THE PHONOLOGY AND MORPHOLOGY OF SOMDAL

ABSTRACT

Somdal (a dialect of Tangkhul), is a Tibeto-Burman language found spoken in the Ukhrul District of Manipur, India and in adjoining area of Burma. According to the Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India Volume III part II. (1904), Tangkhul belongs to the Kuki-Chin Naga subgroup of the Tibeto-Burman family. But Benedict and Shafer (1940-1) clubbed it under the Kukish section which includes Central-Kuki, Northern-Kuki, Old-Kuki, Southern-Kuki, Northern-Naga, and Lushai. Tangkhul is also known as Luhuppa in old literatures (see Grierson's L.S.I Vol. III, part-II). Somdal is the dialect which is mainly specific to the Somdal village. It is one of the numerous sub-tribes of Tangkhul. The present work is mainly concentrated on the data collected from the inhabitants of the Somdal village, which is located in the Ukhrul District which is about 40 miles from Imphal (the capital town) of Manipur, India.

Like many other dialects of Northeast India, Somdal is a hitherto undescribed, unexplored and undocumented dialect. They don't have their own indigenous script and proper literature. Roman script is used for their writing purpose. Some of the written works done on Tangkhul are 'Tangkhul Naga Grammar and Dictionary (Ukhrul dialect) With Illustrative Sentences' by William Pettigrew (1918), 'Tankhur Naga Vocabulary' by D.N.S.Bhatt (1969), 'Tangkhul Naga Grammar' by S. Arokianathan (1987) etc.

The contents of my thesis entitled 'The Phonology and Morphology of Somdal', consists of five chapters. In chapter no.1, I wrote a brief introduction about the dialect of Somdal which includes about the people, land and location of Somdal village. Also, I discussed few things about the dialect Somdal, society, culture, occupation of Somdal villagers like festivals, traditional dress etc. In this chapter I

have mentioned briefly about how I collect my data from the field, scope of the thesis, about place of data collection etc.

In chapter no. 2, I have briefly discussed about the review of literature.

In chapter no. 3, I discussed about the Phonology of Somdal which consists of two parts: segmental and supra-segmental phonology. Consonants and vowels constitute the segmental part while supra-segmental part includes of tone, juncture, etc. Somdal has twenty-seven phonemes. Out of these, twenty-one are consonants, they are- *p, p^h, b, t, t^h, d, k, k^h, g, m, n, ŋ, l, r, c, v, h, s, ʃ, w,* and *j*. According to the place of articulation they may be bilabial, alveolar, palatal, velar or glottal. They may be voiced or voiceless, aspirate or unaspirate and they may be grouped as stops, fricatives, nasals, laterals, trills and semi-vowels according to their manner of articulation.In this analysis, there are nine phonemic oral stops. The stop series occur at three distinctive places of articulation: bilabial */p, p^h, b/,* alveolar */t, t^h, d/ and* velar */k, k^h, g/.* There are three aspirated stops */p^h, t^h, k^h/.* The voiced unaspirated stops found in Somdal are */b, d, g/.* Unaspirated stops /p, t, k/ are phonetically unreleased */p ̚, t ̚, k ̚/* when they occur word finally. */m/,* /n/ and /ŋ/ are voiced, unaspirated nasals. They can occur in all positions in Somdal word or syllable. In word initial position and intervocalic position, they are voiced, unaspirated nasals . And in word final positions, the phonemes */m/, /n/ and /ŋ/* are voiced, unreleased, unaspirated nasal . */l/* is a voiced unaspirated lateral approximant. It can occur only in initial and intervocalic position in Somdal word or syllable. In word initial and intervocalic position, it is voiced, released, unaspirated, lateral approximant [l]. */r/* is a voiced unaspirated alveolar flap. It can occur in all positions in Somdal word or syllable. */c/* is a voiceless unaspirated palatal affricate. It can occur only in initial and in intervocalic positions in Somdal word or syllable. In word initial and intervocalic positions, the phoneme */c/* is a voiceless alveolar affricate [ts]. It is not attested in word or syllable final position. */v/* is a voiced unaspirated labio-dental fricative. It can occur only in the initial and medial positions in Somdal word and syllable. In word initial and intervocalic positions, the phoneme */v/* is a voiced unaspirated labio-dental fricative[v].It is not

