Abstract

This paper attempts to highlight the structure of Manipuri pronouns. Manipuri is popularly known as Meiteilon/Meeteilon. It is a lingua-franca among the different tribes inhabiting in the state of Manipur. The total population of Manipur is 2,570,390 of which male and female are 1,290,171 and 1,280,219 respectively (2011 census). In this paper, the types pronoun such as: personal pronouns, relative pronouns, interrogative pronouns, possessive pronouns and indefinite pronouns of Meiteilon are analysed with examples. It also analyses the different structures of singular and plural pronouns in particular. Personal pronouns can be discussed into three categories; person, number and case. Three types of persons (first, second and third) can be divided into two forms of number (singular and plural). The first person, second person and third person is indicated by ‘əi’, əŋ- and ma’ respectively. In formation of subject personal plural pronouns, second person (əŋ) and third person (ma) changes to ‘ŋə’ and ‘mə’ by suffixing suffix marker ‘khoi whereas first person (əi) remain unchanged.

1. Introduction

The term 'pronoun' is generally used for referring to several different sets of words such as personal pronouns, demonstratives, interrogatives, indefinites, relatives, correlative, etc (Bhat, 2004). In linguistics and grammar, a pronoun is a word that substitutes for a noun or noun phrase. In Meiteilon, pronouns can be classified into six types:

I. Personal pronouns,
II. Relative pronouns,
III. Interrogative pronouns,
IV. Demonstrative pronouns,
V. Possessive pronouns and Indefinite pronouns.
2. Rationalization

I. Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns can be discussed into three categories: person, number and case. Again, there are three types of persons (first, second and third), each of which can be divided into two forms by number (singular and plural). These three persons do not distinguish any gender (male or female). The first person, second person and third person is indicated by ‘əi-, nəŋ- and ma-’ respectively. The plural form is made by suffixing ‘-kʰoi’ to the first person, second person and third personal pronouns. The second person singular pronoun ‘nəŋ’ changes to ‘nə’ and the third person singular pronoun ‘ma’ changes to ‘mə-’ in plural formation and suffixed the plural marker ‘-kʰoi’ as in examples 2.a and 3.a. The first personal plural pronoun is made by suffixing ‘-kʰoi’ to the first person ‘əi-’ means ‘I’. In case two groups - subject and object pronouns are discussed in detailed.

Person and Number

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<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. nəŋ cak ca -bə -rə you rice eat NZR INT ‘Do you eat rice’?</td>
<td>2.a nə-kʰoi cak ca -bə -rə 2PP PL rice eat NZR INT ‘Do you eat rice’?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ma isiŋ tʰək-i s/he water drink eat SA ‘S/he drinks water’.</td>
<td>3.a mə-kʰoi isiŋ tʰək-i 3PP. PL water drink SA ‘They drink water’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another singular form of personal pronoun:

A suffix marker ‘-hak’ is suffixed to the first, second and third personal singular pronouns to identify the definitive form. The third personal subject pronoun (nəŋ) changes to ‘nə’ and third personal subject pronoun (ma) changes to ‘mə’. Whereas first personal subject pronoun (əi) remain unchanged. But the third personal subject pronoun ‘mə-hak’ is more prominent than the other forms i.e: first personal pronoun ‘əi-hak’ and second personal pronoun ‘nə-hak’. This suffix marker ‘-hak’ is generally used in the narrative form of speech. The plural forms remain unchanged as in the above examples (1.a, 2.a, 3.a).

<table>
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<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
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<tr>
<td>6. mə -hak isiŋ tʰək -i s/he DEF water drink SA ‘S/he drinks water’.</td>
<td>6.a mə-kʰoi isiŋ tʰək -i 3PP. PL water drink SA ‘They drink water’.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Case: In this category, two cases - subject pronoun and object pronoun have been used.
Subject Pronoun
Subject pronouns are used when the person or thing is the subject of a sentence or clause. In the example (7.) below, ‘əi’ means ‘I’ like to eat fish but ‘ma’ doesn’t like to eat fish. In the example (8), ‘nəŋ’ means ‘you’ love Sita but ‘əi’ means ‘I’ do not love Sita. In the example (9), ‘ma’ means ‘he’ eats meat but ‘əi’ means ‘I’ do not eat meat. Both the asterisk marks (*) and (**) can be used.

