CHAPTER: **6**

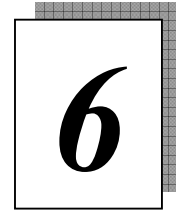**C**ONCLUSION

6

CONCLUSION

The final chapter reiterates all that which have so far been attempted to be studied. The concluding chapter, therefore, summarises the earlier chapters and discusses the findings of the research.

6.1   BACKGROUND

On the basis of the analysis done in the preceding chapters, it can be concluded that Uchai is a small endangered ethnic group living mostly in the southern part of Tripura. Ethnically, the group is closer to Bru than to Tippera; their tradition makes Bru and Uchai brothers. Linguistically, Uchai belongs to the Bodo group of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family of Sino-Tibetan languages. They are of the mongoloid stock who for a considerable period lived under the Arakan rulers and later migrated to the Chittagong Hill Tracts and finally stepped into the present day Tripura during the second decade of the nineteenth century.

Uchai is one of the nineteen recognized tribes of Tripura. It is a community of about people of 2,447 in number. Though most of the Uchais have now moved at the foothills leaving behind the high altitude, yet even

today they enjoy the maximum luxury of nature — picturesque hills, green valleys with the symphony of splashing water and dense forests, living mostly in far-flung villages and hamlets with little access to the basic amenities of life. Again, though majority of the Uchais were earlier Hindu, yet of late, a good number of population have been converted to Christianity.

As with the other highlanders of Tripura, highland life of the Uchai tribe has also changed with the passage of time. Due to the permanent settlement of the tribe there has been a great transformation in their dwelling pattern as well, and invariably, traditional Uchai stilt-house is rarely found existing today. Again, the Uchais traditionally had a swidden based economy which was essentially self-sustaining in character. However, the traditional mode of cultivation is now under threat due to certain governmental rules and policies; hence, the primitive method has been swapped over by plough cultivation. Again, cottage industry and handloom or waist-loom craft has also suffered a setback during the recent years; traditional art and craft of the Uchais is now under great threat and almost on the verge of extinction.

The Uchai tribe like any other community has their own social structure; and the foundation of Uchai society is based on lineage and clan system. An Uchai family is patriarchal in nature; the male head is the authority figure and the other members live and work with reference to him. The notion of property and inheritance is but a recent concept to the Uchais. Until recent times, the position of women in Uchai society was not a very encouraging one. Women's education received much encouragement from government agencies and

missionary projects in the recent years. A section of educated Uchai women now works in different private and public sectors.

It needs to be stated that no comprehensive linguistic work on Uchai has been carried out till date. Further, there is no original script of Uchai. The only book available on Uchai is Shyamlal Debbarma's *Sadharan Samikshar Aloke Uchai* (1983), a socio-economic study on the Uchais. However, there are other books of Hutchinson's (1906) and Lewin's (2007) and Debnath's (2010) with passing reference to the tribe and their ethnicity and socio-economic life. Apart from the books mentioned, only two articles and a glossary on Uchai exist authored by Keisuke Huziwara. There are, however, several grammars on Kokborok language and mention must be made of P.P. Karapurkar's *Kokborok Grammar* (1976) and F. Jacquesson's *A Kokborok Grammar* (2008). To all these must be added Rupak Debnath's *Kokborok: Language Origin and Development* (2014), an illuminating study on the origin and development of Kokborok. Moreover, a few published dictionaries on Kokborok and Bru are also available. Nonetheless, this present study is the first and the only work on the descriptive study of Uchai.

6.2 PHONOLOGY

The phonemic inventory of Uchai consists of ***thirty five phonemes*** out of which ***six are vowels***, ***five diphthongs***, ***twenty two consonants*** and ***two tones***.

Uchai has phonemically *two front vowels – /i/ and /e/, two central vowels – /ə/ and /a/* and *two back vowels – /u/ and /o/.* The distributional pattern of Uchai vowel phonemes is clearly distinguished — all the vowels except /ə/, viz., /i/, /e/, /a/, /u/ and /o/ can occur at all the positions — initial, medial, as well as final positions; whereas the vowel /ə/ with minimal load appears only in the word-medial position.

Uchai vowels are chiefly oral vowels. However, their counterparts are found in the form of nasalized vowels. In a number of words, the syllables ending in nasals /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/ have a tendency of becoming nasalized, i.e., syllable-final nasal is dropped and the vowels preceding the nasals are nasalized. Some examples of nasalized vowels are provided below:

/in/	⟶	/ĩ/	'yes'
/beŋ/	⟶	/bẽ/	'spider'
/kaham/	⟶	/kahã/	'honest'
/khum/	⟶	/khũ/	'flower'
/šom/	⟶	/šõ/	'salt'

The *five diphthongs* in Uchai, which are *all closing and falling* in nature, rarely or never occur in closed syllables; on the contrary they *chiefly occur at syllable-final position*. While the diphthong /ai/ can occur at all positions, i.e., word-initial, medial and final positions, the other diphthongs /ui/, /oi/ and /au/, occur only at word-medial and final position, while /ou/

occurs only at word-medial position. Apart from these regular diphthongs, the diphthong /ei/ can also be found in Uchai, though only in a handful of words.