attested in word or syllable final position. */s/* is a voiceless unaspirated alveolar fricative. It can occur only in initial and medial position in Somdal word or syllable. In word initial and intervocalic positions, the phoneme */s/* is a voiceless unaspirated alveolar fricative [s]. It is not attested in word or syllable final position. */ʃ/* is a voiceless aspirated post alveolar fricative. It can occur only in the initial and intervocalic position in Somdal word or syllable. The phoneme */ʃ/* is a voiceless aspirated post alveolar fricative [ʃ].It is not attested in word or syllable final position. */h/* is a voiceless glottal fricative. It can occur only in the initial and medial position in Somdal word or syllable. In word initial and intervocalic position, the phoneme */h/* is a voiceless glottal fricative [h].It is not attested in word or syllable final position. */w/* is a voiced unaspirated semi-vowel. It can occur only in initial and medial position in Somdal word or syllable. In word initial and intervocalic position, the phoneme */w/* is a voiced unaspirated semi-vowel [w].It is not attested in word or syllable final position. */j/* is a voiced unaspirated palatal semi-vowel. It can occur in word initial and intervocalic positions in Somdal word or syllable. It is not attested in word or syllable final position.

Among the consonant phonemes found in Somdal, fifteen consonant phonemes do not occur in all the positions, they are the phonemes */b, g, p^h, k^h, t^h, l, c, v, s, ʃ, h, w* and *j/* i.e. they do not occur in final position. Most of the consonant sequences in Somdal are found in medial position. Consonant sequence in Somdal can be divided into four types. They are gemination, homorganic, contiguous and heteroganic. The consonants */r/, /n/, /t/, /p/, /k/, /m/* etc are attested to as germinate in Somdal. In Somdal, consonant clusters are rarely found and they are found only in the initial and medial position of a word whereas it is not found in the final position.Consonant clusters found in Somdal are in the structure-Unaspirated stop +semi-vowel, Unaspirated stop+trill, Unaspirated stop+lateral approximant, Aspirated stop +trill, Nasal+semi-vowel and Fricative+trill.There are six vowel phonemes found in Somdal. They are */i, e, ə, a, o, u/* and they are classified as front, central and back in terms of their place of articulation while in accordance to their manner of articulation they are termed as high, mid and low. The phoneme */i/* is a short, unrounded, high front vowel [i] which is attested in word initial, medial

and final positions. The phoneme /e/ is a short, mid close, unrounded, front vowel [e] which is attested in word medial and final positions. The phoneme /ə/ is a central, mid, unrounded vowel [ə] which is attested in word initial, medial and final positions.The phoneme /a/ is a low, back, unrounded vowel [a] which is attested in word initial, medial and final positions.The phoneme /o/ is a mid close, back, rounded vowel [o] which is attested in word initial, medial and final positions. The phoneme /u/ is a high, back, rounded vowel [u] which is attested in word initial, medial and final positions. All the six vowels can occur in the initial, medial and final position, except the mid, front unrounded vowel /e/ does not occur in initial position. Most of the vowel sequences in Somdal are found in medial position. Diphthongs found in Somdal are /-rai/, **/-**ao/, /-ei/   , /-eo/, /-oi/, /-ui/ and /-əu-/. V syllable structures in Somdal are found to be very rare and limited.The CV and CVC syllable structures are found to be common in forming the word in Somdal.There are two types of syllable in Somdal. They are open syllable and closed syllable, which is also called checked syllable by David Crystal (2003: p. 70). Like other Tibeto-Burman languages, Somdal is also a tonal language and it has three tones i.e. rising tone, level tone and falling tone. The rising tone is marked as (´), the level tone is left unmarked and the falling tone is marked as (`).In Somdal juncture is found very rarely. /lai/ and /də/ are the allomorphs of the same morpheme for the indication of recipient as well as dative case marker. But the two dative marker /lai/ and /də/ are used in different ways, /lai/ the dative marker is used or indicates in specific place or in particular area whereas the dative marker /də/ is used in vast area.Syncope, Apocope, Epenthesis, Elision, Procope and Insertion are rarely found in Somdal.

Chapter no.4 gives the morphological analysis of Somdal.Somdal nouns can be defined as a class of words that can be inflected for the categories of gender, number, person and case. Affixes play an important role in an agglutinative dialect like Somdal. There are three kinds of affixes-a) Prefix b) Suffix and c) Infix. Infix is not found in this language.The roots found in Somdal are monosyllabic, disyllabic, and polysyllabic words. Bound roots in Somdal can be divided again into two types. They are a) Nominal bound root and b) Verbal bound root.The

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verbal root may be classified into two groups as i) Dynamic and ii) Stative on the basis of their meaning difference. In Somdal only two types of affixes are found. They are 1) Prefixes and 2) Suffixes. Prefix in Somdal can be classified into two branches as, a) Pronominal Prefixes and b) Non-Pronominal Prefixes. The pronominal prefixes in Somdal can be divided into two types. They are (i) Singular pronominal prefixes and (ii) Plural pronominal prefixes. There are three formative prefixes (FP) found in Somdal. They are /ə-/, /kə-/ ~ /kʰə-/ and /mə-/. The formative prefix /ə-/, in Somdal are found prefixed with body parts, body organs, collective nouns and other natural objects. The formative prefix /kə-/ or /kʰə-/ are found prefixed to root to form persons and adjectives. And very rarely, gender distinction can also be seen in Somdal through prefixation to stem. A suffix is a letter or group of letters attached to the end of a word to form a new word or to alter the grammatical function of the original word. Suffixes are very numerous in Somdal. Most of the sentences are constructed by suffixing their respective markers. Some suffixes are added to the nominal and some are added to the verbal. According to this, suffixes can be grouped into two types in Somdal. They are i) Nominal suffix and ii) Verbal suffix. Some of the suffixes which are added to the noun are case suffixes, they are added to nouns. The case suffixes found in Somdal are nominative /-nə/, accusative /-tə/, genitive /-nao/ or /-ji/, locative /-lai/, instrumental /-tə/ or /-də/, ablative /-laidə/ or /-laitə/, associative /-kʰənə/ and dative /-lai/ or /-də/. In Somdal, there are three number suffixes. They are singular, dual and plural. Singular number is left unmarked. Personal pronouns take the dual marker *ni* (*kʰəni* 'two) and plural marker *tʰum* (*kətʰum* 'three'). The plural markers *–piŋ* and *–tʰum* are also used in indicating plural in proper nouns. The gender distinction in Somdal is based on the natural notions like animateness and sex. Both the human natural gender and other animate beings are indicated by *–va or -dla* for male and *–wi or -dlawi* for female. There are different types of particles suffixed to the noun in Somdal. Co-ordinating conjunctions can join two main clauses to emphasize equally. There are many conjunctive particles in Somdal. They are *kʰənə* 'and', *kʰə* 'but', *civaŋdə* 'so', *mənimkʰə* 'therefore', *mənimirukʰə* 'otherwise', *lə* 'also', *laitə* 'and then'etc. Many kinds of verbal suffixes are found in Somdal. They

