

Chapter 5

Root sentences

Chapter 4 described how the grammatical role of a noun phrase is signalled in Meithei. Chapters 5 and 6 provide a description of Meithei sentence types and patterns of subordination.

Basic sentence types in Meithei are determined through illocutionary mood markers, all of which are verbal inflectional suffixes, with the exception of the interrogative which is an enclitic. The morphemes and the sentence types they signal are listed in Table 1. The basic word order is the same for all root sentence types (see phrase structure rules in Chapter 3).

Table 1. Sentence Types in Meithei

Sentence type	Morpheme
nonhypothetical declarative	-i
assertive declarative	-e
imperative	-u
prohibitive	-nu
optative	-ke
supplicative	-si
permissive	-sənu
interrogative	-lə

A declarative sentence makes a statement or assertion. An imperative sentence issues a command and a prohibitive sentence is used to forbid the performance of an action. The optative is used to express a desire or intention. The supplicative is used to plead an action in which the speaker will participate. The permissive is used to grant permission for some action to be performed. Finally, the interrogative is used to elicit information. The use of these sentence types to perform speech acts other than the ones listed here is discussed in section 9.1. All sentences, except for question-word questions described in section 5.6.4, end with one of these mood markers, which may or may not be followed by an enclitic (see section 7.3).

5.1 Declarative

Declarative sentences can be characterized as those which are marked either by *-í* 'nonhypothetical' or *-e* 'assertive'. A pragmatically neutral sentence is marked by the nonhypothetical marker *-í* which indicates a mild assertion; the speaker does not support the statement by providing evidence for it, but simply presents it as fact. The nonhypothetical declarative has a perfect or imperfective aspectual reference since an action so encoded refers to either a habitual or constant truth (as in (1a,b)) or to a past action which has some current relevance (as in (1c,d)).

- (1) a. *əy čák čáy*
 əy čák čá -í
 I rice eat -NHYP
 I rice eat
 'I eat rice.'

- b. *ətər gulab pházəy*
 ətər gulab phé -čə -í
 ətər gulab good -SELF -NHYP
 rose is good
 'Roses are beautiful.'

- c. *məhák əpəl čárammí*
 mə -hák əpəl čá -ləm -í
 3P -here apple eat -EVD -NHYP
 he apple ate
 'He just ate an apple.'

- d. *Ramdi Ravanbu hátkhirəmmí*
 Ram -ti Ravan -pu hát -khi -ləm -í
 Ram -DLMT Ravan -PAT kill -STILL -EVD -NHYP
 Ram Ravan killed
 'Ram killed Ravan.'

An assertive declarative sentence is signalled through *-e* 'assertive'. Strong assertion declaratives have a perfective reference. Example (2) illustrates the difference between the nonhypothetical and strong assertive declarative. Compare the first and second response given by Ram to a question by Sita about whether or not the woman they are talking about has been studying diligently for her examination: in the first response Ram uses a nonhypothetical declara-

tive to indicate that she is a hard worker (a continuing state); in the second attempt to get his point across, Ram uses the strong-assertive declarative, directing attention to a single display of hard work in the past (a completed action which does not have current relevance).

- (2) Ram: *təwwí*
 təw -í
 do -NHYP
 does
 '(She) does.'

- Sita: *ha*
 ha
 intj
 what's that
 'Really?'

- Ram: *təwwe*
 təw -e
 do -ASRT
 does
 '(Yes, she) has.'

5.2 Optative

As illustrated in (3a), an optative sentence is indicated by *-ke* and expresses the speaker's desire or intention to perform some action. Optatives frequently signal future tense. As seen in (3b,c), an embedded optative clause may also refer to a desire or intention in the past.

- (3) a. *əy layrik page*
 əy layrik pa -ke
 I book read -OPT
 I book want to read
 'I want to read the book.'

- b. *ŋəraŋ polisna pháge háyɾəʔí*
 ŋəraŋ polis -nə phá -ke háy -lək -í
 yesterday police -CNTR catch -OPT say -DISTAL -NHYP
 yesterday police want to arrest said
 'Yesterday the police said they wanted to arrest me.'

- c. *thónsi lónge háyna*
 thón -si lón -ke háy -nə
 door -PDET lock -OPT say -INST
 this door wish to be locked that

khálləmbəni

- khén -ləm -pə -ni -ne
 think -EVD -NOM -COP -SI
 think
 'I hope I locked the door.'

5.3 Imperative and prohibitive

The basic way to express a command in Meithei is to suffix *-u* 'imperative' to a verb stem.

- (4) a. *nupa óyyu nupi mǎčá*
 nu -pa óy -u nu -pi mǎ -čá
 person -male be -IMP person -FEM one -small
 man you be female small

nəŋsuko

- nəŋ -su -ko
 you -ALSO -TAG
 you also, o.k.

'Hey girl, you too be like (one of those) men, O.K. (at least they have a job)!'

- b. *kátlɔ*
 kát -u
 offer -IMP
 'Offer!'

- c. *phú*
 phú -u
 beat -IMP
 'Beat!'

- d. *paw*
 pa -u
 read -IMP
 'Read!'

A negative command (i.e. a prohibition) can be issued with the use of the prohibitive marker *-nu*, which is not morphologically complex but is a distinct imperative form.⁴⁷

- (5) a. *nəŋ layrik pakhinu*
 nəŋ layrik pa -khi -nu
 you book read -STILL -PROBH
 you book do not read
 'Don't read!'

- b. *nəŋ sinema ədu yeŋnu*
 nəŋ sinema ə -du yeŋ -nu
 you cinema ATT -ddet look -PROBH
 you movie that don't see
 'You don't see that movie.'

5.4 Supplicative

Supplicatives, indicated by the morpheme *-sí*, allow the speaker to propose or urge some course of action where the speaker will be a participant in the action.

- (6) a. *əykhoy məyam čáksi lóynə čásənsi*
 əy -khoy mə -yam čák -si lóy -nə čá -sin -si
 I -hpl NM -much rice -PDET all -ADV eat -IN -SUP
 we a lot this rice all let's eat up
 'Let's all eat up all of this rice!'

- b. *əykhoy loynə sinema yeŋbə čətsi*
 əy -khoy loy -nə sinema yeŋ -pə čət -si
 I -hpl all -ADV cinema look -NOM go -SUP
 we all movies to look let's go
 'Let's all go to the movies.'

As noted by N. Nonigopal Singh (1987: 85), the supplicative marker can be used with stative verbs only if the verb takes the derivational suffix sequence -*sinnə* 'pretend' (from -*sin* 'pretend'; -*nə* 'reciprocal'), where *V-sinnəsi* means 'let us pretend that V is'.

- (6) c. *pəŋsinnəsi*
 pəŋ -sin -nə -si
 fool -IN -RECIP -SUP
 'Let us pretend to be foolish!'

The negative marker -*tə* can only be used with past events and thus cannot be used productively with supplicatives: so, **noktəsi* for 'Let's not laugh' is impossible.⁴⁸ Three ways to phrase a negative supplicative are to create a compound with the root *kum-* 'refuse' (6d), to suffix a root with -*loy* 'nonpotential' (6e), or -*nu* 'prohibitive' (6f). Consultants say that while (6f) is understandable, it sounds archaic.

- (6) d. *nókkumsi*
 nók -kum -si
 laugh -refuse -SUP
 'Let's not laugh!'
- e. *nókʔoyisi*
 nók -loy -si
 laugh -NPOT -SUP
 'Let's not laugh!'
- f. *nóknusi*
 nók -nu -si
 laugh -PROBH -SUP
 'Let's not laugh!'

5.5 Permissive

The permissive marker -*sənu* is used to grant permission to a 2nd or 3rd person to carry out some action.

- (7) *məsá məsági budhi ədunə*
 mə -sá mə -sá -ki budhi ə -tu -nə
 NM -body 3P -body -GEN wisdom ATT -ddet -INST
 his body of his self wisdom then

- hótəŋəđúnə pərikhya pas təwʃəsənu*
 hótə -čə -túnə pərikhya pas təw -čə -sənu
 try -SELF -ING exam pass do -SELF -PERMIT
 try themselves exam pass do for self
 'Let them pass the exams by each using their intelligence!'

5.6 Interrogative

This section will provide a description of yes-no, question-word, echo, alternative and tag questions. Indirect questions are discussed in Chapter 9.

5.6.1 Yes-no questions

Yes-no questions are formed by the suffixation of the interrogative enclitic -*lə* to a nominal construction. This can be a noun root as in (8a); a noun phrase as in (8b) where the noun is followed by a determiner; a noun root followed by a case marker as in (8c-e); a relative clause as in (8f); or a subordinate clause such as the adverbial purpose clause in (8g).

- (8) a. *həyeŋ čutila*
 həyeŋ čuti -lə
 tomorrow holiday -INT
 tomorrow is it a holiday
 'Is tomorrow a holiday?'