7. əi -nə ŋa ca -bə pam -i ədubu ma *-nə **-di pam -de
   I NOM fish eat NZR like SA but 3PP NOM DET like NEG
   ‘I like to eat fish but he doesn’t eat’.

8. nəŋ -nə sita nənṣi -i ədubu əi *-nə **-di nənṣi -de
   you NOM sita love SA but I NOM DET love NEG
   ‘You love Sita but I don’t love’.

9. ma -nə sa ca -i ədubu əi *-nə **-di sa ca -de
   he NOM meat eat SA but I NOM DET meat eat NEG
   ‘He eats meat but I don’t ‘eat.

Object Pronoun
Object pronouns are used when the person or thing acts on itself. The use of pronouns often involves anaphora, where the meaning of the pronoun is dependent on a preceding (or sometimes following) noun phrase. The asterisk mark (*) in examples below is optional.

10. əi -nə ŋa ca -bə pam -i ədubu * (əi -nə) sa -di ca -bə pam -de
    I NOM fish eat NZR like SA but I NOM meat DET eat NZR like NEG
    ‘I like to eat fish but do not like to eat meat.

11. nəŋ -nə sita nənṣi ədubu *(nəŋ -nə) rani -di nənṣi -de
    you NOM sita love but you NOM Rani DET love NEG
    ‘You love Sita but do not love Rani’.

12. ma -nə əi -bə cəi -rə ədubu *(ma -nə) nəŋ -di cəi -de
    he NOM I ACC scold PROG but he NOM you DET scold NEG
    ‘He scolds me but did not scold you’.

II. Reflexive Pronoun
Reflexive pronouns are used when a person or thing acts on itself. In this pronoun, the suffix marker; ‘-sa’ means ‘self/selves’ is suffixed to the pronominal markers (i.e.: -i-, nə-, mə-). Here in the examples ‘loinə’ below gives the meaning of collectiveness and ‘-mək’ gives the meaning of particularisation (person or thing). The asterisk marks (*) & (**) in the examples (13.a, 14.a, and 15.a) are optional.

Examples:

<table>
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<th>Singular</th>
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<tr>
<td>13. əi -sə lak -le</td>
<td>13.a əi -kəoi *(i-sa) loinə **(-mək) lak -i</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘I, myself came’</td>
<td>I PL 1PP self COLL PART come SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you 2PP self come NZR INT</td>
<td>2PP PL 2PP self COLL PART come NZR INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Did you come yourself?’</td>
<td>‘Did you come yourselves come?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. ma mə -sə lak -kə -də -rə</td>
<td>15.a mə -kəoi *(mə-sa) loinə **(-mək) lak-kə-də -rə</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
s/he 3PP self come UN EMP INT 3ppPL 3PP self COLL PART come UN EMP INT

‘Will s/he come herself/himself’? ‘They, themselves come’.

Again, in the examples below, the suffix marker ‘-tʰəntə’ is suffixed to the above three singular pronominal markers. It is happened to singular pronouns only. This suffix marker specifies of the sentence particularly. The examples 16.a, 17.a and 18.a are more prominent than the examples 16, 17 and 18. Here, in the examples 18 and 18.a the subject may be in the form of underlying structure.

s/they 3PP self come UN EMP INT

Reciprocal Pronoun
Reciprocal pronouns refer to a reciprocal relationship. It refers to a noun phrase in the same clause and it happens in plural form. Here, ‘masel’ (each other) is a common reciprocal term and ‘əməgə əməgə’ (one another) is used with collective marker ‘punnə’. Examples;

masel
19. əi  kʰoi masel nuŋsi -nai
I PL each other love TOGE
‘We love each other’.

20. ən  kʰoi masel nuŋsi -nai
2PP PL each other love TOGE
‘You (PL) love each other’.

21. ma  kʰoi masel nuŋsi -nai
3PP PL each other love TOGE
‘They love one another’.

Both masel and əməgə əməgə can be used in the examples 25, 26, & 27 and it conveys the similar meaning. In this case ‘masel’ precedes before the reciprocal marker ‘əməgə əməgə’.

22. əi  kʰoi əməgə əməgə kʰət -nai
I PL one another fight TOGE
‘We fight with each other’.

23. ən  kʰoi əməgə əməgə kʰət -nai
2PP PL one another fight TOGE UN PROH
‘You (PL) fight one another’.

24. ma  kʰoi əməgə əməgə kʰət -nai
3PP PL one another fight TOGE
‘They fight with each other’.

25. əi  kʰoi masel əməgə əməgə kʰət -nai
I PL each other one another fight TOGE
‘We fight with one another’.

26. ən  kʰoi masel əməgə əməgə kʰət -nai
2PP PL each other one another fight TOGE
‘You (PL) fight with one another’.

27. ma  kʰoi masel əməgə əməgə kʰət -nai
3PP PL each other one another fight TOGE
‘They fight with each other’.
Possessive Pronoun
Possessive pronouns are used to indicate possession or ownership. In Meiteilon, possessive pronouns are denoted by the suffix marker ‘-ki ~ -gi’ to the subject or noun.

Singular
28. masa ni -gi san -ni
   this I POSS cow COP
   ‘This is my cow’.
29. masa nən -gi san -ni
   this you POSS cow COP
   ‘This is your cow’.
30. masa məhak -ki san -ni
   this s/he POSS cow COP
   ‘This is his cow’.

Plural
28.a masa ni -kəoi -gi san -ni
   this I PL POSS cow COP
   ‘This is our cow’.
29.a masa nə -kəoi -gi san -ni
   this 2PP PL POSS cow COP
   ‘This is your cow’.
30.a masa mə -kəoi -gi san -ni
   this 3PP PL POSS cow COP
   ‘This is their cow’.

Demonstrative Pronoun
Demonstrative pronouns often distinguish their targets by pointing or by some other indication of position. It may also be anaphoric depending on an earlier context. The demonstrative pronoun ‘-si’ carries the meaning of nearness whereas ‘-du’ carries the meaning of a thing which is far away from the speaker. Here, in examples (31 & 32) ‘masi’ means ‘this’ and ‘modu’ means ‘that’ and the plural form is ‘məkəoi -si’ (these) and ‘məkəoi -du’ (those) respectively.

**singular**
31. masa hui -ni
   this dog COP
   ‘This is dog’.
32. modu həudoŋ -ni
   that cat COP
   ‘That is cat’.

**plural**
31.a məkəoi -si hui -siŋ -ni
   they DEM dog PL COP
   ‘These are dogs’.
32.a məkəoi -du həudoŋ -siŋ -ni
   they DEM cat PL COP
   ‘Those are cats’.

Indefinite Pronoun
Indefinite pronoun refers to one or more unspecified persons or things. The word ‘kəra’ (someone) indicates more than one but not the exact number in particular as in examples (33 & 33.a) ‘kərigumbə kəra’ (something) (34, 34.a). The examples 35, and 35* give same gloss but the difference is ‘kənagumbə ña/kərigumbə ña’ (someone/something) and ‘kəra’ (someone/anything) carries the meaning of a few person whose number is not mentioned.

Examples:
33. ñi komla kəra ca -go -ni
   I orange INDEF eat UNR COP
   ‘I will eat some orange’.
34. nə kərigumbə kə ca -u
   you something INDEF eat COM
   ‘Eat something’.
35. kənagumbə ña lak -i
   someone one come SA
   ‘Someone (SG) has come?’
33.a ñi -kəoi komla -kəra ca -go -ni
   I PL orange INDEF eat UNR COP
   ‘We will eat some orange’.
34.a nə -kəoi kərigumbə kə ca -u
   2PP PL something INDEF eat COM
   ‘You (PL) will eat something’.
35.a * kənagumbə kəra lak -i
   someone INDEF come SA
   ‘Someone (PL) has come?’
Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns are used in relative clauses. Indefinite relative pronouns have some of the properties of both relative pronouns and indefinite pronouns. It has a sense of referring back, but the person or thing to which they refer has not previously been explicitly named. The relative pronouns are: - ‘kəna’ (who), ‘kənabu’ (whom), ‘kənagi’ (whose), ‘kəri’ (what) and ‘kərəmbə’ (which). Examples are as below.

kəna (who)

36.  nəŋ -nə kəri pam -bə -ge hai -bə əi kəbə -i
you NOM what like NZR INTE mention NZR I know SA
‘I know what you (SG) like’.

37.  babu -nə kəri ca -bə pam -i hai -bə əi kəbə -i
babu NOM what eat NZR like SA mention NZR I know SA
‘I know what Babu likes to eat’.

38.  əi -nə kəri yen -bə pam -i hai -bə ma -nə kəbə -i
I NOM what watch NZR like SA mention NZR he NOM know SA
‘He knows what I like to watch’.

kənabu (whom)

39.  nəŋ -nə kəri pam -bə -ge hai -bə əi kəbə -i
you NOM what like NZR INTE mention NZR I know SA
‘I know what thing you (SG) like’.

40.  babu -nə kəri ca -bə ai kəbə -i
babu NOM what eat NZR I know SA
‘I know what Babu eats’.

41.  əi -nə kəri yen -bə ma -nə kəbə -i
I NOM what see NZR he NOM know SA
‘He knows what thing I look at’.

kənagi (whose)

42.  nəŋ -nə kəna -gi lairik -nə pai -ri -bə -do
you NOM who POSS book INT hold PROG NZR DET
‘Whose book you are holding’?

43.  babu -nə kəri ca -bə ai kəbə -i
babu NOM what eat NZR I know SA
‘I know what Babu eats’.

44.  əi -nə kəri yen -bə ma -nə kəbə -i
I NOM what see NZR he NOM know SA
‘He knows what thing I look at’.

kəri (what)

45.  nəŋ -nə kəri pam -bə -ge hai -bə əi kəbə -i
you NOM what like NZR INTE mention NZR I know SA
‘I know what you (SG) like’.

46.  babu -nə kəri ca -bə ai kəbə -i
babu NOM what eat NZR I know SA
‘I know what Babu eats’.
47. əi -nə kərī yəŋ -bə ma -nə kʰəŋ -i
   I NOM what see NZR he NOM know SA
   ‘He knows what I look at’.

kərəmbə (which)

In examples below, the asterisk marks (*) denote the nominative case markers which is optional category.

48. nəŋ -nə kərəmbə pam -bə əi *-nə kʰəŋ -i
    you NOM which like NZR I NOM know SA
    ‘I know which you (SG) like’.

49. ma -nə kərəmbə ca -bə nəŋ *-nə kʰəŋ -i
    s/he NOM which eat NZR you NOM know SA
    ‘You know which he eats’.

50. əi -nə kərəmbə ʰurit pai -bə ma *-nə kʰəŋ -i
    I NOM which shirt hold NZR he NOM know SA
    ‘He knows which shirt I hold’.

mədu (that)

In example (51.*), the aspect marker ‘-i’ is merged with the verb ‘ui’ means ‘to see’. So, it is not necessary to mention the aspect marker.

51.* nəŋ -nə mədu ca -bə əi ui (*-i)
    you NOM that eat NZR I see SA
    ‘I know what you (SG) like’.

52. babu -nə mədu kərino kʰəŋ -i
    babu NOM that what know SA
    ‘Babu knows what that is’.

53. əi -nə mədu u-re
    I NOM that see PERF
    ‘I have seen that’.