The phonemic inventory of Uchai consists of ***twenty two consonantal phonemes***. The consonants, according to the manner of articulation can be grouped into two broad sections — ***the stops and the continuants***. The consonants, as a whole, include ***ten stops and twelve continuants***. The stops show voiced-voiceless and aspirated-unaspirated contrast. Among the continuants, there are ***three nasals***, ***three fricatives***, ***two affricates***, ***one trill***, ***one lateral*** and ***two approximants***. The nasals, the trill, the lateral and the approximants are all voiced and all the fricatives are voiceless whereas the affricates show voiced-voiceless contrasts. In terms of the place or point of articulation, Uchai consonants can be distinguished as bilabial, dental, alveolar, palatal, velar and glottal. It is evident that ***five of the Uchai consonants are bilabial and five are dental***, ***two are alveolar***, ***four palatal and four velar, and two glottal***.

Though voiceless dental fricative /s/ and voiceless palatal fricative /š/ can be established as two different phonemes existing in Uchai, yet in a handful of words, /s/ and /š/ function as phonemic free variants. For instance,

/musro/	~	/mušro/	'ant'
/sa/	~	/ša/	'talk'
/soi/	~	/šoi/	'dog'

However, the presence of /š/ in Uchai is due to the Bengali influence on the native speakers.

Most of the consonant phonemes of Uchai occur at the word-initial position. Phonemes in initial position of syllables are more numerous than those found finally. This feature is characteristic to the Tibeto-Burman languages, including Boro and its sister tongues. However, *the consonant phonemes which do not occur in word-initial position are the voiced velar nasal /ŋ/, voiced palatal approximant /y/ and voiceless glottal stop /ʔ/*. Rest of the consonant phonemes can occur at the word-initial position.

p	t	k
ph	th	kh
b	d	g
č	ĵ	
m	n	
s	š	h
l	r	
w		

Uchai Word Initial Consonants

Word-final consonants are fewer in number than word-initial consonants. *The consonant phonemes which chiefly occur in word-final position in Uchai are voiceless glottal stop /ʔ/ and voiced velar nasal /ŋ/*. In Uchai, voiced bilabial nasal /m/ and voiced dental nasal /n/ have the propensity to become nasalised and so, occur at the word-final position only in a handful

of words. Moreover, the consonantal phonemes /k/ and /r/ also occurs in word-final position but confined only to a handful of words.

$$
\left.
\begin{array}{ccc}
 & k & ʔ \\
m & n & ŋ \\
 & r &
\end{array}
\right\}
\begin{array}{l}
\text{Uchai} \\
\text{Word-Final} \\
\text{Consonants}
\end{array}
$$

In Uchai, the final /k/ of Kokborok is often dropped, which is either replaced by a diphthong or the glottal stop. The final /k/ is replaced by a diphthong when preceded by the mid-high back rounded vowel /o/, as in,

/tok/	⟶	/tau/	'bird'
/kok/	⟶	/kau/	'speech'
/nok/	⟶	/nou/	'house'

while in case of all other vowels it is replaced by the glottal stop as shown in the following words:

/hik/	⟶	/hiʔ/	'wife'
/huk/	⟶	/huʔ/	'jum'
/wak/	⟶	/waʔ/	'hog'

When compared to standard Kokborok, the prefixal bilabial /b-/ changes to homorganic /m-/ in Uchai. Here are a few examples:

<u>Kokborok</u>   <u>Uchai</u>

/be-kreŋ/	/mə-kreŋ/	'bone'
/bə-thai/	/mə-thai/	'fruit'
/bo-koroŋ/	/mə-kroŋ/	'horn'
/bi-thi/	/mə-thi/	'medicine'
/bu-phaŋ/	/mə-phaŋ/	'tree'

In word-initial position, the voiced palatal approximant /y/ of standard Kokborok changes to voiced palatal affricate /ĵ/ in Uchai. The examples given below would explicate the above point:

Kokborok	Uchai	
/yak/	/ĵak/	'arm'
/yoŋla/	/ĵoŋla/	'frog'
/yašku/	/ĵašku/	'knee'
/yakuŋ/	/ĵakuŋ/	'leg'
/yakhili/	/ĵakhli/	'log-ladder'

The **syllabic pattern** found in Uchai is **(CC)V(C) or $C_{0-2}VC_{0-1}$** which means that in an Uchai syllable there can be zero to two consonants in the beginning and zero to one in the end where the V element, i.e., the Vowel is obligatory and the C element, i.e., the Consonant is optional. However, the majority of the Uchai words have the CV structure, i.e., they are open syllables; VC pattern are of very low frequency in Uchai. Moreover, native Uchai words range chiefly from monosyllabic to trisyllabic; most of the tetrasyllabic and pentasyllabic words are either compound words or loan words.