- b. *yénənwəsirə*
 yén -naw -si -lə
 hen -new -PDET -INT
 'This is the chick?'

c. *čindəra*

činj -tə -lə
 hill -LOC -INT
 'It's in the hills?'

d. *káythendəgira*

káy -then -təgi -lə
 grain -display -ABL -INT
 'You're returning from market?'

e. *phurit ədu Tombəgira*

phurit ə -tu Tomba -ki -lə
 shirt ATT -ddet Tomba -GEN -INT
 shirt that is it Tomba's
 'That's Tomba's shirt?'

f. *Tomba u kəkpa mīra*

Tomba u kək -pə mī -lə
 Tomba u cut -NOM man -INT
 Tomba tree to cut is it man
 'Is Tomba the man who is a wood cutter?'

g. *čánəbəgira*

čá -nəbə -ki -lə
 eat -IN ORDER TO -GEN -INT
 'Is this for eating?'

Verbs do not form interrogatives unless they are first nominalized as in (9a,b) or are in the potential mood. As discussed in section 6.1, *-kə* 'potential', *-loy* 'nonpotential', *-təw* 'certain future', and *-tə* 'strong possibility/obligation' act as nominalizers. Evidence for this is seen in forms like *cágəni* 'will eat' (from *čá* 'eat', *-kə* 'potential', and *-ni* 'copula') where the copula, which can only be suffixed to nominals, occurs on the inflected verb.⁴⁹ In (9c), *-lə* is suffixed directly to the mood marker *-tə* 'should'; in (9d), *-lə* is suffixed directly to the non-potential marker *-loy*.

- (9) a. *əynə čithi irəktəbəgi*
 əy -nə čithi i -lək -tə -pə -ki
 I -CNTR letter write -DISTAL -NEG -NOM -GEN
 I letter from not writing

nəŋ sawbra
 nəŋ saw -pə -lə
 you angry -NOM -INT
 you angry
 'Are you angry that I have not written you a letter?'

b. *čətəbra*

čət -tə -pə -lə
 go -NEG -NOM -INT
 '(Am I right in thinking that) you didn't go?'

c. *skutər mənində tóniŋbə*

skutər mə -niŋ -tə tón -niŋ -pə
 scooter NM -back -LOC ride -wish -NOM
 scooter at the back the one wishing to ride

mətam lakʔoydro
 mə -təm lak -loy -tə -lə -o
 NM -time come -NPOT -NES -INT -SOLCT
 time won't it come
 'Won't there be a time when (you too) wish to ride on the back of a scooter?'

d. *məhák čətləyra*

mə -hák čət -loy -lə
 3P -here go -NPOT -INT
 he will he not go
 'He said he wouldn't go?'

The interrogative marker may also be suffixed to the nominalized form of a verb with the potential mood markers. There is no apparent change in meaning between suffixation to the nominalized form and suffixation to the non-nominalized form.

(9) e. *sémdokabro*

sém -thok -lə -pə -lə -o
 correct -OUT -PERF -NOM -INT -SOLCT
 'Did they complete the corrections?'

f. *čátkədra*

čát -kə -tə -lə
 go -POT -NES -INT
 'Must you go?'

In colloquial speech it is common for subordinating quotatives (see section 6.2) to be deleted and for the morphology on the subordinator to be suffixed on the verb of the subordinated sentence. This results in the apparent suffixation of the interrogative marker to the non-nominalized form of the verb with imperative morphology: see (10a) where the interrogative is suffixed to *čátlukho* 'You go!'.⁵⁰

(10) a. *məkhoydə hánna*
 3P -khoy -LOC hán -nə
 mə -hpl -tə first -ADV
 with them first

*čátlukhorá*⁵⁰

čát -lu -khi -o háy -pə -lə
 go -ADIR -STILL -SOLCT say -NOM -INT
 will you go is it
 'Do you say that (you want me) to go to their place first?'

As noted by Thoudam (1980: 84–85), however, a sentence like (10a) is actually derived from a sentence like (10b):

(10) b. *məkhoydə hánna čátlukho*
 mə -khoy -tə hán -nə čát -lu -khi -o
 3P -hpl -LOC first -ADV go -ADIR -STILL -SOLCT
 to them first go there do you say that

háybra

háy -pə -lə
 say -NOM -INT
 that
 'Did you say that you wanted me to go with them?'

Such an analysis could also be used to explain interrogative marking with the optative in (10c), where the form with the quotative complementizer should be *táge háybra* 'Did you say you would like to hear (it)?'.

(10) c. *nəkhoy isáy ədu tágerá*
 nə -khoy isáy ə -tu tá -ke háy -pə -lə
 2P -hpl song ATT -ddet hear -OPT say -NOM -INT
 you all song that do you want to listen
 'Will you listen to the song?'

5.6.2 Alternative questions

An alternative question can be posed with the interrogative marker on both alternatives, which may both be positive as in (11a) or positive and negative as in (11b,c).⁵¹ In (11a) and in following examples the enclitic -o 'solicitive' is used as a performative marker of asking, best translated as 'I ask you please...'. It softens the force of the question, making it a polite request rather than a demand for information.⁵²

(11) a. *čaka əməra əniro?*
 čaka ə -mə -lə ə -ni -lə -o
 tire ATT -one -INT ATT -two -INT -SOLCT
 tire is it one is it two
 'Was it one tire or two?'

b. *nəj čátrəbra čátləroydra*
 nəj čát -tə -lə -pə -lə čát -lə -loy -tə -lə
 you go -NES -PRO -NOM -INT go -PRO -NPOT -NES -INT
 you will go will not go
 'Are you going or not?'

c. *təw háybro təwnu*
 təw háy -pə -lə -o təw -nu
 do say -NOM -INT -SOLCT do -PROBH
 do did they say don't do

háybrobá

háy -pə -lə -o háy -pə
say -NOM -INT -SOLCT say -NOM
did they say, tell (me)
'(Tell me) did they tell you to do it or not?'

Although no overt conjunction appears in informal speech, the alternatives can be conjoined with *nətraga* 'or' in more formal speech.

- (11) d. *thákkadra* *nətraga*
thák -kə -tə -lə nə -tə -lə -kə
drink -POT -NES -INT be -NES -PERF -ASS
will you drink or

thák'oydra
thák -loy -tə -lə
drink -NPOT -NES -INT
will you not drink
'Will you drink or not?'

The alternative question may also consist of just the first alternative and the disjunction, with the second alternative unspecified but understood.

- (11) e. *nə məhákki* *ləyphám*
nə mə -hák -ki ləy -phém
you 3P -here -GEN be -place
you his living place

khəṇbra *nətraga*
khəṇ -pə -lə nə -tə -lə -kə
know -NOM -INT be -NES -PERF -ASS
do you know or
'Do you know where he lives or not?'

As noted by Ch. Yashawanta Singh (1984: 190-195), there are two restrictions on the conjuncts: both alternatives must have the same aspect and if one of the alternatives is positive and the other negative, the positive alternative must precede the negative one. Ch. Yashawanta Singh provides no negative data to support the first restriction, but no counterexamples to his claim are found in my data. The second restriction is supported by (11f).

- (11) f. **nəṇ layrik ədu* *padəribra*
nəṇ layrik ə -tu pa -tə -li -pə -lə
you book ATT -ddet read -NEG -PROG -NOM -INT
you book that have you failed to read

nətraga *paribra*
nə -tə -lə -kə pa -li -pə -lə
nə -NES -PERF -ASS read -PROG -NOM -INT
or have you read
'Have you read that book or not?'

The alternative question can be used as a dependent question as seen in (11g) and (11h).

- (11) g. *phəṇṇəṃgədrə* *phəṇṇəṃmoydrə*
phəṇ -ṇəṃ -kə -tə -lə phəṇ -ṇəṃ -loy -tə -lə
get -able -POT -NES -INT get -able -NPOT -NES -INT
will she find will she not find
'I don't know whether or not she will be able to find it. (Literally: Will she or won't she be able to find (it))'

- h. *thákhibrə* *thákhidəbrə*
thá -khi -pə -lə thá -khi -tə -pə -lə
send -STILL -NOM -INT send -STILL -NEG -NOM -INT
did you send did you not send

háyna *thákhre*
háy -nə thá -khi -lə -e
say -INST send -STILL -PRO -ASRT
that have sent
'...whether or not it is ready he will send it...' (Literally: Will it be ready, will it not be ready, he will send it.)'

5.6.3 Tag questions

There are a number of ways to form tag questions in Meithei. One way is to use the negative form of a positive verb or the positive form of a negative verb as the tag. The tag is suffixed by the interrogative marker. This is illustrated in (12a).

- (12) a. *učék paybə* *ŋəmde* *ŋəmbra*
 učék pāy -pə *ŋəm -tə -e* *ŋám -pə -lə*
 bird fly -NOM able -NEG -ASRT able -NOM -INT
 bird to fly not able are they able
 'Birds cannot fly, can they?'

A second way to form a tag question is to use an invariant tag marker (which has only one form regardless of whether the questioned clause is negative or positive). There are two invariant tags: the lexical item *nətra* 'is it not so?' which requires a verbal response, and the enclitic *-ko* 'right, don't you agree?' which can be answered by gesturally expressed agreement or dissent.

- (12) b. *John əsida* *lakkəni*
 John ə -si -tə lak -kə -ni
 John ATT -pdet -LOC come -POT -COP
 John here will come

háybə *nətra*
 háy -pə nə -tə -lə
 say -NOM be -NEG -INT
 that is it not

'John said that he would come here, didn't he?'

- c. *se se əy wá háyge tároko*
 se se əy wá háy -ke tá -lə -o -ko
 hark hark I word say -OPT hear -PRO -SOLCT -TAG
 intj intj I word want to say listen, o.k?
 'Hey, hey, I'd like to say something, go ahead and listen, o.k.'

- (13) a. *kəna káythélda* *čáuli*
 kəna káy -thél -tə čét -li
 who grain -display -LOC go -PROG
 who to the market going
 'Who goes to the market?'

- b. *kənadəgi kəmdəwnə ləyruribə*
 kəna -təgi kəmdəwnə ləy -lu -lə -í háy -pə
 who -ABL how buy -ADIR -PERF -NHYP say -NOM
 from whom how did go and buy, tell (me)
 'How and from whom did he buy the certificate?'

- c. *Johnnə čákkə kərigə thónŋi háybə*
 John -nə čak -kə kəri -kə thón -í háy -pə
 John -CNTR rice -ASS what -ASS cook -NHYP say -NOM
 John with rice with what cooked that
 'What is it that John cooked rice with?'

- d. *nəŋnə əygi mərámdə ədum*
 nəŋ -nə əy -ki mə -lám -tə ə -sum
 you -CNTR I -GEN NM -way -LOC ATT -so
 you my towards thus

- háynə kərigi háyrino*
 háy -nə kəri -ki háy -li -no
 say -INST what -GEN say -PROG -INQ
 that why do you say that
 'Why do you talk about me like that?'

5.6.4 The morphology of question-word questions

The Meithei question-word system is rich: there are 6 basic forms all of which begin with *kə-* (from the Proto-Sino-Tibetan interrogative **ka* (Benedict 1984a). The basic forms are morphologically frozen⁵³ nominals and can be inflected like nouns. A list of question words found in my data, P. Madhubala Devi (1979: 213–234) and Ch. Yashawanta Singh (1984: 172) are given in Table 2. The most common ones are given in sentences in (13).

5.6.5 Nominal and verbalized question words

There are three ways to form a question-word question in Meithei. First, as shown in (13a), a nominal form of the question word occurs with an inflected verb. Second, as in (14a,b), the question word occurs in a sentence that ends with *-no* 'inquisitive'.⁵⁴ Questions are marked with *-no* when the speaker

Table 2. Question words

1.	<i>kəday</i>	'where' (approximately)
	<i>kədaydə</i>	'where'
	<i>kədaydəgi</i>	'from where'
	<i>kədaynə</i>	'which one'
	<i>kədaywaydə</i>	'from around where'
2.	<i>kədomdə</i>	'which way'
	<i>kədomdəgi</i>	'from which side'
3.	<i>kəna</i>	'who'
	<i>kənagə</i>	'with who'
	<i>kənagi</i>	'whose'
	<i>kənada</i>	'to whom'
	<i>kənadaɡi</i>	'from who'
	<i>kənanə</i>	'who'
	<i>kənabu</i>	'who'
4.	<i>kəya</i>	'how many' (for count nouns)
	<i>kəyada</i>	'for how much' (price)
	<i>kəyana</i>	'how much' (is needed to V)
	<i>kəyám</i>	'how much' (for mass nouns)
	<i>kəyarək</i>	'how many times'
	<i>kəyasubə</i>	'of what number' (ordinal)
5.	<i>kəram/kəm</i>	'how, in what way'
	<i>kəramkandə</i>	'at what time' ⁵⁵
	<i>kəramdəwnə/kəmdəwnə</i>	'how, by what means'
	<i>kəramnə</i>	'how, in what way'
	<i>kərambə</i>	'which'
6.	<i>kəri</i>	'what'
	<i>kərigə</i>	'with what'
	<i>kərigi</i>	'why' (V for what reason)
	<i>kəridə</i>	'on what, for what reason'
	<i>kəridəgi</i>	'from what'
	<i>kərinə</i>	'by what means, with what instrument'
	<i>kəydəw < kəridəw</i>	'doing what'
	<i>kəydəwəy < kəridəwəy</i>	'when'

requests the hearer to provide additional information about some topic/thing and can be translated as 'tell me please?'.
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- (14) a. *kənagi* *yénawno*
 kəna -ki *yén* -naw -no
 who -GEN chicken -new -INQ
 whose is this chick, tell me
 'Whose chicken is this?'

- b. *nəŋnə* *láyəkpa* *phurit?u*
 nəŋ -nə *láy* -lək -pə *phurit* -tu
 you -CNTR buy -DISTAL -NOM shirt -DDET
 you which was bought that shirt

- kərambə məkhəngino*
 kərambə mə -khén -ki -no
 which NM -type -GEN -INQ
 which kind is it
 'That shirt that you bought, what type is it?'

The third way of forming a question-word question is for *-no* to be affixed directly on the question word. In this case, the question word acts as the predicate for the sentence, taking either a simple noun phrase argument as in (14c,d) or a full complement as in (14e).

- (14) c. *kənagino*
 kəna -ki -no
 who -GEN -INQ
 whose is it
 'Whose is (it)?'

- d. *nəŋ kənano*
 nəŋ *kəna* -no
 you who -INQ
 you who is it
 'Who are you?'

- e. *nəŋnə* *puθorəkkəni*
 nəŋ -nə pu -thok -lək -kə -ni
 you -CNTR carry -OUT -DISTAL -POT -COP
 you will bring it

háybədu *kəriŋo*
 háy -pədu kəri -no
 say -DCOMP what -INQ
 that what is it
 'What is it that you said you would bring?'

5.6.6 Position of the question word

As discussed in section 5.6.5 there are three types of question word questions: (1) question word-inflected verb (2) question word-main verb+inquisitive; (3) question word+inquisitive. In the first type of question -- the questioning of the actor, patient, goal, theme and other oblique arguments in simple sentences -- the question word appears *in situ* (following the canonical argument and verb order).

- (15) a. *kəna ləyri*
 kəna ləy -li
 who be -PROG
 'Who is there?'

- b. *mána phidu kənada útli*
 má -nə phi -tu kəna -tə út -í
 he -CNTR cloth -DDET who -LOC show -NHYP
 he that cloth to whom has shown
 'To whom has he shown the cloth?'

- c. *nəŋgi yum kədaydə láy*
 nəŋ -ki yum kəday -tə láy -í
 you -GEN house where -LOC is -NHYP
 your house where at is
 'Where is your house?'

Additionally, a question word may occur in a noncanonical position as shown in Ch. Yashawanta Singh (1984: 190) and repeated here in (16a-c).

- (16) a. *nəŋ kəydəwəŋə yumdə čátkəni*
 nəŋ kəydəwəŋə yum -tə čát -kə -ni
 you when house -LOC go -POT -COP
 you when to house will go
 'When will you go home?'

b. *nəŋ yumdə kəydəwəŋə čátkəni*

c. *kəydəwəŋə nəŋ yumdə čátkəni*

General word order constraints hold here. The verb must be sentence final. The constituents within a question word phrase can be repositioned as in (16e,f), as long as the question word constituent is not broken up as in (16d).

- (16) d. **nəŋ tinnə kərəmbə čík khre*
 nəŋ tín -nə kərəmbə čík -khi -lə -e
 you insect -CNTR which bite -STILL -PERF-ASRT
 you by insect which has bitten
 'Which insect bit you?'

e. *kərəmbə tinnə nəŋ čík khre*

- f. *nəŋ tín kərəmbə čík khre*
 nəŋ tín kərəmbə -nə čík -khi -lə -e
 you insect which -INST bit -STILL -PERF -ASRT
 you insect by which bit
 'Which insect has bitten you?'

Part of a conjunct may be questioned *in situ* only when the question is an echo question as in (13c). Th. Harimohon Singh (p.c.) notes that such a sentence might be used when a speaker has not heard the declarative counterpart clearly or as a written exam question.

A constituent of a subordinate clause (as in (17a)) or a relative clause (as in (17b)) is questioned *in situ*.

- (17) a. *əy kəri wá háysige háybədu khállí*
 əy kəri wá háy -si -ke háy -pə -tu khén -li
 I what word say -SUP -OPT say -NOM -DDET think -PROG
 I what word let me say that am thinking
 'I am thinking about what I should say.'

- b. *nəŋ kəna luhónbə pammí*
nəŋ kəna lu -hón -pə pam -í
 you who head -initiate -NOM want -NHYP
 you who to marry like
 'Who do you want to marry?'

In type 3 questions, the question word+inquisitive sequence must occur at the edge of a clause. If the question word occurs at the right edge of the clause, a neutral reading is obtained.

- (18) a. *nəŋnə puthorəkídu kəríno*
nəŋ -nə pu -thok -lək -li -tu kəri -no
 you -CNTR carry -OUT -DISTAL -PROG -DDET what -INQ
 you that you carry what is it
 'That (which) you brought, what is it?'

If the question word occurs at the left edge of the clause, the clause which follows the question word is an *afterthought*.

- (18) b. *kəríno nəŋnə puthorəkídu*
 'What is it, that thing you brought?'

5.6.7 Multiple question words

Multiple question words within a clause may appear *in situ* or may order freely with other constituents within the sentence as in (19a-e). In keeping with general word order constraints, neither of the question words may occur after the verb.

- (19) a. *məhákti kənadəgi*
mə -hák -ti kəna -təgi
 he -here -DLMT who -ABL
 he from who
- kəmdəwnə ləwruribá*
kəmdəw -nə ləw -lu -li háy -pə
 how -ADV get -ADIR -PROG say -NOM
 how having got from, tell (me)
 'How and from where did he get it?'

- b. *kənadəgi məhákti kəmdəwnə ləwruribə*
 from who he how buy
- c. *kəmdəwnə məhákti kənadəgi ləwruribə*
 how he from who buy
- d. *kənadəgi kəmdəwnə məhákti ləwruribə*
 from who how he buy
- e. *kəmdəwnə kənadəgi məhákti ləwruribə*
 how from who he buy

Predictably, sequences of question word+inquisitive cannot be separated since the rest of the sentence is an *afterthought*. For example, *kərinone* 'what is it' cannot occur after *nəŋnə* 'you' in (19f).

- (19) f. *kənano kərinone, nəŋnə*
kəna -no kəri -no -ne nəŋ -nə
 who -INQ what -INQ -SI you -CNTR
 who is it what is it you

- khəŋde háyribədubo məmá*
khəŋ -tə -e háy -li -pədu -pu mə -má
 know -NEG -ASRT say -PROG -DCOMP -PAT 3P -mother
 not know that you are saying their mother
 'Mother, what or who do you say that you don't know?'

5.6.8 Phrase final rising intonation

Questions with interrogative morphology do not have a characteristic intonation associated to them; however, with adequate pragmatic grounding, phrase final rising intonation can signal an interrogative. Ch. Yashawanta Singh (1984: 185) provides (20a) as an example where intonation alone allows for this declarative sentence to be interpreted as an interrogative.

- (20) a. *nəŋ həwʃik pháwbə isáy sákʔi*
nəŋ həwʃik pháw -pə isáy sák -li
 you now up to -NOM song sing -PROG
 you now up to song singing
 'You are still singing?'

I have found examples of this use of intonation in plays and conversations that I have recorded. For example, in (20b) a character asks why Nimay, who is known to be a kind and gentle man, is being arrested by the police.

- (20) b. *Nimaybudi*
 Nimay -pu -ti
 Nimay -ADVR -DLMT
 'It is Nimay?'

5.6.9 Use of question words as discourse markers

Question words are used as discourse markers. For example, the question word *kəriŋo* (or *kəyno* in fast speech) is used as a hesitation marker, where the speaker is indicating a momentary lapse in memory, translating roughly in English as 'Now, what was I was going to say?'

- (21) a. *Rajan nəkhoygi* ə: oʃa oyrəmbə *kəyno*
 Rajan nə -khoy -ki ə: oʃa oy -ləm -pə *kəyno*
 Rajan 2P -hpl -GEN um teacher be -EVD -NOM what is it
 Rajan your um teacher who is what is it
- daktər Cəndel kəydəwŋəy lakkəni háyge*
 daktər Cəndel kəydəwŋəy lak -kə -ni háy -ke
 doctor Chandel when come -POT -COP say -OPT
 doctor Chandel when will come want to say
 'Rajan, on which day did your teacher, what's his name, Dr. Chandel say he would come?'
- b. *ədə* *kəynodi* *kəday*
 ə -tu -tə *kəyno* -ti *kəday*
 ATT -ddet -LOC what is it -DLMT where
 then what is it where
- čátkhige* *Sushiladi*
 čát -khi -ke Sushila -ti
 go -STILL -OPT Sushila -DLMT
 wants to go that Sushila
 'All right then, what's her name, where has she gone, that Shushila?'

kəyno can also be used to indicate the beginning of a new topic:

- (21) c. *kəynoŋa* *əykhoy* *mána*
kəyno -nə əy -khoy má -nə
 what is it -ADV I -hpl mother -CNTR
 well then our mother
 'Well, our mother...'

The question word *kəyno* also occurs in the idiomatic phrase *kəyno táwre* 'so, anyway' (Literally: what is done), where it is used by the speaker to indicate the transition of the conversation from one topic to another.

- (21) d. *má skop yamná* *láybəni* *mági*
 má skop yam -nə láy -pə -ni má -ki
 her scope lot -ADV have -NOM -COP her -GEN
 her scope a lot is her's

kəyno-təwre *ədudəy*
kəyno -təw -lə -e ə -tu -təgi
 what is it -do -PERF -ASRT ATT -ddet -ABL
 so anyway from that

nəŋnəsida *thúŋŋəbna*
 nəŋ -nə -si -tə thúŋ -lə -pə -nə
 you -CNTR -PDET -LOC reach -PRO -NOM -INST
 you here for reaching

kəydəwŋəy *thunŋəbə*
kəydəwŋəy thunŋ -lə -pə
 when reach -PERF -NOM
 when reached, you say
 'She has a lot of potential, her (...incompleted thought), so anyway, then, in order to reach here (changes line of questioning), when did you say you reached here?'

The question word *kəram* 'how', or its variant *kam*, also appears in two idiomatic phrases with the verb *təw* 'do'. The first is (21e), which is used as a common greeting between friends who have not seen each other for a while. (21f) is a conventionalized preamble to the telling of an event that has taken place in the remote past. It is found frequently in traditional narratives.

- (21) e. *kəmdəwre*
 kəɾəm -təw -lə -e
 how -do -PERF -ASRT
 how are you doing
 'How do you do?'

- f. *nónmædi kəmdəwwi*⁵⁶
 nón -mə -ti kəɾəm -təw -li
 day -one -DLMT how -do -PROG
 'What happened one day...'

The question word *kərigi* 'why', can be used to introduce a direct quote as in (21g), where the speaker sets up the situation in which the speech act that he is about to report occurred.

- (21) g. *phəʃəna* *háyrəbəni*
 phəʃə -nə háy -ləbə -ni
 beauty -ADV say -HAVING -COP
 beautifully said that

kəriginobu *phátʔəbə*
 kərigi -no -pu phə -tə -pə
 why -INQ -ADVR good -NEG -NOM
 since that bad

khənfɪnle *moydu* *pumme*
 khən -sin -lə -e mə -khoy -tu pum -lə -e
 think -IN -PERF -ASRT 3P -hpl -DDET rot -PERF -ASRT
 chosen they are rotten
 '...I put it to them beautifully, (I said), "since they made a bad selection, (the ones selected), they will be rotten..."'

Chapter 6 Subordination

There are three basic forms of clausal subordination in Meithei: subordinate clauses formed by suffixing a nominalizer to a noninflected verb; complements formed by suffixing complementizers to the nominalized clause; and adverbial clauses formed by suffixing subordinators on either nominalized clauses or complements.

6.1 Nominalization

Verbs can be nominalized in a number of ways and can function as relative clauses, adjectives, or nominalized complements. In this section, I will describe the morphology of nominalization and the constructions in which nominalized verbs occur. The phrase structure of nominalized clauses is represented in (1).

- (1) $S_{nom} \rightarrow (NP^*) V_{nom}$
 $V_{nom} \rightarrow V-(\text{derivational morphology})\text{-nominalizer}$

6.1.1. Nominalizers

There are three nominalizers in Meithei. First, verbs are nominalized by suffixation of *-pə*.

- (2) a. *nupidi* *ṇádu* *phábə* *pammí*
 nu -pi -ti ṇá -tu phá -pə pam -í
 person -FEM -DLMT fish -DDET catch -NOM like -NHYP
 that woman that fish to catch like
 'The woman wants to catch fish.'

Second, as argued in section 5.6.1, mood markers (*-kə* 'potential', *-loy* 'nonpotential', *-təw* 'obligation/probability', and *-tə* 'necessity') also act as nominalizers. Evidence for this is that verbs inflected with a mood marker can be suffixed by *-lə* 'interrogative' or the copula *-ni* both of which occur only on nominals. The mood markers may occur independently as nominalizers (as in (2b)) or may occur in conjunction with the nominalizer (as in (2c)).