are a) Aspect suffixes, b) Interrogative suffixes, c) Imperative suffixes, d) Suggestive suffixes, e) Adverbial suffixes, f) Intensifier suffixes, g) Reciprocal, h) Honorific suffix, i) Directional suffix and k) Reflexive suffixes. Derivational process can be divided into two types. They are Affixation and Compounding. There are three types of compounding in Somdal. They are 1) Endocentric compounds 2) Exocentric compounds and 3) Co- ordinate compounds.There are two kinds of endocentric compounds in Somdal, they are i) right-headed compounds and ii) left-headed compounds.The underlying structures of the constituent of the right-headed compound can be related each other i) by possessive relation and ii) by verbal relation. Nouns in Somdal are largely monosyllabic, but disyllabic nouns are also quite frequent in the language. Nouns in Somdal may be divided into derived and non-derived nouns. Derived nouns are formed by means of derivational morphology and may include gender and number. Non-derived nouns on the other hand, are inflectional in nature and include case marking.It also includes diminutive, numerals, quantifiers etc.This section also discussed nouns which are classified on the basis of meaning and forms. They are common nouns, proper nouns, collective nouns, material nouns, abstract nouns, concrete nouns, countable and uncountable nouns. Somdal has three possessive pronominal prefixes: /i-/ 'first person', /nə-/ 'second person' and /vai-/ 'third person' that are attached to kinship terms, body parts and other inalienable nouns to form possessive nouns. Nouns form by suffixation in Somdal includes gender. Gender in Somdal is based on natural distinction of sex and therefore it is applied only to the animate nouns. Nouns in Somdal can be broadly divided into two groups, i, e animate and inanimate noun. Animate noun can be further divided into human (+human) and non-human (-human). All the inanimate nouns are considered as neuter. Somdal personal pronoun differentiates three persons, namely; (i) Singular, (ii) Dual and (iii) Plural. Only nouns show the distinctions, while verbs and adjectives do not have different form for a different numbers. In Somdal, the singular number is unmarked. The dual form is marked by –ni while the plural is marked by suffixing –$t^h um$. In Somdal, the plural suffixes found are –$t^h um$, –mə, –piŋ and -$k^h ə dla$. The plural suffix –$t^h um$ is suffixed especially to personal pronoun

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only and the plural suffix *–mə* can be added only to the first person personal pronouns. Suffix *–piŋ* in Somdal is added to the animate nouns, inanimate nouns and abstract nouns to form plural. The plural suffix *–piŋ* can be added to any nouns. Suffix *-tʰum* can also be added to proper nouns to indicate plurality. Suffix *-kətoŋə* 'all' can also be added to animate and inanimate nouns to indicate plurality. In Somdal, the pluralisation of kinship terms is marked by suffixing *-kʰədla* to the kinship terms. Numerals in Somdal can be classified as cardinals, ordinals, multiplicatives, fractional, aggregative etc. In this dialect, numerals 1 and 3 are formed by prefixing *kə-* to its root *si* and *tʰum* respectively and for the numeral 2, the prefix *kʰə-* is added to the root *ni*. And the numerals from 11 to 19 are form by suffixing its respective numerals to the root *tʰəra* which means 'ten'. Likewise, the numerals from 21 to 29 are formed by prefixing *məkui-* 'twenty' to its respective numerals i.e., from 1 to 9 and the numerals from 31 to 39 are also formed by prefixing *tʰumra-* 'thirty' to its respective numerals i.e., from 1 to 9. The numerals 40, 50, 60, 70, 80 and 90 are formed by prefixing */hə-/* to the numerals 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. The numerals from 41 to 49, 51 to 59, 61 to 69, 71 to 79, 81 to 89 and 91 to 99 are formed by prefixing */hə-/* and suffixing */-pa/* to the root (numeral) 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, followed by numeral 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9. In Somdal, ordinal numerals are expressed by adding the prefix */kə-/* to the cardinal numbers, except in the case of first, i.e. *kʰəre*. Multiplicative numerals in Somdal can be expressed by suffixing */-ʃi/* at the end of the cardinal forms of the numerals except in the case of 'once', it is not so. Aggregative numeral is formed by suffixing */–kətoŋa/* 'all' to the basic cardinal. Approximate numerals in Somdal are formed by suffixing the free morpheme */-sukʰə/* which means 'about' to the basic cardinal. Distributive numerals are formed by suffixing */–rip/* meaning 'each' to cardinal numerals. Restrictive numerals are formed by prefixing */–kəssə/* meaning 'only' to the cardinals, except in the case of 'only one', i.e. the first one, the restricted form is used by adding the suffix */-kʰə/.*There are several types of traditional measurements found in Somdal like space measurement salt measurement, liquid measurement etc.

Somdal has eight case markers. They are Nominative /-nə/, Accusative /-tə/, Genitive /-nao/, Locative /-lai/, Instrumental /-tə/ and /-də/, Ablative /-laidə/ or /-laitə/, Associative /-kʰənə/ and Dative /-lai/ or /-də/. Adjectives in Somdal can be classified into 7 kinds, they are-1. Adjective of Quality. 2. Adjective of Quantity 3. Adjective of Taste 4. Adjective of Colour 5. Adjective of Dimension 6. Adjective of Demonstration and 7. Adjective of Comparision. Adverbs in Somdal are formed by a) suffixation of adverbial particles to roots and b) reduplication of the roots of suffixes (particles) or by compounding the suffixes. In Somdal, adverbs can be classified into eight kinds on the basis of their meaning. They are given as: (i) Adverbs of Manner (ii) Adverbs of Place (iii) Adverb of Time (iv) Adverbs of Order (v) Adverbs of Degree and (vi) Adverbs of Number (vii) Adverbs of Affirmation and (viii) Interrogative Adverb. In Somdal case suffixes can be added to pronouns. In this language it is divided into several distinct classes, including personal pronouns, possessive, reflexive, demonstrative, indefinite and interrogative pronouns.All these pronouns takes case suffixes but gender and number are not marked. Compounding is a very important factor in word formation process for Somdal. Both the compound of two semantically identical words and two semantically related words are found in Somdal. Complete and partial reduplication are very rarely found in Somdal.Somdal verbs can be divided into two types: Transitive and Intransitive.   A conjunct verb is a sequence constituted with either a noun + verb or an adjective + verb which is found in Somdal. Verbs can be divided into three types in Somdal on semantic ground, viz; i) Action verb ii) Static verb and iii) Process verb. In Somdal the only tense distinction grammatically is future and non-future. Future will have future time reference contrast with non-future that has no future time reference. In Somdal simple, progressive, perfect, unrealized and habitual aspects are found. Mood in Somdal are, Indicative or Declarative /-mə/ is marked only in negative constructions such as negative declarative or negative yes/no question.Imperative is marked by the suffix /-lou/. Interrogative /-kə/ is used with 'wh-words' (pronominals and adverbials) and non-words (verbs). With verbs it occurs in negative constructions. In 'yes/no' question /-la/ is suffixed to the verb or nominal. /-se/ is suffixed to express an

exhortation, *-tei* is suffixed to verbs to express request of offering etc.The optative suffix *-səklou* expresses realizable wishes or hopes, The dubitative suffix */-pai/* expresses the meaning 'perhaps it is so', 'it is likely to', etc.The verb */-pai/* 'be easy' is used to express either permission or possibility or both. Probability may be expressed by affixing the adverbial particle */lə/* 'also' between the modal verb */pai/* 'be easy'and the main verb or the nominal stem.The auxiliary verb */ŋai/* meaning 'want' is suffixed to verbal stems to express the sense of 'wanting' or 'desire'. */pʰəluŋ/* meaning 'must ' expresses obligation or compulsion, / *ŋəji* / 'ought to'expresses obligation, or necessity. In Somdal, mood can be divided into three types. They are namely; Subjunctive Mood, Optative Mood and Imperative Mood. Subjunctive mood is denoted by suffixing *-kʰə* to verb. It expresses the meaning of 'if'.Optative mood is used to express a desire or intention. It is denoted by suffixing *–lapai* 'may' to the verb. Imperative mood goes with second personal pronouns as underlying structure. It can be divided into three types which are illustrated below:

i.   Command is denoted by suffixing *-lou and –l* to the verbs.
ii.   Prohibitive command is denoted by adding suffix *-mə* to verb root.
iii.   Request command is denoted by *–cei* which means 'please'. And negative request is denoted by suffixing negative suffix *-mə* to the verb.

And lastly, in chapter no.5, I have discussed about the findings which I have made during my research work followed by conclusion.

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