Uchai has primarily *two types of consonant clusters i.e., stop + liquid and fricative + stop / nasal / liquid*. Apart from these two types, one can find Uchai consonant cluster consisting of stop + nasal, which is however very rarely found and which has come into existence due to elision of prefixal vowel. One can also find in Uchai a variety of medial consonant sequences though most of the consonant sequences comprise of nasal + stop /fricative. However, Uchai has no geminate in native root words. Moreover, Uchai does not permit consonant cluster in word-final position.

Uchai has *two tones — low and high*. In single syllable words, the contrast between high and falling tone is quite clear than the words with two or more syllables. When pronounced in isolation, the high tone of non-stopped syllables, especially of open syllables, is characterised by its high pitch, short length, and abrupt termination which usually culminates as a voiceless glottal stop /ʔ/. The falling tone is longer and a bit lower than the high tone.

6.3 MORPHOLOGY

The Uchai nominal may be defined as the root morpheme that is capable of taking case affixes. The Uchai nominal can be classified into two categories: Nouns and Pronouns as they take the nominal affixes.

The noun in Uchai may be defined as a word that can take the pronominal prefix and carry the distinction of gender and number. The grammatical construction of Uchai nouns may be shown as:

Noun = root ± gender ± number

Uchai nouns can be broadly classified as *(i) monomorphemic and (ii) polymorphemic nouns*. However, polymorphemic nouns in Uchai are more numerous than monomorphemic nouns. The ***polymorphemic nouns in Uchai are formed in two different ways***:

    (i)   Nouns where the first member is a Generic Noun, and

    (ii)   Nouns with derivative constructions.

Uchai nouns can also be classified under certain categories, like, generic noun, non-generic noun, human animate noun, non-human animate noun, inanimate noun, abstract noun, noun indicating parts of body, kinship terms, and verbal nouns.

Gender in Uchai is not grammatically marked. Gender distinction in Uchai is determined on the natural recognition of sex. On the basis of semantico-morphological criteria, nouns in Uchai are primarily classified into two classes, viz. animate and inanimate. Animate nouns, both human and non-human nouns are differentiated for masculine and feminine genders; while all the inanimate nouns are considered neuter in Uchai. Neuter gender is not marked by any marker in Uchai. However, ***there are three different ways of expressing gender differentiation in Uchai which are as follows***:

    (i)   The basic kinship terms have two distinct forms for each sex; hence, the gender distinction among the kinship terms is made lexically.

(ii)   The human nouns other than the kinship terms and the animate nouns specify the difference in sex by adding a gender marker that indicates maleness or femaleness usually after the noun. The morphemes generally used to indicate masculinity and femininity are /čla/ and /broi/ respectively.

(iii)   However, in a few words, there is an exception to this general rule where the morphemes /la/ and /ma/ are sometimes used to indicate masculinity and femininity respectively.

In Uchai, ***two number distinction, viz., singular and plural*** can be found. Like gender, number is also not a grammatical category in Uchai. The verbs have no plural form, neither derivative nor grammatical. While the singular is always unmarked, ***the plural in Uchai is usually formed at the morphological level by suffixation of plural morpheme /rau/ to the singular form***. The plural morpheme /rau/ is used with animate nouns, both human and non-human, as well as with inanimate nouns. However, when reference is made to an indefinite, large number of people or things and uncountable nouns, plurality is expressed by adding after the noun a collective adjective /gəbaŋma/, which is a free form meaning 'many,' 'much,' or 'a lot of.' Moreover, ***the morpheme indicating plurality always occurs after the morpheme indicating masculinity or femininity, if it is present***.

Case is an inflectional category of noun. The case in Uchai shows the semantic relationship between the nouns to which they are added with the verb and also between two nouns. The case in Uchai is realised by adding suffix to

the nouns and pronouns to denote case relations. However, when the case suffix is used after the stem, it does not affect the phonetic shape of the stem. Uchai has *eight distinct cases* and *four different markers* to denote the case relations: *Nominative /Ø/, Accusative /-no/, Dative /-no/, Genitive /-ni/, Ablative /-ni/, Locative /-wo/, Instrumental /-bai/ and Associative /-bai/.* Though the case markers of accusative and dative, genitive and ablative, instrumental and associative are similar, they are classified as six distinct cases on the basis of meaning. Thus, the case forms in Uchai are obtained by adding the case suffix to the base, which is equal to the nominative case form, in the singular, and to the base containing the plural format, in the plural. The case suffixes are post-posed to the base; hence, *all the case markers in Uchai are post positional*.

The post positions in Uchai are added immediately after the noun or the noun phrase. The post positions in Uchai differ formally from the case markers as they can occur independently while the case forms cannot. The post positions can be added to the genitive as well as nominative form of the noun. Moreover, the post positions in Uchai behave like nouns as they can take the locative, the ablative and the genitive suffixes. Some of the post positions found in Uchai are: */jora/ 'upto', /sauʔga/ 'on' or 'above', /tola/ 'below' or 'under', /čiŋ/ 'since, /səkaŋ/ 'front', /uklau/ 'behind', /phata/ 'outside' or 'out', /məsiŋ/ 'inside' or 'into', /doi/ 'through', /sanʔ/ 'near', /məkhauʔ/ 'towards' or 'at the side',* etc.

Pronouns in Uchai are a sub-class of nominal as the root morpheme is capable of taking case affixes. In Uchai, the root pronoun may be followed by

case and number markers. Therefore, the morphological construction of pronoun in Uchai may be stated as:

Pronoun = Root ± case ± number

It means that the root pronoun can occur alone as well as with case markers. Hence, Uchai pronoun has basically two types of morphological constructions which are as follows:

Pronoun (only root)	:	/aŋ/	'I'
Pronoun (root + case)	:	/aŋno/	'to me'
Pronoun (only root)	:	/bo/	'this'
Pronoun (root + number)	:	/borau/	'these'

On the basis of usage of separate lexical items for different purposes, the pronouns in Uchai can be classified into certain categories which are as follows:

(i) ***Personal pronouns*** like /aŋ/ 'I', /čuŋ/ 'we', /nuŋ/ 'you', /nənaŋ/ 'you', /bo/ 'he'/'she'/'it' and /braŋ/ 'they';

(ii) ***Demonstrative pronouns*** like /bo/ 'this' and /abo/ 'that';

(iii) ***Possessive pronouns*** like, /ani/ 'my'/'mine', /čini/ 'our'/'ours', /nəni/ 'your'/'yours', /bini/ 'his'/'her'/'its' and /braŋni/ 'their'/'theirs'

(iv) ***Interrogative pronouns*** like /šo/ 'who', /šono/ 'whom', /šoni/ 'whose', /təmauʔmi/ 'why', /təma/ 'what', /baiphuʔwo/ 'when', /batoiwo/ 'where', /batoima/ 'which', etc.

(v) ***Reflexive pronouns*** like, /aŋsauʔ/ 'myself', /nuŋsauʔ/ 'yourself', /bosauʔ/ 'himself/herself/itself' etc.; and

(vi) *Indefinite* *pronouns* like /ɉoto/ 'all'/'everything', /khrouha/ 'nobody'/'none, /muŋha/ 'nothing', /ɉebai/ 'anything', etc.

However, no referential and relative pronoun can be found in Uchai.

The Uchai numeral always follows the noun. However, if the morpheme for gender or any adjective is present, it follows all of them. The *Uchai numeral system is of decimal type; yet it seems to have included a vigesimal unit* along with the distinctive root /kho/ 'twenty'. Uchai numerals can be *broadly classified under two heads, cardinal and ordinal numbers*, though fractional, enumerative or proportional and distributive numerals also exist in the system. Again, *cardinal numbers in Uchai are of two types: basic numerals and compound numerals* where compound numerals are formed in a number of ways; while some are additive, others are multiplicative and rest are multiplicative-cum-additive.

On the other hand, there are only two ordinal numbers found in Uchai native words — /skaŋthauʔ/ to indicate 'first' while for all other ordinal numbers Uchai uses /aboni ɉauʔgu/. Alternatively, younger generations of Uchai speakers who are acquainted with the Bengali language often use the Bengali expressions for the ordinal numbers.

Uchai uses a number of *classifiers to denote the semantic classification of the referent on the basis of the qualities of nouns*, i.e., its physical shape, size, state, etc. Uchai is rich in classifiers and they are numerous in number. Uchai classifiers are predominatly mono-syllabic in nature. The classifiers in

Uchai usually precede the numerals and follow the nouns. Hence, the order of occurrence of Uchai classifier is:

Noun + Classifier + Numeral

and no other order is possible in Uchai. Some of the classifiers found in Uchai are: */ko/, /koŋ/, /kaŋ/, /kai/, /kho/ /thai/, /phaŋ/, /ba/, /ma/, /lai/, etc.*

Verbs in Uchai can be defined as roots which can take the morphemes for tense, aspect and mood. Uchai verbs are not marked for person, number and gender. In Uchai, all verbal roots are bound roots; hence, Uchai verbs can be analysed into mono-syllabic verb-roots and a set of affixes. It is to be noted that some of the affixes occur as verb-roots elsewhere. For instance, the word /pai/ 'finish, complete' can function as verb-root as well as a completive suffix.

Verbs in Uchai are of different types and can be formed in a number of ways. Most of the verbs in Uchai have monosyllabic roots. However, there are also Uchai verbs which are disyllabic in nature. The disyllabic verbs in Uchai are usually formed by prefixing /kV-/ or /mV-/ and a very few by prefixing /bV-/ and /rV-/. The most constructive method for formation of verb phrases is by adding suffixes to the verb root. Nonetheless, compounding is also a productive method for formation of verbs in Uchai. There exist a number of compounded verbs in Uchai, though it is often difficult to resolve the thin border between compounded verbs and suffixation as suffixes often come from verbs.

Verbs in Uchai can be classified into several classes. ***Grammatically, Uchai verbs are of two types, viz. intransitive and transitive verbs***. In Uchai, the intransitive verbs are primary verbs which do not take a direct object while transitive verbs are those which take a direct object. However, there are no separate markers for transitive and intransitive verbs in Uchai. Apart from the transitive and intransitive verbs, there are ***causative verbs*** in Uchai which are morphologically marked and are formed by adding the verb /ri/ 'give' to the intransitive as well as to the transitive verbs.

Uchai has certain ***copulative verbs*** which express the meaning of 'be' and 'to have, stay, remain'. There are two types of copulative verbs in Uchai, viz., ***equative copula and existential copula***. Uchai uses the equative copula /le/ and /se/. The equative verbs in Uchai function as a copula in non-verbal predicates and as verb 'be' in the equative sentences. The concord particle /le/ is usually used in simple statements and obligatorily, in locative predicates. On the other hand, the copula /se/ is used to say something or someone in relation to another or other. On the other hand, Uchai uses the existential copula /toŋ-/ which expresses the meaning 'to have, stay, remain'. The existential verb /toŋ-/ in Uchai is used in stative sense of possession, 'have', and also to denote the meaning 'to stay, remain'.

Verbs in Uchai can further be classified as ***stative and active***. Stative verbs in Uchai are those that indicate habitual facts and natural phenomenon. The 'be' verb and the predicative adjectives in English are usually stative verbs in Uchai. Stative verbs in Uchai can be existential, equational or descriptive.

The stative verbs do not have causative formation. Moreover, the stative verbs do not form dubitative future, perfective and hortative moods. On the other hand, active verbs in Uchai are those that indicate doing something.

Uchai distinguishes three tenses — past, present and future. Tense in Uchai is determined by the usage of different suffixes or tense markers. Uchai uses /-oi/ and /-woi/ as present tense markers, /-kha/ and /-ha/ as past tense markers and /-nai/ as a future tense marker. However, tense in Uchai is often not very clear and distinct, as in other Tibeto-Burman languages. This indistinctiveness of tense is one of the structural features of Uchai. Hence, it is convenient to discuss about aspect than tense in Uchai. In Uchai, aspect indicates the temporal distribution of an action, i.e., the internal structure of an event or situation. ***Uchai has the following types of aspect***:

(i)   *the simple aspect which denotes simple statement, universal truth and habitual meaning and expressed using the present and the past tense markers /-oi/ ~ /-woi/ and /-kha/ ~ /-ha/ respectively;*

(ii)   *the completive aspect which indicates completion of an action already performed and completed is expressed using the suffix /-pai/ to the verbal root;*

(iii)   *the incompletive aspect specifies an icomplete action performed at certain time in the past and it is obtained by adding the suffix /-ye/ to the verbal root;*

(iv)   the progressive aspect that indicates the continuity of an action in the present, past or future and expressed using the suffix /-toŋ/; and

(v)   the irrealis or unrealized aspect used to indicate an action which will take place in the near future and expressed by means of the future tense marker /-nai/.

Mood in Uchai can be analysed keeping into consideration the finite and non-finite verbal constructions. ***The finite verbal constructions in Uchai have the following types of moods***:

(i)   The Indicative Mood is used to make factual and habitual statements and refers to the time of the action taking place or the state of the action in relation to the speech act. The indicative mood in Uchai is marked for three tenses, viz., present, past and future.

(ii)   The Imperative Mood in Uchai denotes command or request to perform certain action by the listener. The subject of the imperative mood is always in the second person and often may not be overtly expressed.

(iii)   The Hortative Mood in Uchai is used to indicate certain wish or suggest that an action shall take place. The subject of the hortative mood is always in the first or third person.

> *(iv)* **The Subjunctive Mood** in Uchai is obtained by certain modal constructions. The different types of modal constructions found in Uchai are:
>
> > *(a)*   *the modal of ability,*
> >
> > *(b)*   *the modal of certainty,*
> >
> > *(c)*   *the modal of probability,*
> >
> > *(d)*   *the modal of condition,*
> >
> > *(e)*   *the modal of determination, and*
> >
> > *(f)*   *the modal of necessity.*

Adjectives in Uchai are words describing nouns; or, can be defined as words modifying nouns or pronouns. Adjectives in Uchai generally follow the noun. In Uchai, **adjectives are of two types: (i) those which have been borrowed from Bengali and (ii) those which are of native origin.** The adjectives those which have been borrowed from Bengali have entered into Uchai usage during the course of time. Moreover, the adjectives which have been borrowed from Bengali usually precede the noun. On the other hand, the adjectives of native origin usually follow the noun.

