

ABSTRACT

The present research work entitled "**Phonology and Morphology of Liangmai**", focuses on Phonology and Morphology of Liangmai, which mainly spoken in some parts of Manipur and Nagaland States in Northeast India. Liangmai is one of the constituent tribe of Zeliangrong within the generic term called "Naga". The term Zeliangrong consists of Zeme, Liangmai and Rongmei. This is the combination of the first syllable of the three tribes, i.e. Ze from Zeme, Liang from Liangmai and Rong from Rongmei (Ze+Liang+Rong=Zeliangrong). It is a name of an organization formed by the fusion of these three tribes scattered in Manipur and Nagaland. Like many other Naga tribes, Zeliangrong belongs to Tibeto-Burman language family.

Liangmai language is one of the 33 languages recognized by the Government of Manipur. According to Grierson LSI (1903) classified Liangmai under the Kuki-Chin-Naga sub-group of the Tibeto Burman family. Liangmai is spoken in Tamenglong district particularly in the Headquarter, Tousem and Tamei Sub-division also in Senapati District i.e. Kangpokpi, Supermania and Tadubi of Manipur. They are also found in Nagaland State particularly in Tening Sub-division, Jalukie, Peren, Dimapur and Kohima (Liangmai and Zeme are referred to collectively as Zeliang in Nagaland). This language is linguistically closer to Maram, Poumai, Ruangmei and Zeme which are spoken in same region. There is no evidence of existence of writing system among the Liangmai's in the past. However, the richness of their oral tradition (history, songs, sayings, chants, etc.) orally handed down from generation to generation. It was the Britishers, who first introduce the system of education and writing to the Liangmai. According to Rev. N. Mairilungbou, the first school to be set up in Liangmai village was in Longdi Mpa, in 1920, by the British missionaries. Thereby, education and writing system make the first move among the Liangmai. Liangmai language has been already introduced for teaching till class ten (high school level) in Manipur since January 2014. The script used is the Romans script, which was introduced by the Britishers.

It is believed that at one point of time the *Zeliangrong* lived together at place called *Makhel* or *Makhiang* as before a major dispersal took place (it is presumable that they spoke one language there). There, people use one language in songs and prayer were

deep seated. It is said that the members of the houses in *Makuilongdi* reached 7777, due to increase in population the administration become out of control, people in group with their dear and near ones started parting from each other in different groups in different direction according to their own wishes, some to the North-West, some to the North-East and some to the South. They proceeded with their own lives without knowing their destination. The dispersal took place after year within a time frame under the customary law. The ancestors of Liangmai left their abode in *Makhel* and with their belongings, moved to Southward. After long time they reached *Ramting Kabin* where they are comparatively safe. It was located at *Makuilongdi* which was commonly called *Guangphungning (Chawang Phungning)* somewhere near the present *Oklong* village.

The vast majorities of Liangmai groups are agriculturist and still live in villages. As their village is on the top of the hill, it provides a proper habitat for cultivation. They mostly practice shifting cultivation also called *pamlou* in Manipuri. They worship god for good harvest and also for the protection of their lives and general well being. They were theists and believed in the highest god or the supreme god called 'CHARAWANG' which literally means 'God king'. He is the creator of everything. Their religion was traditionally animism. However due to the influence of the Christian missionaries they have converted to Christianity even before India's independence and celebrated the Passover (commemoration of liberation by God) in the year 2003 in Manipur). The administration of the village was carried on in general by the village *bampi* or *wangdi*. He was responsible for the administration after consulting the *apai*. Traditionally, all the administrative power were vested in him but without the consent of the members of *apai* (village authorities) he was not regarded as the final authority to decide any disputes, theft, quarrel among the villagers. The post of village chief was not hereditary in Liangmai society. Liangmai society being patrilineal, the property is inherited by the younger sons. The Liangmais have fine qualities, they are known for their simplicity and hospitality. They are honest, courteous and cheerful. Traditionally, the Liangmai have their traditional clothes both for men and women worn at the cultural festivals and during dance.

The data for the present study was collected in several part of the Liangmai inhabiting areas of Tamenglong District Manipur, mainly from Thalon Village of Tamenglong

and Tamei sub-division of Tamenglong District. The present work is organized into five chapters. The chapters are Introduction, Review of Literature, Phonology, Morphology and Conclusion.

The first chapter contains an introduction, origin, migration, position of Liangmai within the Tibeto-Burman family, village administration, law of property inheritance, