

Initiation and Response in Manipuri Conversation

Huiningshumbam Surchandra Singh

(Department of Linguistics, Manipur University, Manipur, India)

Corresponding Author: Huiningshumbam Surchandra Singh

ABSTRACT : *The present paper attempts to explore the structure of Manipuri question and answer sequence. When a speaker puts an initiation on another speaker, an immediate response is to be supplied. The two speakers' initiation and response sequence makes an adjacency pair. In this pair the initiation gets its immediate response. But in some contexts another adjacency pair is inserted within an adjacency pair which is caused by the making of a counter question. This insertion is called an insertion sequence. Preferred response is given immediately without any delay whereas the dispreferred response is given in a mitigated or indirect form. Moreover the dispreferred response is a negative one. In Manipuri society to give an immediate response is considered to be very rude or hostile. So in order to attenuate the hostility, dispreferred response is used with many conversational devices like accounts, excuses, disclaimers and apologies.*

KEYWORDS – Adjacency pair, conversational device, diapreferred response, initiation, preferred response

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I. INTRODUCTION

Stubbs (1983) defines a conversational exchange as the minimal interactive unit, comprising at least an initiation from one speaker and a corresponding response from another speaker. The simplest structure of an exchange is therefore Initiation-Response (IR). The most obvious example of such an exchange is probably a question-answer pair with the structure QA (Stubbs, 1983). In the conversational interactive exchange of Manipuri discourse, when the speaker intends to know about something he or she needs to put an initiation and the other interlocutor also needs to make an appropriate response so that they can build a complete discourse of interaction. In the study of the initiation-response sequence the notions like **adjacency pair**, **insertion sequence** and **preference organization** are discussed. Generally questions are made with the expectation of an appropriate response which may be either preferred or dispreferred which will be discussed in the following part of this chapter and responses are made in the different ways. Normally the speaker who initiates an initiation expects an immediate response. However in some certain context the speaker who initiates an initiation does not get an immediate response; instead a counter question has been made by the interlocutor who should response. Later the speaker who initiates a question gets the response of the respective question. Now the question-answer sequence found in the conversational exchange of Manipuri discourse has taken a great place. The contribution of the sequence of question-answer to a complete cohesive discourse is so great.

II. ADJACENCY PAIR

In fact initiation and response sequence is one of the adjacency pairs like greeting-greeting, offer-acceptance and apology-minimization. Adjacency pairs are the kind of paired utterances of which question-answer, greeting-greeting, offer-acceptance, apology-minimization (Levinson, 1983). Adjacency pairs are the sequences of two utterances that are:

1. adjacent
2. produced by different speakers
3. ordered as a first part and a second part
4. typed so that a particular first part requires a particular second

And there is a rule governing the use of adjacency pairs, namely:

Having produced a first part of the same pair, current speaker must stop speaking, and next speaker must produce at that point a second part to the same pair (Levinson, 1983).

Schegloff and Sacks (1973) called the sorts of paired utterances adjacency pairs and these adjacency pairs are the basic unit on which sequences can be used by way of a preliminary definition.

1. They consist of two turns
2. They are produced by the different speakers
3. They are placed next to each other in their basic minimal form
4. They are ordered
5. They are differentiated into pair types

From the concepts of the adjacency pairs given by the different analysts some characteristic features of this concept can be drawn out. When an adjacency pair occurs there will be at least two turns produced by the different speakers. The two turns which build up an adjacency pair will occur immediately without any intervening talk between the two. However it does not mean that all the adjacency pairs are in fact immediately adjacent but in certain contexts other talk can come between the two turns. The two turns of an adjacency pair are ordered so that one of the turns of the pair always occurs first and the other also always occurs in the second. For instance, initiation always precedes the response. Those forms of talk which initiate actions are called First Pair Part (FPP) while those followed from such initiation are called Second Pair Part (SPP) (Liddicoat, 2007).

1. A- mək^hoi cətk^hərəbərə
 mə-k^hoi cət-k^hə-rə-bə-ra
 3P-PL go-DEF-PERF-NMZ-INTR
 ‘Had they gone?’
 B- cətk^həre
 cət-k^hə-re
 go-DEF-PERF
 ‘Yes, they had gone.’

Here the speaker A initiates a question and the speaker B also gives an immediate response. The speaker A’s utterance of question is the first turn and the speaker B’s response is the second turn. There comes no intervention between the two turns. So the speaker A’s question builds a first part of this initiation-response pair and it is called First Pair Part (FPP) and the speaker B’s response builds the second part of this pair and it is called Second Pair Part (SPP). This initiation-response sequence has an order that the initiation of the speaker A *mək^hoi cətk^hərəbərə* ‘Had they gone?’ precedes the response of the speaker B i.e. *cətk^həre* ‘yes, they had gone’.

The relationship between the FPP and the SPP is constrained by the types of FPPs produced. In other words an appropriate SPP will be required in accordance with the FPP. For instance, if the FPP is a question then the SPP that will follow it will automatically be an answer. To make a cohesive conversational discourse it is required to maintain such relationship between the two different pair parts. The very concept adjacency pair is very much related to the turn-taking system. An adjacency pair requires that once an FPP has been produced the current speaker will stop speaking and the next speaker should produce an SPP of the relevant type.

2. A- lairiku kənanə puk^hi
 lairik-tu kəna-nə pu-k^hə-i
 book-DET who-NOM bring-DEF-SAM
 ‘Who took away the book?’
 B- tombanə puk^hibəni
 tomba-nə pu-k^hə-i-bə-ni
 Tomba-NOM bring-DEF-SAM-NMZ-COP
 ‘Tomba had taken away the book.’
 or
 əi k^həŋde
 əi k^həŋ-de
 I know-NEG
 ‘I do not know.’

In this pair of utterances of initiation and response the speaker A’s question is the FPP and the speaker B’s response is the SPP. There is a close relationship between these two pair parts in the sense that as the first pair part is an initiation the second pair part is automatically a response. In one sense the initiation in the FPP is always followed by the response which will be in the SPP. That is why the response to the speaker A’s initiation the speaker B produces is an appropriate response. Now these two pair parts of the turn build up an adjacency pair. Another feature that can be seen from the above given example is that when the speaker A makes an initiation he stops speaking and the speaker B takes the second turn and makes an appropriate response. What it means is that adjacency pair is related to the turn taking system.

So it is necessary to study the initiation and response of Manipuri discourse putting in the domain of adjacency pair. The question-answer sequences are constructed by two different speakers. In a simple way, in order to make a conversational exchange at least two speakers should take part. When a speaker makes an initiation there will be surely an addressee or a hearer who will make a response to that initiation. In the first part of the conversational exchange a speaker initiates a question and then will stop speaking giving a turn to the addressee who will be the next speaker. In the second part the addressee starts to respond to the question asked by the speaker of the first pair part. Likewise initiation comes in the first part and then response in the second. In this order the conversational exchange is going on. A crucial point is that the response in the SPP is formed suitably with the initiation put at the FPP. Some instances are illustrated here as follows:

3. A1- cak carəbəra
 cak ca-rə-bə-ra
 meal eat-PERF-NMZ-INTR
 ‘Have you taken meal?’
 B1- care
 ca-re
 eat-PERF
 ‘Yes, I have taken meal.’
 A2- kəri ensaj carəge
 kəri ensaj ca-rə-ge
 what curry eat-PERF-INT
 ‘What curry have you taken?’
 B2- ŋa cai
 ŋa cai-φ
 fish eat-SAM
 ‘I have eaten fish curry.’

This above given piece of conversational exchange is between the speaker A and B. A1 and B1 build the first adjacency pair. In the first adjacency pair, the speaker A initiates a question and stops speaking. After the speaker A produces an initiation, the speaker B takes the second turn. The initiation of the speaker A1’s first pair part is a confirmation type of question (polar question) i.e. *cak carəbəra* ‘have you taken meal?’. The next speaker B1 who makes the second pair part of the first adjacency pair is taking his turn to respond to the question of A1. The response of the speaker B1 in the second pair part is represented by the verbal form only. In the spoken form of Manipuri it is permitted to response in such a way. However it can give a complete response to the question of the speaker A1.

The second adjacency pair in the example is made by the FPP produced by the speaker A2 and the SPP made by the speaker B2. In the FPP of the second adjacency pair the speaker A2 again makes another initiation which is of information seeking type of question (content question) i.e. *kəri ensaj carəge* ‘what curry have you eaten?’. Like in the first adjacency pair this second adjacency pair starts with the A2’s question. Just after the end of the speaker A2’s turn, the speaker B2 responds to the speaker A2’s question and builds up the second pair part of the adjacency pair. It is the fact that initiation and response are the two pair parts of the same adjacency pair. So, initiation and response are the two important pair parts of one adjacency pair.

III. INSERTION SEQUENCE

Adjacency pair means the sequence in an initiation-response pair which is adjacent but it is not always the case that the second pair part of the pair comes immediately. Another sequence of initiation-response may come between the first pair part and the second pair part of the adjacency pair. This sequence of initiation-response is inserted within an adjacency pair itself. The inserted two pair parts are known as insertion sequence. In the Manipuri conversational exchange this inserted sequence is launched by the FPP of the second speaker. In the initiation-response sequence the second speaker puts the insertion sequence with the counter question to the first speaker. In that insertion sequence the second speaker puts a counter question and the first speaker also gives response for that counter question.

Even though an insertion sequence is put within the adjacency pair itself, the first speaker’s initiation gets its appropriate response i.e. the SPP produced by the second speaker. The only thing is that insertion sequence makes a little delay or gap between the first pair part and the second pair part of the adjacency pair.

In Manipuri conversational exchange, it is impossible to give a relevant second pair part until the problem of hearing or understanding the FPP is resolved. Most of the insertion sequence is coming out because of the speaker’s problem of understanding the FPP of the adjacency pair. To get the SPP by the first speaker, the first speaker needs to give response to the second speaker’s FPP of the insertion sequence. That means the first speaker must first respond to the counter question of the second speaker’s FPP of the insertion sequence.

4. A- kəidəuŋəi jumdə lakkəni (Q1)
 kəidəuŋəi jum-də lak-kəni
 when home-LOC come-NREAL
 ‘When will you be coming home?’
 B- kəri ləirəge (Q2)
 kəri ləi-rə-ge
 what have-PERF-INT
 ‘What is the matter?’
 A- wa əmə tanəsi təubəni (R2)
 wa əmə tanə-si təu-bə-ni

- word one discuss-SUG do-NMZ-COP
 'I like to discuss with you about a matter.'
 B- həjeŋ lakkəni (R1)
 həjeŋ lak-kəni
 tomorrow come-NREAL
 'I will come tomorrow.'

Here an adjacency pair of Q2 and R2 by the speaker B and A is embedded within another adjacency pair of Q1 and R1 by the speaker A and B. The speaker A's first question in the FPP of the Q1 and R1 gets the response R1 after an embedded adjacency pair of Q2 and R2. The speaker A's question (Q1) does not get the corresponding response in the immediate next turn. The speaker B in the second turn who is supposed to respond makes a counter question and the speaker A also needs to give the response to that counter question before getting his question's response. So the speaker B's question (Q2) and the next speaker A's response (R2) in the above conversational exchange are the two pair parts of one adjacency pair. This pair is found to occur within the adjacency pair of Q1 and R1 of the speaker A and B. This embedded adjacency pair of Q2 and R2 is what is to be called the insertion sequence. So the speaker A's first question (Q1) gets the response after this inserted sequence. Such pattern of initiation-response pair is frequently found in the conversational exchange of Manipuri discourse.

5. A- ma lakpəra (Q1)
 ma lak-pə-ra
 he come-NMZ-INTR
 'Does he come?'
 B- kənbuno (Q2)
 kəna-bu-no
 who-ACC-INQ
 'Whom are you asking about?'
 A- tombabuni (R2)
 tomba-bu-ni
 Tomba-ACC-COP
 'I am talking about Tomba.'
 B- lakpəni (R1)
 lak-pə-ni
 come-NMZ-COP
 'He has come.'

In this piece of conversational exchange between the speaker A and B, the inserted sequence is made by Q2 which is made by the speaker B and R2 by the speaker A. Here the Q1 and R1 are the two pair parts of the adjacency pair. That means R1 is the appropriate response to the question in Q1. However there is a gap between these two pair parts because of this inserted sequence of Q2 and R2. Here insertion sequence takes place because the speaker B does not know the person the speaker A is asking about. So the speaker B in the second turn and who makes the FPP of the insertion sequence makes a counter question so that he can give the appropriate response to the question of the speaker A in Q1. On the other hand the speaker A who produces the second pair part of the insertion sequence also gives the response to the counter question put up by the speaker B in the second turn.

In such a way the speaker B's counter question that is the FPP and the speaker A's immediate response that is the SPP builds up the inserted sequence. After the end of this inserted sequence the speaker B knows the person the speaker A is asking about and then he gives the appropriate response R1 finally.

6. A- nəŋ həjeŋ səŋgədəra (Q1)
 nəŋ həjeŋ səŋ-gə-də-ra
 you tomorrow free-NREAL-NES-INTR
 'Will you be free tomorrow?'
 B- kərəmkandəno (Q2)
 kərəmkən-də-no
 when-LOC-INQ
 'When will it be?'
 A- əjuktə (R2)
 əjuk-tə
 morning-LOC
 'In the morning'
 B- səŋgəni (R1)
 səŋ-gəni

free-NREAL
'I will be free.'

In this excerpt of conversational exchange of Manipuri discourse the speaker A is putting a question (Q1) with the expectation of an appropriate response. However he gets the response (R1) with a little delay. These two pair parts build up the base adjacency pair. After the end of the speaker A's turn (Q1) the speaker B takes the second turn. Instead of giving a response he makes a counter question asking about the exact point of time. This means that he puts the counter question because he needs to know the exact point of time and to confirm whether he will be free or not. At the same time the speaker A also gives the response (R2) of that counter question (Q2) so that he can get the response (R1) from the speaker B. The speaker B's question (Q2) and the speaker A's response (R2) are the two pair parts of this embedded adjacency pair and they build up an inserted sequence. Thus the process of insertion sequence plays a crucial role in making a complete and cohesive exchange of the discourse in Manipuri.

7. A- rəmeskə nəŋgə t^həŋnərəmbəra (Q1)
 rəmes-kə nəŋ-gə t^həŋ-nə-rəm-bə-ra
 Rames-ASS you-ASS meet-REC-AC-NMZ-INTR
 'Have you met Rames?'
- B- kədaidəno (Q2)
 kədai-də-no
 where-LOC-INQ
 'Where?'
- A- kəit^heldə (R2)
 kəit^hel-də
 market-LOC
 'In the market'
- B- t^həŋnərəmde (R1)
 t^həŋ-nə-rəm-de
 meet-REC-AC-NEG
 'I have not met him.'

This is a piece of initiation-response sequence in which the speaker A and B are interacting. In the FPP of the adjacency pair made by (Q1) and (R1), the speaker A puts a question asking whether the speaker B has met 'Rames'. After the end of the turn of the FPP, the speaker B who is supposed to give a response makes a counter question asking about the exact place and this makes the FPP of this inserted sequence of (Q2) and (R2) and then the speaker A also gives the response (R2) so that he can get the response of what he asks from the speaker B. The inserted sequence comes out mainly because of the speaker B's intention to know the exact place. If he cannot know the exact place he might be unable to give the appropriate response. After knowing the exact place from the response (R2) of the speaker A in the inserted sequence, the speaker B gives the response (R1).

8. A- p^hurittu ədudə ləibəra (Q1)
 p^hurit-tu ədu-də ləi-bə-ra
 shirt-DET that-LOC have-NMZ-INTR
 'Is the shirt there?'
- B- kərəmbəno (Q2)
 kərəmbə-no
 which-INQ
 'Which one?'
- A- əŋaŋbədo (R2)
 əŋaŋbə-do
 red-DET
 'The red one'
- B- ləite (R1)
 ləi-te
 have-NEG
 'That is not here.'

In this excerpt of conversational exchange the speaker A puts a question (Q1) expecting a response from the speaker B. In the second turn the speaker B does not give response but he makes a counter question (Q2) to confirm the identity of the shirt the speaker A is asking about. In the third turn the speaker A is giving the response (R2) to the counter question of the speaker B. The second turn (Q2) of the speaker B and the third turn (R2) of the speaker A make the inserted sequence. The inserted sequence is the second adjacency pair embedded within the first adjacency pair built up by the speaker A's question (Q1) and the speaker B's response

(R1).The speaker B can identify the shirt through the inserted sequence. After identifying the shirt the speaker B can give response (R1). Thus this process of insertion sequence contributes a lot to the initiation-response sequence in making a coherent conversational exchange.

IV. PREFERENCE ORGANIZATION

Preference organization is the term used to indicate a socially determined structural pattern and does not refer to any individual's mental or emotional desires. In this technical use of the word, preference is an observed pattern in talk and not a personal wish (Yule, 1996). And he classified preference structure into two as preferred and dispreferred social acts. The preferred is the structurally expected next act and the dispreferred is the structurally unexpected next act.

The concept of preference deals with the possible ways in which some conversational action may be accomplished. It does not refer to the personal desire of the speakers, but rather to the recurrent patterns of talk in which actions are carried out. These two concepts – preferred and dispreferred – are essentially social in nature. They express the fact that some responses are problematic for social relationships, while others are not. If a speaker needs to produce a next turn which is dispreferred, then one needs to design the turn in different ways in order to do extra conversational work. This extra conversational work orients to the need for the contribution not to be disruptive of the relationship the speaker has with the recipient (Liddicoat, 2007).The preferred SPPs come early in their turns and are contiguous with the FPPs, and dispreferred SPPs are delayed in their turns and are thus not contiguous with their FPPs (Pomerantz, 1984).

In the study of Manipuri conversational exchange mainly the initiation-response sequence the very concept preference organization needs to be discussed as it has taken a prominent place in this arena. A more elaborate part of this study is here to be carried out so as to explore the need of the organization of this preference in Manipuri initiation-response sequence. In the case of the Manipuri conversational exchange also there are preferred and dispreferred responses. The preferred response is immediately given directly and without any delay whereas the dispreferred is made in a mitigated or indirect form or by giving account for.

9. A- həjeŋ imp^hal cətminnərusira
 həjeŋ imp^hal cət-min-nə-ru-si-ra
 tomorrow Imphal go-together-REC-DEIC-DET-INTR
 ‘Can we go to Imphal tomorrow?’

B- jani
 ja-gəni
 agree-NREAL
 ‘Yes, we can.’

The speaker A in the above given piece of conversational exchange is asking a question with the aim to know whether the speaker B is accepting his proposal to go to Imphal together or not. Then the speaker B is responding immediately and directly without any delay because he gives a preferred response i.e. a positive response. What this type of preference organization shows is that if any positive response is to be given in the initiation-response sequence of Manipuri, the speaker is always giving an immediate response without any hesitation, doubt and delay. And structurally the preferred responses are simple. This is the characteristic feature of the preferred response in Manipuri conversational exchange.

In the case of making dispreferred responses in Manipuri conversational exchange, the speaker is not producing an immediate response. For making a dispreferred response the speaker employs many conversational devices like accounts, excuses, disclaimers, apologies etc. because in Manipuri society giving an immediate negative response is treated as a very rude and hostile. So in order to attenuate the hostility of the speaker, these devices are used to make a dispreferred response in Manipuri talk-in-interaction.

Manipuri dispreferred responses in the SPP of an interaction of initiation-response sequence are produced in many different ways. In fact they are characterized by many typical features of them. The dispreferred responses are negative ones. In certain context the respondent gives a direct negative response and in some other contexts an indirect negative response is produced. For direct way of giving a negative response, it is easy and short to answer whereas in the case of indirect way of negative response many conversational tools are employed. These conversational tools have already been mentioned in the above. In fact the devices are employed in a dispreferred response in order to show regard and respect to the speaker of the FPP.

One of the reasons of using these devices is not to have a negative impact on the hearer by the respondent's dispreferred response. If the FPP speaker of the sequence is superior to the SPP speaker, he usually gives dispreferred response with the tokens of excuses and apologies. Because of having such constraints in making a dispreferred response, the making of dispreferred response is to some extent social in nature. In most of the formal conversational exchange the dispreferred responses are delivered in an indirect way by using above mentioned devices but between those who are very much intimate dispreferred responses are given

directly without using any conversational devices. Some conversational exchange of Manipuri initiation-response sequences are illustrated for a minute analysis.

10. A- nəŋgi lairiktu purəkpəra
 nəŋ-gi lairik-tu pu-rək-pə-ra
 you-GEN book-DET bring-DEIC-NMZ-INTR
 ‘Have you brought your book?’

B- purəkhte
 pu-rək-te
 bring-DEIC-NEG
 ‘No, I have not brought the book?’

In the initiation-response sequence of the above given example, the speaker A of the FPP is putting an initiation with the expectation of a response of what he is asking to the second speaker B in the SPP. Then after the immediate end of the speaker A’s initiation, the speaker B is giving an immediate or direct negative response which is supposed to be with many conversational devices that reduce the rudeness or hostility of a direct negative response as dispreferred ones. Now it is to be thought that by giving an immediate dispreferred response the speaker B is now showing his rudeness or hostility.

11. A- ŋəsidi nəŋgi lairiktu əi pəruge
 ŋəsi-di nəŋ-gi lairik-tu əi pa-ru-ge
 today-PART you-GEN book-DET I read-DEIC-INT
 jaŋədəra
 ja-gə-də-ra
 allow-NREAL-NES-INTR
 ‘Would you allow me to read your book today?’

B- jaroi
 ja-roi
 allow-NPOT
 ‘No, you will not be allowed.’

In the above given example the speaker A is putting an initiation with the sense of seeking permission of reading the speaker B’s book. Immediately the speaker B is giving a dispreferred response which is to be rude and hostile in Manipuri society. This is what is seen in the immediate dispreferred response. Now another context where the degree of rudeness and hostility of the immediate dispreferred response vanishes has come out. In the conversational exchange of the initiation-response sequence made by the intimate people, an immediate dispreferred response does not make any sense of rudeness or hostility. If the conversational exchanges of example (10) and (11) take place between the two intimate persons, the rudeness of a direct negative response has been concealed. Some more examples of dispreferred responses are given below:

12. A- ŋəraŋ əinə haibə midu
 ŋəraŋ əi-nə hai-bə mi-du
 yesterday I-NOM say-NMZ person-DET
 k^həŋbirəbəra
 k^həŋ-bi-rə-bə-ra
 know-HON-PERF-NMZ-INTR
 ‘Would you know the person I told you yesterday?’

B- warəu jade əisi t^həbək k^hərə
 warəu ja-de əi-si t^həbək k^hərə
 mind agree-NEG I-DET work some
 cille həjeŋ soidənə
 cil-le həjeŋ soi-də-nə
 busy-PERF tomorrow mistake-NEG-ADV
 k^həŋləkləge
 k^həŋ-lək-lə-ge
 know-DEIC-PROS-INT
 ‘Please don’t mind. I was busy with some works. I shall surely know the person tomorrow.’

In the exchange of the above given example the speaker B is making a negative response in an indirect way with a particular device of excuse and account. Here in the very beginning of the response the token of excuse *warəu jade* ‘please don’t mind’ is put and next to it the speaker is again putting another token of account *əise ŋəraŋ t^həbək k^hərə cille* ‘yesterday I was busy with some works’. It is not a direct negative response but the response can imply that it is a kind of dispreferred response. Such response, even though it is a negative one, does not make aggressive and not insult the first speaker A who is putting a question.

13. A- nəŋbu ŋəsi t^həbəkту loisinbə

nəŋ-bu	ŋəsi	t ^h əbək-tu	loi-sin-bə
you-ACC	today	work-DET	finish-more-NMZ
ŋəmdəuribəra			
ŋəm-dəu-ri-bə-ra			
able-about to -PROG-NMZ-INTR			
‘Can you finish the work today?’			
B-	loisinnəbədi	hotnəge	ədo
	loi-sin-nə-bə-di	hot-nə-ge	ədo
	finish-more-ADV-NMZ-PART	try-ADV-INT	but
	k ^h itəŋdi	wadəu	malli
	k ^h itəŋ-di	wa-dəu	mal-li
	a little-PART	difficult-about to	seem-PROG
‘Let me try to finish the work but it seems to be a little difficult.’			

In the above example the speaker B of the SPP is giving a dispreferred response. In the beginning of the response given by the speaker B there is *loisinnəbədi hotnəge* ‘let me try to finish’ which is a positive like response but next to it another negative like response *ədo k^hitəŋdi wadəu malli* ‘but it seems to be a little difficult’. What this combination of an initial positive like response and a negative like response shows is that the overall response is a dispreferred one.

14. A-	həjeŋdi	t ^h əbək	məp ^h əmdə	
	həjeŋ-di	t ^h əbək	məp ^h əm-də	
	tomorrow-PART	work	place-LOC	
	lakkədəra			
	lak-kə-də-ra			
	come-NREAL-NES-INTR			
‘Will you come to the workplace tomorrow?’				
B-	imadu	məsa	ŋəmdenə	haihəui
	ima-du	mə-sa	ŋəm-de-nə	hai-həu-i
	mother-DET	3P-body	able-NEG-ADV	say-INC-SAM
	ədunə	həjeŋdi	lakcəŋroi	
	ədunə	həjeŋ-di	lak-cə-rə-roi	
	so	yesterday-PART	come-REF-DEIC-NPOT	
‘It was told me that my mother was not well. So, I won’t come tomorrow.’				

In the above given example of initiation-response sequence the speaker A puts an initiation *həjeŋdi t^həbək məp^həmdə lakkədəra* ‘will you come to the workplace tomorrow?’ which is the FPP of this sequence and the SPP is made with the speaker B’s response *imadu məsa ŋəmdenə haihəui ədunə həjeŋdi lakcəŋroi* ‘It was told me that my mother was not well. So, I won’t come tomorrow’. Here the speaker B does not directly give the dispreferred response. Instead he gives it with an account for being unable to be coming tomorrow. In the very beginning of his response the speaker B puts the account *imadu məsa ŋəmdenə haihəui* ‘It was told me that my mother was not well’. Why this speaker uses the account is that it may reduce the negative impact which will be made with the dispreferred response on the speaker A.

15. A-	kəna	əmətə	ka	mənuydə	cəŋbə
	kəna	əmət-tə	ka	mənuy-də	cəŋ-bə
	who	one-NEG	room	inside-LOC	enter-NMZ
	jade	haibəsi	k ^h əŋdəbərə		
	ja-de	haibə-si	k ^h əŋ-də-bə-ra		
	allow-NEG	QUO-DET	know-NEG-NMZ-INTR		
‘Don’t you know that no one is allowed to enter the room?’					
B-	saubigənu	əi	k ^h əŋjəhəudərə		
	sau-bi-gənu	əi	k ^h əŋ-jə-həu-də-re		
	angry-HON-PROH	I	know-REF-INC-NEG-PERF		
‘Please don’t be angry with me. I was not aware of it.’					

The speaker A of the first pair part of the conversational exchange of the above given example is asking a question *kəna əmətə ka mənuydə cəŋbə jade haibəsi k^həŋdəbərə* ‘Don’t you know that no one is allowed to enter the room?’ with an anger about which is not known of the restriction by the speaker B of the SPP. As the speaker B knows that the speaker A has got angry because of his mistake, he does not immediately reply as *əi k^həŋjəhəudərə* ‘I was not aware of it’ which is a dispreferred response. Instead before this direct negative response the speaker B is putting a token of an excuse *saubigənu* ‘please don’t be angry with me’. The overall response of the speaker B is a dispreferred response. By using such a token of excuse in a dispreferred

response the speaker can to some extent escape from the anger of the first speaker of the initiation-response sequence.

16. A- mək^hoinə tombagi mərəmdə
 mə-k^hoi-nə tomba-gi mərəmdə
 3P-PL-NOM Tomba-GEN about
 ɲaɲnəribəsi cumbəra
 ɲaɲ-nə-ri-bə-si cum-bə-ra
 speak-REC-PROG-NMZ-DET true-NMZ-INTR
 ‘Is everything they talk about Tomba right?’
 B- əisu əseɲbədudi k^həɲde
 əi-su əseɲ-bə-du-di k^həɲ-de
 I-also fact-NMZ-DET-PART know-NEG
 ‘I don’t know the fact.’

In the initiation-response sequence of the above given example the speaker A is putting an initiation *mək^hoinə tombagi mərəmdə ɲaɲnəribəsi cumbəra* ‘Is everything they talk about Tomba right?’ to the speaker A in order to confirm whether what they talk about Tomba is found to be true or not. The speaker B of the SPP is giving a dispreferred response *əisu əseɲbədudi k^həɲde* ‘I don’t know the fact’ with a sense of disclaimer. What his response of dispreferred implies is that he does not like to take the responsibility of the confirmation imposed by the speaker A of the FPP.

17. A- əik^hoi həjeɲ more cətpəsidə nəɲ
 əi-k^hoi həjeɲ more cət-pə-si-də nəɲ
 I-PL tomorrow Moreh go-NMZ-DET-LOC you
 jaubə ɲəmgədərə
 jau-bə ɲəm-gə-də-ra
 join-NMZ able-NREAL-NES-INTR
 ‘Can you join our tomorrow’s trip to Moreh?’
 B- jaudi jauniɲbəni ədubu t^həbək
 jau-di jau-niɲ-bə-ni ədubu t^həbək
 join-PART join-wish-NMZ-COP but work
 əmə ləibədəgi ɲəmləroi
 əmə ləi-bə-dəgi ɲəm-lə-roi
 one have-NMZ-ABL able-PROS-NPOT
 ‘I intend to join the trip but because of having a piece of work, I won’t be able to join it.’

In the above given example the speaker A is putting an initiation *əik^hoi həjeɲ more cətpəsidə nəɲ jaubə ɲəmgədərə* ‘Can you join our tomorrow’s trip to Moreh?’ as the FPP of this sequence of initiation-response. In the SPP the speaker B is giving a dispreferred response *jaudi jauniɲbəni ədubu t^həbək əmə ləibədəgi jaubə ɲəmləroi* ‘I intend to join the trip but because of having a piece of work, I won’t be able to join it’. This dispreferred response is prefaced with the intention of joining the trip to ‘Moreh’ and it is followed by being unable to join it. Such type of response reduces the feeling of negative impact to the speaker A.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study shows that the Manipuri question-answer sequence has taken an important place in Manipuri conversational discourse. It almost talks about the structure of Manipuri initiation-response sequence. The different ways of making different responses which are conditioned by the Manipuri societal norms are studied here. For instance, the immediate negative response is considered to be very rude; so to attenuate this rudeness many conversational devices are employed. It can be a new dimension in the linguistic study of Manipuri language and also contribute to the study of Manipuri conversational discourse. It can help the future researchers also to some extent to carry out a deeper and minute research work in this area.

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