There are **various categories of adjectives** in Uchai. Uchai adjectives can be classified under the following categories:

(i)   *Adjective of Quality* — describes the nature of a noun/pronoun;

(ii)   *Adjective of Quantity* — shows the amount or the approximate amount of the noun/pronoun;

(iii)   *Adjective of Colour* — tells the shade and hue of a noun;

(iv)   *Adjective of Taste* — words used to describe taste;

(v) *Adjective of Dimension* — indicates measurable extent or quantity that denotes the degree to, or range over, which something extends;

(vi) *Demonstrative Adjective* — points out specific nouns, and can be used in place of articles to indicate whether the noun is singular or plural and whether it is located near or far from the speaker.

The adjective in Uchai shows different *degrees of comparison — positive, comparative and superlative*. In Uchai, the positive degree of comparison remains unmarked. The comparative degree in Uchai is formed by inserting /slai/ before the adjective. Often the word /kruŋ/ is used to indicate 'capable'. The superlative degree in Uchai is formed by adding the superlative suffix /thauʔ/ to the adjective. The common noun /ɟoto/ 'all' and the post position /məsiŋ/ 'among' might be optionally added to form the superlative in Uchai.

In Uchai, *an adverb denotes a class of word that specifies the mode of action, or rather, qualifies the verbs*. In Uchai there are *two types of adverbs: (i) primary and (ii) derived*. The primary adverbs can further be classified into two categories — (i) those which are a part of the verb stem and (ii) independent primary adverbs. The primary adverbs which are a part of the verb stem denote the manner in which the action is performed. On the other hand, there are primary adverbs in Uchai which can occur independently. The independent primary adverbs in Uchai are accompanied with the verbal forms. Apart from the primary adverbs, Uchai also uses derived adverbs. The derived adverbs in Uchai are formed from adjectives by adding /-khaiye/ to the

adjectival base. It is to be noted that Uchai adverbs are primarily adverbs of manner, i.e., they show how the action occurs. Other adverbs like adverbs of time, place and frequency can also be found in Uchai.

In Uchai, there are certain morphemes which are added to the root of another word, usually the noun or the verb class, to impart a meaning. Some of these morphemes denote emphasis, endearment while others express contempt, certainty, doubt, etc. These morphemes in Uchai are called ***particles***. Along with these morphemes, the conjunction and disjunction may also be included under the Uchai particles.

The Uchai particles can be classified as:

(i)   *Particles of Emphasis* — /se/, /leʔ/, /le/, /ma/, /sei/;

(ii)   *Particles of Doubt* — /khna/, /mu/;

(iii)   *Particles of Exclamation* — /hãhaleʔ/, /paʔ/ ~ /paihã/, /baʔ/, /thuro/, /alapala/;

(iv)   *Particles of Address* — /khasouʔ/, /o/;

(v)   *Particles of Affirmation* — /o/ or /ou/ 'yes';

(vi)   *Particles of Negation* — /ẽheʔ/ 'no';

(vii)   *Particles of Inclusiveness* — /pho/ 'also';

(viii) *Particles of Exclesiveness* — /čoʔ/ ~ /čouʔ/ 'only';

(ix)   *Particles of Conjunction* — /bai/ ~ /akhe/ 'and'; and

(x)   *Particles of Disjunction* — /areyakhe/ 'or' and /arepho/ 'but'.

Word Formation deals with the creation of new words. In Uchai, one of the common morphological processes used for formation of new words involves **suffixation**. Formation of new words formed by the combination of two or more roots is known as **compounding**. In Uchai, the combination may be of same class or of different classes of words. On the basis of semantics, compounding in Uchai may be divided into ***three types: (i) endrocentric, (ii) exocentric and (iii) coordinate compounds***. An endrocentric compound is that in which one member functions as the head and the other as its modifier, attributing a property to the head. In Uchai, there are two types of ***endocentric compounds — (i) right-headed and (ii) left-headed compounds***. The constituents in right-headed endrocentric compounds are generally found to be of nominal bases; whereas in left-headed compounds, both the elements may be nouns or the first element a noun and the second element being an adjective. An ***exocentric compound***, on the other hand, refers to a particular type of compound that lacks a head, i.e., a compound with no definable head. Uchai compounds are usually endocentric compounds and exocentric compounds are very rare in Uchai. Moreover, in ***co-ordinate compounds***, both the elements, usually nouns function jointly as head.

Reduplication is a morphological process in which the root or stem of a word or part of it or even the whole word is repeated exactly or with a slight change. In other words, reduplication is the repetition of a lexical item. Reduplication in Uchai can be categorised as: ***(i) complete reduplication*** which involves complete repetition of the base word and ***(ii) partial reduplication*** where a part of the base word is reiterated. In Uchai, complete reduplication is

a more regular phenomenon than the partial reduplication. Also *expressive* in Uchai, which belongs to the category of morphological reduplication, refers to the minimally meaningful and segmentally indivisible morphemes constituted of iterated syllable. *Expressive* in Uchai *includes onomatopoeia, sound symbolism, ideophone and imitatives*. Apart from all these, the *echo word formation* is a very productive phenomenon in Uchai. Thus, in Uchai, *suffixation, compounding, reduplication and echo formation are the four most common morphological processes used for formation of new words*.

6.4   SYNTAX

The normal word order of Uchai is SOV. In other words, Subject (S) occurs in the sentence-initial position while Object (O) follows the subject and Verb (V) occurs in the sentence final position. It needs to be mentioned that Uchai has a very rigid word order and no other order is allowed in normal circumstances. However, Uchai may allow OVS word order depending upon a particular situation or context.

Again, sentences with intransitive verb do not have any object; hence *the word order in such sentences is SV*. The object (O) is absent in case of sentences with intransitive verbs. There are also *sentences in Uchai which can occur without the subject (S)*. The subject is usually optional in case of imperative sentences. In Uchai, *even a verb can make an imperative sentence* where the use of subject (S) and object (O) is optional.

In case of ***interrogative sentences*** in Uchai, the subject (S) and the object (O), if present, usually precedes the interrogative pronoun (INT PRO) followed by the verb (V). The word order for interrogative sentences in Uchai is as follows:

Subject (S) + Object (O) + Interrogative Pronoun (INT PRO) + Verb (V)

However, in case of ***interrogative sentences with equative verb***, the subject (S) is followed by the object (O), if present, and the equative verb (EQU), while the interrogative pronoun (INT PRO) appears at the end of the sentence. The word order for interrogative sentences with equative verb may be represented as follows:

Subject + Object + Equative Verb + Interrogative Pronoun

or,   **S   +   O   +   EQU   +   INT PRO**

The constituents of a simple sentence in Uchai are noun phrase and verb phrase. The ***noun phrase (NP) in Uchai consists obligatorily a noun, which is also known as the head noun***. The noun in the noun phrase may be followed or preceded by one or more modifiers. The noun phrase (NP) in Uchai may be anyone of the following:

(i)   the simple noun;

(ii)   the noun preceded by the demonstrative and/or the genitive;

(iii)   the noun followed by the gender markers, the plural markers, the classifier and the numeral, case markers, the post position and the free adjective.

Hence, the noun phrase (NP) in Uchai can be represented as:

NP⟶   ±DEM ±GEN +N ±GER ±PL ±ADJ ±CLF ±NUM ±POST ±CM

The ***verb phrase (VP) in Uchai consists obligatorily a verb along with the tense or the aspect marker***. The verb in the verb phrase may either be a lexical verb or a copulative verb. Apart from the obligatory verb in the verb phrase, some other optional constituents like noun phrase comprising of indirect or/and direct object may be found in the verb phrase. Moreover, adverb phrases, consisting of either bound or free adverbs, may also be found within the verb phrase, which may either follow or precede the main verb accordingly. Thus the verb phrase (VP) in Uchai may be anyone of the following:

(i)   the simple verb;

(ii)   the verb followed by another simple verb and/or bound adverbs;

(iii)   the verb preceded by the free adverbs and/or the direct and indirect objects.

Thus, the verb phrase (VP) in Uchai can be represented as:

VP ⟶   ± IO ± DO ± FR ADV + V ± BN ADV + T/ASP/MOD

Uchai has ***three types of clauses — principal or main clause, subordinate clause and coordinate clause***. The ***main or principal clause is independent*** and can make complete sense in itself; it is always identical with a simple sentence. In contrast to the main or principal clause, ***the subordinate clause*** in Uchai can never occur on its own and is ***always dependent on the principal clause*** for its meaning. The subordinate clause in Uchai either precedes or follows the main clause. On the other hand, ***coordinate clause*** in Uchai is ***marked either by the presence of conjunctive particles***, /bai/ or /akhe/ 'and', ***or disjunctive particles*** /areyakhe/ 'or' and /arepho/ 'but'.

Sentences in Uchai can be classified into three kinds, viz., (i) simple, (ii) compound and (iii) complex sentences. These three types of classifications are made at the surface level structure of the sentences. *A simple sentence (S) in Uchai consists of one subject (SUB) and one predicate (P)* at the surface phrase structure. In other words, a simple sentence in Uchai has only one clause, i.e., the principal or main clause. However, the predicate may take objects, direct or indirect. *The word order in a simple Uchai sentence is usually of the following three types*:

(i)   S   =   SBj   +   P

(ii)   S   =   SBJ   + $\underline{\hspace{2cm} \text{P} \hspace{2cm}}$
                               DO   V

(i)   S   =   SBJ   + $\underline{\hspace{3cm} \text{P} \hspace{3cm}}$
                               IO   DO   V

In Uchai, the predicate in a simple sentence can also be a nominal. In such a case, there is a copula relating the subject and the predicate.

       S   =   **Subject**   +   **Nominal Predicate**

However, the equative copula or the concord particles /le/ and /se/ are dropped in the existential sentences; rather Uchai makes use of the existential copula /toŋ-/.

A complex sentence in Uchai consists of one principal or main clause and one or more subordinate or dependent clause(s). The subordinate clause in Uchai is introduced by a subordinator. The subordinators in the complex sentence may either precede or follow the predicate of the dependent or subordinate clause. It is also to be noted that a complex sentence in Uchai may often be introduced without any subordinator.

A compound sentence in Uchai consists of two or more main clauses or simple sentences which are conjoined co-ordinately either by the conjunctive particle /bai/ ~ /akhe/ 'and', or by the disjunctive coordinator /areyakhe/ 'or', or by the contra-propositional conjunction /arepho/ 'but' or by a coordinating conjunction like /aboni/ 'so'. A compound sentence in Uchai can also be formed by using the incompletive suffix /-ye/ to the verbal root.

Apart from declarative sentences, Uchai has various other types of sentences; and a *negative sentence* is one of them. Negative sentences in Uchai are formed in a number of ways:

(i) Uchai has different *negative markers* like /-ya/, /ta-/, /-kroi/ and the lexical negator /ẽheʔ/ for the purpose of negation.

(ii) Uchai uses the *Negative Polarity Item* (NPI) /ȷ̃ephuʔpho/ 'never' and the *negative strengthener* /ȷ̃uʔha/ 'always' to the main verb.

(iii) Uchai makes use of *double negative* in literary expression.

The *interrogative sentences* in Uchai are formed by employing one of the interrogative pronouns or using the interrogative marker /-de-/. Uchai also

uses several other question particles like /ba/, /are/ and /leʔ/. In Uchai, questions can also be formed by using the rising tone without any interrogative marker. The interrogative sentences in Uchai can be classified into the five following types:

(i)   *Yes/No type of questions*,

(ii)   *Wh-questions,*

(iii)   *Alternative questions*,

(iv)   *Tag questions,* and

(v)   *Questions using rising tone*

Imperative sentences in Uchai express a command or a request. The different types of imperative sentences in Uchai are —

(i)   *Command* : formed by the suffixation of the command marker /di/ to the verbal root;

(ii)   *Request*: adding the prefix /sa-/ 'please' to the base verb or the particle /ga-/ often added to the imperative suffix /-di/ to the verbal root;

(iii)   *Prohibitive*: formed by adding the prohibitive prefix /ta-/ and imperative suffix /-di/ to the verbal root; and

(iv)   *Permissive*: framed using the interrogative pronouns like /təma/ 'what', /batoiwo/ 'where' and /baiphuʔwo/ 'when' along with the permissive marker /nəčuŋ/ and the imperative /-di/.

The *hortative sentences* in Uchai indicate certain wish or suggest that an action shall take place and the form is obtained by adding suffix /-noi/, /-na/ or /-thoi/ to the verbal root. On the other hand, *optative sentences* in Uchai

express an ardent wish, hope, desire, prayer, curse, etc. which are also formed by using /-thoi/. Nevertheless, *exclamatory sentences* in Uchai are formed by using the wh-words like /təma/ 'what' and /nəkhe/ 'how'. Uchai also uses certain particles like, /hãhaleʔ/ — expressing extreme joy or pleasure, /paʔ/ or /paihã/ — expressing extreme sorrow, /baʔ/ — expressing wonder, /thuro/ — expressing disagreement, /alapala/ — expressing utter disgust, etc. to form exclamatory sentences.

It is also to be noted that *passive sentences are not found in Uchai*. When active and passive versions of a sentence in English are given, there is only one response in Uchai for both the constructions — the only difference is in the word order — SOV turned into OSV. However, Uchai has certain semi-passive or passive-like sentences which are formed by adding the particle /yauʔ/ to the verbal root. Thus, it can be concluded that *passivization is not a grammatical process in Uchai* and the *types of sentences found in Uchai are declarative, negative, interrogative, imperative, hortative, optative and exclamatory sentences*.

6.5   CONCLUSION

To conclude, the present study intends to give a comprehensive idea about the descriptive structure of Uchai and throws significant light on the nature of Uchai as spoken today. As no detailed linguistic work on Uchai has been done earlier, so, the present study anticipates being the only work on the Grammar of Uchai. Further, there is no original script of Uchai; either English

or Bengali is used for literary purpose till today. Moreover, Uchai has not been introduced for teaching in any government educational institution, at least in Tripura. So, the present work also expects to serve as the basic material for teaching and learning of Uchai. Nevertheless, the study proposes to generate materials for typological and areal comparisons for languages and for studies of language universals.

✠　✠　✠　✠　✠