CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Manipuri is a language mainly spoken in Manipur. Several additional speakers of this language lie in some parts of the bordering countries and states. Manipuri is the medium of instruction in all levels of education, while English is another language, which is also used in the courts, offices etc. and also as the medium of instruction after western education came.

1.1 MANIPURI LANGUAGE

Manipuri, locally known as Meiteilon, is mainly spoken in Manipur as a first language almost in and around the plain valley region. As a second language hilly people speak Manipuri. This language is also known as Meiteilon, which is from the term Meitei ‘the local people inhabiting in the valley’ and lon ‘language spoken by the Meiteis’. Several additional speakers of this language lie in some parts of the bordering countries like, Burma, Bangladesh, etc. and states like, Assam, Tripura, Mizoram. Manipuri is the only medium through which speakers of 33 different communities communicate one another. Hence, it is the lingua franca.

1.1.1 STATUS OF MANIPURI LANGUAGE

Manipuri which is included in the Scheduled VIII language of Indian constitution as the first T.B. language since 20th August, 1992, is the link language throughout the state of Manipur. Before Manipur got independence and merged into the Indian Union this language has been used as official language. Manipuri is the medium of instruction in all levels of education while English is another language, which is also used in the courts, offices etc. and also as the medium of instruction after western education came. Sahitya Academy, New Delhi also recognizes Manipuri as a regional language. In 1974, a renowned writer, Pacha Meitei was awarded the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award for his book, *Imphal Amasung Magi Ishing Nungshitiki Phibam* ‘Imphal and its climatic condition’.
Since then, many scholars have been honoured with this award. Numbers of Ph.D. scholars from the Department of Manipuri Language and Literature, Manipur University have been produced in various fields of literature. This shows that Manipuri is a highly developed, culturally rich and advanced language. It has also been recognized by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi, Guwahati University, Delhi University, North Eastern Regional Language Centre, Guwahati, etc. Through this language various programs are being broadcasted over AIR, Imphal, DDK, Imphal and ISTV Network, Imphal.

1.1.2 MANIPURI LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSIFICATION OF T.B. LANGUAGES


Manipuri shares some features of the Tibeto-Burman languages. It includes phonemic tone, SOV word order, agglutinative verb morphology and tendency to reduce disyllabic forms to monosyllabic ones. Very specifically, Manipuri has extensive verb morphology and extensive suffix. Suffixes play the most important role in the structure of the language. Relativization is a subspecies of clausal nominalization.

1.1.3 DIALECTS

Manipuri has dialects of Kakching, Sekmai, Andro, Phayeng, Kwatha, Thanga, etc. Speech varieties in the Cachar district of Assam and Jiribam of Manipur have become almost similar with Imphal dialect, since transport and communication improved. Imphal dialect is considered the standard form of speech. The forms of speech found in Tripura, Myanmar and Bangladesh still show clear dialectal variation. It is difficult to assess the exact number of dialects in Manipuri.
1.2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Since the present work is a part of Manipuri Grammar, a number of existing works in this language has been gone through. Many Sanskrit scholars analyzed Manipuri language on the basis of Sanskrit framework. Some of them are: Manipuri Byakaran Kaumudi by Kalachand Shashtri (1964), Meiteilon by Nandalal Sharma (1976), Manipuri Byakaran by Dwijamani Dev Sharma (1969), Meiteilon Byakaran by Narayan Sharma (1984). Mention may be made in this regard that the two languages, Sanskrit and Manipuri possess different structures as they belong to different language families. Hence, the study of Manipuri (a Tibeto-Burman language) on the framework of Sanskrit (an Indo-European language) is considered theoretically inadequate and unauthentic by modern linguists.

During the British Rules, British Missionaries or administrators like Pettigrew (1912) and Primrose (1987) study Manipuri language providing useful list of conversational sentences and list of idioms. But theses are on the framework of English, which is an isolating language that is different from Manipuri which is an agglutinating language. Grierson (1903) described vowels, consonants, word categories, syllable, sentence types, etc. of Manipuri language in his Linguistic Survey of India. But much more such as phonology, morphology, word-formation, morphophonemic and morphosyntax are remained untouched.

