and unless the seniors get up thereby showing respect to the seniors.
5. By studying address terms, a very important aspect has been unearthed. Address terms are one of the most important examples exhibiting the relationship between language and power. That is, whoever is superior or powerful (either in age or in social position) commands respect and is respected by the inferiors and this is reflected in the address terms used by inferiors to address the superiors.

6. In the Meitei society polite speech forms are used to superiors but from the findings it has been inferred that polite speech forms are not only accorded from inferiors to superiors. There are cases where the superiors used polite speech forms to inferiors, probably because the superiors required things to be done by the inferiors or the superior person is showing their cultural refinement.

7. Suffixes such as -bi ~ -pi, -ca ~ -ja, are used in speech forms by Meiteis to acknowledge the superiority of the addressee or they are used to inferiors to show that they are polite. Politeness markers are also used when a favour is sought from a person. They are used to serve immediate the purpose of the speaker.

8. Speech form using suffixes -bi ~ -pi along with suffix -si is the most polite speech form and is employed to superiors and not to inferiors.

4.12 Chapter summary

This chapter gives an overall analysis of address terms and suffixes that reflect power hierarchy in the Meitei society.

It is a general rule in Meiteilon, that the addressees should be properly addressed while interacting, so that the speaker may be counted as humble and cultured. This is a general sociolinguistic rule that higher status addressees should be respected, while doing so one has to assess the relative positional relationship with the addressee. For this purpose one has to consider relative age, relative socio-economic status, and his relative position with the addressee in accordance with the social system (Meiteilon speakers still pay respect to the royal
descendants and to Brahmins). Further, one has to count the difference in sex and the context of usage. Formality and informality of the context bears a major role in determining the appropriate address form.

Like other behavioural routines, which are deeply rooted in the socio-cultural context of a society, address terms assert and create "a network of bonds and obligations" (Firth 1937: 113). Certain unique features reflect the Meitei socio-cultural milieu. For example, it has been noted that age supersedes rank in dyadic relationships. Being colleagues in the Meitei society does not necessarily imply equality. An older person addresses a younger person by name but the latter dares not reply in the same way. It is considered impolite, rude and grossly insolent to address an older person by name among the Meiteis. Again, it is not always age that supersedes rank. In some cases, rank also supersedes age. An officer in an established officialdom would be addressed as saheb ‘Sir’ by a peon, even though the peon is older (in age) than the officer.

Certain parameters seem to be in conflict while trying to choose address terms. For example, there is a conflict between age and generation. Generation played a major role in the composite seniority variable of the behavioural analysis of the Meitei address terms. But recently in the new generation, some changes are being noticed in the kinship behaviour. Relative age seems to be playing a greater role in deciding the kin terms of address instead of generation. An uncle may be addressed by his personal name if he is of the same age or younger than the ego. Such a usage was not allowed in the past as the traditional kin mode of address was based primarily on generation. Again, there is a conflict between age and occupation. Meitei custom does not allow persons who are older than the speaker to be addressed by their personal names. A kin term is always the preferred form to address a person who is older. An older person addresses a younger person by
name but the latter dares not reply in the same way. But occupation may come in conflict with age. For example an officer in an established officialdom would be addressed as saheb ‘Sir’ by a peon, even though the peon is older (in age) than the officer. In the official domain, the officer has more power and commands respect than the peon. The peon would adopt deferent or even servile attitude. Against the background of the complex pattern of interaction among factors of age, occupation, status, intimacy and situation etc. and different address terms, a Meitei is faced with a problem of choice. However, the form chosen to address another person arises from assessment of the relationship between interlocutors, from the expected norm of behaviour appropriate to the situation and from what the speaker wants to emphasize about the relationship with the speaker.

The usage of Meiteilon address form is determined primarily by the relative age of the addressee and the addressor. This is an asymmetrical or non-reciprocal relationship. In many such relationships, to be older than implies more powerful than the other. Parents, older brothers / sisters, teachers, bosses who are all older than a person are all in positions to command over the person. Similarly, to be younger than, may in some relationships imply to be weaker than a person senior in age.

As far as personal and family relations within the traditional society is concerned, the most universal rule is that the senior will receive more deferential/formal type of address forms unless solidarity considerations override power considerations. Equals and juniors to whom solidarity is due will receive less formal address terms according to the increasing degree of solidarity.

Different focuses in conceptualizing the address-and-reference system among different social groups speaking the same language show man’s ingenuity
in abstracting or transcribing everyday reality through speech. Language
behaviour, in this sense, tends to be covert. Speech is noteworthy as much as for
what it conceals as for what it reveals.

Addresses can be with personal names, kin terms, with or without
endearment forms, and can also be with occupational and social titles. To address
an elder person with appropriate kin term is a general norm in Meitei society.
Summing up all these facts, what we observe is that there are different forms of
address terms used by different categories of people in different social settings and
the choice of address term is determined by the relative role and status relationship
between the interlocutors and the context of use. However, what is noted in
present day Meitei society is that younger generation is becoming less polite (a
feature noted in Korean and Japanese society too). The youngsters today speak
more directly. People earlier took care to preserve relationships but today as the
society become more complex people do not care much about maintaining
relationships.

Ervin-Tripp (1971) has noted that terms of address may serve to mark an
occasion with regard to formality and informality of the context, indicate
hierarchical relationships among the speakers, and express social identity. Another
point to be emphasized here is that terms of address also serves as a mirror to reflect
the political and social changes and people’s attitudes toward them.

There are different suffixes which are attached to the verb root, so that the
semantic value of the verb is altered. But in the study, only suffixes that reflect
power relation are taken up for analysis. In this study the point that has been
shown is how power relationship between the interlocutors is reflected in the
usage of suffixes -bi ~ -pi, -co ~ -jo and -si.
In linguistic behaviour, politeness motives may be realized phonologically, morphologically, lexically and syntactically. At the morphological level, a very common strategy employed with the hearer amongst the Meiteis is to use the morphological politeness marker i.e. suffixes -bi ~ -pi, -ca ~ -ja, -si. These morphological politeness markers usually occur in sentence-final position. These politeness markers are employed to person who is superior (either in age or in social status). Power relationship between the addressee and the addresor is manifested linguistically in the usage of politeness markers. Whoever is powerful is respected by the inferiors and respect is shown by using polite speech forms. An important point to be noted here is that, in the Meitei society, politeness markers are not only used by inferiors to superiors but can also be used by superiors to inferiors to show their cultural refinement.

The foregoing accounts of the Meitei address forms and morphological politeness markers and their role in reflecting power relations should however, lead one to an important conclusion: that no single factor or hypothesis can account for all the observable facts and effects. When such vast networks of forces are at play, several of them being heterogeneous and at times vague, the task of the investigator who tries to map them all becomes all the more difficult and arduous.