III. Interrogative Pronoun

Interrogative pronouns ask which person or thing is meant. In reference to a person, one may use ‘kəna’ who (subject), ‘kənagi’ whom (object) or ‘kənagi’ whose (possessive). In colloquial speech, whom is generally replaced by who. Non-personal pronouns ‘kərəmbə’ which and ‘kərī’ what have only one form.

kəna (who)

kəna (who) is used as a subject of the sentence. Examples are as;

54. kəna -nə mədu ca -bə -ge
    who NOM DET eat NZR INTE
    ‘Who have eaten that?’

55. kəna-nə məpʰəm -si -də lak -pə -ge
    who NOM place DET LOC come NZR INTE
    ‘Who have come to this place?’

56. kəna -nə mənipur -də cat -li
who NOM Manipur LOC go PROG
‘Who have gone to Manipur?’

kanagi (whom) - It is used as object of a sentence (57, 58 & 59). It refers possessive meaning of a sentence as in examples.

kanagi
57. yum -du kana -gi -no house DET who POSS INT ‘Whose house is that?’
58. mapbǝm -si kana -gi -no place DET who POSS INT ‘Who have come to this place?’
59. manipur -do kana -nǝ cat -li who NOM Manipur LOC go PROG ‘Who have gone to Manipur?’

kərǝmbə (which) and kari (what) – These interrogative pronouns are used as object of the sentence as in the examples.

kərǝmbə
63. mǝsi kərǝmbǝ lairik -no this what book INT ‘Which book is this’?
64. mədu kərǝmbǝ mapbǝm -no that which place INT ‘Which place is that’?
65. məkǝoi -du kərǝmbǝ yum -no those DET which house INT ‘What are those houoses’?

kari
66. mǝsi kari -no this what INT ‘What is this’?
67. mədu kari -no that what INT ‘What is that’?
68. məkǝoi -si kari -no these DET what INT ‘What are these’?

IV. Pronouns and Determiners

Pronouns and determiners are closely related. Pronouns are actually determiners without a noun or a noun phrase. Instead determiners are defined as pronouns.

ai -kǝoi maǝtrǝi -siq - di sannǝ -bǝ pam -i I PL Meitei PL DET play NZR like SA ‘We, Meiteis like playing’.

na -kǝoi mahəirǝi -siq -di para pa -gǝ -dǝ -bǝ -ni 2PP PL student PL DET lesson read UN COM NZR COP ‘You (PL), the students should study your lessons’.

uhǝi -du cǝmpǝ ai -nǝ pu -rǝk -u fruit DET lemon be NOM bring TOW COM ‘Bring the fruit, lemon’.

3. Conclusion

From the above analysis, it is found that pronouns in Manipuri have six categories - personal pronouns, relative pronouns, interrogative pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, possessive
pronouns and indefinite pronouns. First person, second person and third person is indicated by ‘əi-, əŋ- and ma-’ respectively. The plural form is made by suffixing ‘-kəi’ to the first person, second person and third personal pronouns. In reflexive pronoun, the suffix marker; ‘-sa’ meaning ‘self/selves’ is suffixed to the pronominal markers (i.e.: i-, əŋ-, ma-). Reciprocal pronoun is used in plural form ‘məsel’ (each other). Possessive pronouns are denoted by the suffix marker ‘-ki ~ -gi’ to the subject or noun. Demonstrative pronoun is denoted by suffix marker ‘-si’ and ‘-du’. Indefinite pronouns is denoted by ‘kəra’ means ‘some’, ‘kərigumbə kəra’ means ‘something’, ‘kənagumbə əmə’ means of ‘anyone’. Interrogative pronouns are ‘kəna’ who (subject), ‘kənagi’ whom (object) or ‘kənagi’ whose (possessive). In colloquial speech, whom is generally replaced by who. Non-personal pronouns ‘kərəmbə’ which and ‘kəri’ what have only one form.

4. Abbreviation

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<th>Table 4.1: Abbreviations used</th>
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<td>DEM</td>
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References

[2] Hardegree, Gary Pronouns - Basic Ideas.: Department of Philosophy, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003