In the study of Manipuri language based on the linguistic approach, modern linguists who worked with pure linguistic knowledge are Thoudam (1991), Bhat and Ningomba (1997), Sobhana (1997), Yashawanta (2000), etc. These pioneers contributed works on grammar namely, Thoudam’s Remedial Manipuri Grammar, Bhat and Ningomba’s ‘Manipuri Grammar’, Sobhana’s A Grammar of Meithei. They analyze the language on the descriptive model. Some other works contributed in the study Manipuri language on linguistic approach are A Study of Meitei Phonology by Tomchou (1976), A Study on Meiteilon Phonology with a supplement of Morphology by Sonamani (1980), Meitei

Thoudam (1991) in Remedial Manipuri Grammar gives a bit sketch on clause structure just mentioning on types- dependent and independent clause. Bhat and Ningomba (1997) in Manipuri Grammar studied sentence types by classifying Nominal sentences and verbal sentences and on the other side, as modifying construction relative clauses are analyzed. But they fail to study the semantic role of the head NP. They mainly focused on externally headed and internally headed relative clauses. Nothing is mentioned of coordination.

Sobhana (1997) in A Grammar of Meithei studied on subordination explaining about nominalization, complementation and adverbial clauses, but a bit account on clausal coordination. Much more on coordinate clauses formed by various coordinators and concatenate structures formed by juxtaposition of the conjuncts are not analyzed.

Yashawanta (2000) in Manipuri Grammar discusses a small portion of clause structure mentioning word order, elements, case marking, types, coordinate clauses and complex sentences. Different forms of coordinators such as, conjunctive, disjunctive and adversative are not analyzed separately in detail.

P. Madhubala (1979) in her Ph.D. thesis Manipuri Grammar includes portions such as relative clause, nominalization, conjunction, but these are not fully sufficient for a clause structure.

In an article entitled Coordination in Hakha Lai (Tibeto-Burman) by David A. Peterson and Kenneth VanBik (2004), three main sections of coordination viz., Basic elements of coordination, Special types of coordination and Ellipsis in coordination construction are discussed. The authors provide a descriptive account of coordination construction in Lai using the conceptual distinctions and terminological conventions. Aspects of coordination along with illustrative instances are well described. Authors keep views on the contrastive conjunction which is somewhat more complicated at the clause level. But they do
not identify specialized means of expressing contrastive disjunction. A clear distinction is seen between alternative questions and disjunctive questions. It has historical development of the coordination. But by contrast, Haspelmath (2004) reacts that the explanation is not a possible synchronic analysis. That is why more investigations on historical development are recommended.

Carol Lord and Benson Craig (2004) in *Conjunction and Concatenation in Sgaw Karen* considered the contrast between concatenation (juxtaposition) and overt conjunction. In coordinate construction, an all-purpose conjunction \( d\mathring{\text{a}} \) for variety of functions is used. A formal structure with two components juxtaposed with no intervening grammatical morpheme is used to express a close semantic/pragmatic connection. However, for looser semantic/pragmatic relationship, the components are separated by the conjunction morpheme \( d\mathring{\text{a}} \). The context in which speakers choose between concatenation and conjunction is based on the conceptualization of speaker’s experience.

1.3 REASON FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study, *Manipuri Clause Structure* aims to provide and describe the nature of clauses in Manipuri constructed through various phenomena. Analysis of Manipuri clauses in various books was incomplete; it is just a bit portion of clause mentioned in the existing Manipuri Grammars. More on different clause types, elements by which Manipuri clauses are constituted, different forms of coordinators showing semantically and syntactically behaviours, etc. are needed for the purpose. This area has not yet been discussed in detail by any linguist so far. All the earlier works do not include a well-studied clause structure. Instead, a few accounts on it are given. In fact, the present study tries to fill up this gap. The reason why the present study is taken up is to explore the nature of clauses in Manipuri and find out their functions and classify them as well as to discuss the semantic and syntactic components.
1.4 SOME CHARACTERISTIC OF MANIPURI LANGUAGE

Manipuri shows highly agglutinative word structure. It is a verb final structure. The word order is primarily SOV, i.e. the verb occurs in the final position. In a clause, the most central constituent is the verb that belongs to it. This verb and all the possible noun phrases that the verb must occur with constitute the clause.

