

Chapter 5

Conclusions

On the basis of above analysis, we can draw the following conclusions:

(i) Sylheti has five monophthongs /a, e, i, o and u/ in its phonemic inventory. All the vowels can occur in all the position of a word i.e initially, medially and finally.

(ii) All the vowel phonemes in Sylheti are oral.

(iii) Length is not phonemic in the language.

(iv) Sylheti has 29 consonantal phonemes. It has sixteen stops i.e., /p, b, p^h, b^h, t, d, t^h, d^h, t̪, d̪, t̪^h, d̪^h, k, k^h, g, g^h/, one affricates /ts/, four fricatives /s, ś, z and h/, three nasals /m, n, ŋ/, three liquids /l, r and ɽ / and two semi-vowels /w and y/.

(v) Aspiration is phonemic in Sylheti and voicing is also one of the distinctive features of the language.

(vi) The voiceless and voiced labio-dental fricatives /f/ and /v/ are absent in Sylheti. However these are substituted by aspirated voiceless bilabial stop /p^h/ and voiced bilabial stop /b/ respectively in the English loanwords in Sylheti.

(vii) Generally no consonant clusters are found in Syllable initially and finally in the variety.

(viii) The central mid unrounded /ə / vowel changed to the mid back rounded vowel /o/ in English loanwords in Sylheti such as /ma:stəɾ/ > /mastɔɾ/

(ix) The high vowels of the final syllables influence the vowels of the first syllables which have the same tongue height rather than their backness distinctions such as /*məfi:n*/ > /*miʃin*/.

(x) Sylheti usually does not permit the /*kl-*, /*kr-*, /*sl-*, /*sp-*, /*st-*, /*sk-*, /*sg-*/ CC-cluster in the beginning of a word because of the difficulty in pronunciation therefore the vowel /*i*/, /*o*/ and /*e*/ sound are being added to break the initial cluster of English to make it easier to pronounce the same such as /*kri:m* > /*kirim* ‘cream’, /*pleit*/ > /*peleit*/ ‘plate’ /*sloul* > /*solol* ‘slow’ and so on.

(xi) Insertion or addition of vowel sounds is one of the common phonological processes in the phonology of English loanwords in most of the Indian languages. Sylheti is no exception in this regard, a few English loan words in Sylheti exhibit the process of vowel insertion such as /*sku:l*/ > /*iskul*/ ‘school’

(xii) The English phonemes /*f*/ is generally substituted by the voiceless aspirated stop /*p^h*/ in English loanwords in Sylheti such as /*fæn*/ > /*p^hen*/ ‘fan’.

(xiii) Sylheti usually does not allow syllable initial or final consonant clusters. Hence a consonant cluster at the beginning or end of a borrowed word is simplified such as /*drem*/ > /*derein*/ ‘drain’.

(xiv) Long vowels become short ones before the voiceless stop sounds in the borrowed words in Sylheti such as /*ʃɔ:t* > /*ʃot*/ ‘short’.

(xv) A few English loanwords in Sylheti shows the interchange of two consonants i.e., the sequence of stop /*k*/ plus sibilants sounds /*s* or /*ʃ*/ in English becomes sibilants /*s* or /*ʃ*/ plus stop /*k*/ in Sylheti Bengali. It may be the reason that the sequences of said consonants are not permitted in syllabic structure of Sylheti so that the same sequence of sounds metathesize to get permitted syllabic structure of Sylheti such as /*tæk.si*/ > /*teski*/ ‘taxi’.

(xvi) A few English loanwords in Sylheti shows the voicing assimilation, the voiceless sounds /*k*/ and /*p*/ in English loanwords become voiced in

intervocalic position i.e., in between two vowel sounds such as /sɪkʌnd/ > /seɡent/ ‘second’ /pʌkɪt/ > /pʌɡet/ ‘packet’ and so on.

(xviii) The Sylheti speakers substitute the voiced stops by their voiceless counterpart in the final position of words such as /bæg/ > /bek/ ‘bag’.

(xix) Generally, the voiceless stop sounds /p, t, and k / are aspirated in the initial position of a syllable in Sylheti except in a few cases. The unaspirated stop sounds became aspirated in English loanwords in Sylheti such as /pəli:s > /puliś/ [p^huliś] ‘police’.

(xx) The Voiced labio-dental fricative became the voiced bilabial stop in English loan words in sylheti such as /veikənsi/ > /bekensi/ ‘vacancy’.

(xxi) In Sylheti loanwords, noun plus noun particularly sylheti nouns and English nouns are very common as many other languages of the world do. So a loan compounding are found in the house hold items such as /sabon keis/ ‘soap case’.

(xxiii) In the case of adjective + noun loan compounding, the adjective precedes the loan nouns regularly. In this type of loan compounding the English loan nouns became the head of the compound. It is also noticed that the head cannot be in the left side of the compound in Sylheti such as /lal bek/ ‘red bag’.

(xxiv) In Sylheti, in Numeral (Native) + Noun (Loan) compound the numeral precedes the noun. However the noun is the head of the compound. So the head is in the right side of the compound that is right headed compound such as *ek^h nombor* > number one.

(xxv) In noun + verb compound in Sylheti, the noun precedes the verb such as *kiket k^hela* ‘to play cricket’.

(xxvi) In Noun (Native) + Genitive (Native) + Noun (Loan) compound in Sylheti , the native noun precedes the genitive and the genitive precedes the loan nouns as schematised in the following order [noun (native) + genitive + loan nouns] such as *tel-or butol* ‘oil bottle’ , *ṣamṣa-r bek* ‘bag made of leather’.

(xxvii) In Noun (Loan) + Genitive (Native) + Noun (Native) compounds, the loan noun is the head of the compound and it is right side of the compound. So this type of compound is right headed compound as the head is in the right side of the compound such as *ṭelip^hon-or tar* ‘wire of telephone’.

(xxviii) In Noun (Loan) + Genitive (Native) + Noun (Loan) compound the loan noun precedes the genitive and the genitive precede the loan nouns such as *bas-or siṭ* ‘seat of a bus’.

(xxix) In Noun (Loan) + Verb (Native) compound the loan noun precedes the native verb such as *suis dewa* ‘to switch on’.

(xxx) Some loan compound words are directly incorporated in Sylheti without having any morphological changes rather the phonological changes such as *batr um* > bath room , *beḍ ṣiṭ* > bed sheet.

(xxxi) The lexical item ‘*bank*’ means financial institution and the coast of a river in English. However the loan word ‘bank’ only means financial institution in Sylheti.

xii) In English the lexical item *mobile* means both mobile phones and something moving but when it is nativised in Sylheti it means only the mobile phone rather than the moving object.

(xxxiii) In English the lexical item *gas* means a substance like air that is neither liquid nor solid and burns easily (lit. gas cylinder). But in Sylheti, apart from this, it is also used to mean acidity.