Syntactically, elements of a clause play significant roles. Of all the elements of a clause, only the verb can express a complete sense. Temporal and locative tend to be early in the clause, before or immediately after the subject; generally adverbial manners are found directly before the verb, e.g. \( t^h \)oibə \([t^h]u\)nə \( lakkə-ni \) ‘Thoiba will come soon’, \( [həje]y \) ə \( t^h \)oibə \( lakkə-ni \) ‘Thoiba will come tomorrow’. The elements such as O\( D \) (direct object), C (complement) and A (adverbial) are obligatory elements in the sense that they are required for the complementation of the verb. This means that the sentence is incomplete if one of these elements is omitted.

Semantically, every clause describes an event or state in which a number of participants (may be four as maximum and zero as minimum) e.g. \([sərkarnə,məntrisin⁬bu,mijamdə,pəiswa]\) jelhəl-li ‘Govt. made ministers distribute money’, \( pιk^bəre \) ‘It has been given’. Verbal roots undergo nominalization with the morpheme \(-pə-\) to derive nominal in the clause like, \( aι [ibə] \) pam-mi ‘I like to write’, \( məhək [cətpə] \) pam-mi ‘He likes to go’. However, Manipuri has no verbalization process which derives a verb from a noun. In a clause construction, two NPs occur which are linked by the copula \(-ni\) ‘be’ and its variants like \( oi \) ‘be’ as a nominal sentence, e.g. \( kumar oja-ni/oi \) ‘Kumar is a teacher’. But in case of yes-no question regarding such construction, the question marker follows the last noun without the element \(-ni/oi\) ‘be’ as in \( kumar oja-rə \) ‘Is Kumar a teacher?’ Whereas, in verbal sentence, there contains a verb as a predicate and one or more
NP(s) occurring as arguments, e.g. *tomba waŋ-ŋi* ‘Tomba is tall’, *məhak lairik par-i* ‘He is reading’.

As mentioned at the beginning, Manipuri is an agglutinative language which allows a verbal bound root to take a string of suffixes, as for instance, *lak-ca-ŋem-ga-də-ŋəŋi*. *lak-* ‘come’ is the verbal root followed by five derivational suffixes and as inflectional suffix. More than five derivational suffixes can occur at a time. There are notions such as subject and object can be excluded in the description of Manipuri clause structure. In fact, arguments are freely deleted and as a result, only the verb exists in a clause, e.g. *cəkɒh-ře* ‘(He) has gone’, *hatkɒho-ře* ‘(It) has been killed’.

Demonstrative follows the noun (*NDem*). But in certain situation, it can precede the noun (*DemN*) when the determiner itself is marked with genitive -gi--ki along with the addition of demonstrative suffixes -du, -tu, -si that are added to the noun (head), e.g. *turel əsi saŋ-ŋi* ‘This river is long’, *əsigi turelsi saŋ-ŋi* ‘This river is long’. The two occurrences such as *NDem* and *DemN* is only in the case of noun (head), not in the case of pronoun (head). For the pronoun being the head, the demonstrative only follows it but never precedes it even though the genitive marker is added to it as in the nouns being the head, e.g. *məhak əsi lak-e*, *əsigi məhaksi lak-e*.

Numeral follows the noun. It can not precede the noun at all, e.g. *əŋəŋ məŋa sannə-ri* ‘Five children are playing’, *məŋa əŋəŋ sannə-ri*. However, the ordinal can precede and follow the noun, e.g. *əhanbə əŋəŋ* ‘first baby’ or *əŋəŋ əhanbə* ‘first baby’. Manipuri has only nominal pronominalizaiton; not verbal pronominalization. Pronominal markers are all prefixes (i-, nə- & mə-) in this language.
In Manipuri, adjective and modifying parts have the same function i.e. to modify a noun. But they are formally and distributionally distinct. A nominalized verb in a modifying part can refer to a state or an action. However, adjectives can refer only state, e.g. [tʰoibiŋə pambə] nupadu kʰəmbə-ni ‘The man whom Thoibi likes is Khamba’, [mərep wajbi] nupidu sita-ni ‘The girl who is tall is Sita’.

Manipuri has no grammatical agreement of number, person and gender with verbs. In other words, verbs are not reflected for these grammatical categories. Also Manipuri is a tense less language. Tense, in this language, is shown by adverbial time element by morphological markers on the verb. As a Tibeto-Burman language feature, the velar nasal phoneme /ŋ/, in Manipuri, can occur initially (ŋəray ‘yesterday’), medially (nuŋŋa ‘a kind of fish’), and finally (tʰay ‘sword’).

1.5 SOURCES OF DATA

Data for the entire thesis are collected from reliable and authoritative books, published or unpublished works, local newspapers, news which is being broadcasted over television and radio, and various conferences held in the university or other academic places.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study would be definitely significant because it explores and studies the vast area covered by clauses which is the important syntactic constituents. As there is no adequate work on the present area by any linguist so far except a bit for the namesake only as in Thoudam (1991), Sobhana (1997) and Yashawanta (2000) mentioned earlier, the present area of work bringing out an accurate clause structure of Manipuri, would be a significant one in the linguistic world. Since the work is the first of its kind and there is no any exhaustive works on Manipuri clause structure, the present study should be of interest and very significant so as to remain as documents and interest to the students of linguistics
especially those who study Tibeto-Burman languages as it fills up the gap of linguistic analysis untouched by many linguists.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis entitled *Manipuri Clause Structure* consists of six chapters including this introductory portion and conclusion. The body comprises of four chapters. Out of which chapter two accounts an overview of Manipuri clause, chapter three studies *Simple sentences*, chapter four focuses *Complex sentences* and chapter five analyses *Compound sentences*.

The first chapter gives an introduction of the thesis.

The second chapter accounts an overview of Manipuri clause and it introduces the structures and types of clauses. Well, this chapter provides the description of clause dealing with the definition, clause types, syntactically defined clause elements, semantically considered clause elements, transitive and intransitive clauses, subordinate clauses, quotative clauses, nominalized clauses and coordinate clauses.

The third chapter deals with Simple sentences providing nominal sentences, verbal sentences, word order, generic sentences, habitual sentences, equative sentences (including predicational and specificational sentences), statements, grammatical agreements, pronominalization and argument structures. It discusses the structure of simple sentence in Manipuri which consists of at least an NP and a VP or a copula that it does not construct complex or compound in it.

The fourth chapter explores complex sentences in Manipuri. It analyses formation of complex sentences, forms of subordinate clauses, subordination, subordinators and its kinds, nominalization, relativization, quotative clauses and purpose clauses. In the construction of Manipuri complex sentences, a matrix clause consisting of at least an NP and a VP and an embedded clause with its various forms take part in the construction of complex sentence. It also studies subordinate clauses which are constructed by adding nominalizing morpheme to
the verb of the clause and such subordinate clauses are embedded as a constituent of a matrix sentence and they function as a noun, adjective, or adverb.

The fifth chapter discusses the compound sentences in Manipuri. It studies the formation of compound sentences, occurrence of compound sentences, syntactic constituents, coordination, semantic types of coordination and coordinators with their different kinds. It shows that the two non-embedded clauses stand in a variety of semantic relationships to each other and two independent clauses are conjoined by a coordinator. This chapter further discusses on concatenation, in which the two coordinate clauses are juxtaposed and also shows the possibility to embed modifying parts within one or more of the coordinate clauses. Whether a sequence of words acts as a syntactic constituent or not is also determined by some tests, such as substitution test, conjoining test, and distribution test.

The sixth chapter, being the final chapter gives overall concluding remarks of the foregoing studies and concludes the work.

At the end of the thesis a selected bibliography is given, which includes only those references, which have been directly referred to in the thesis.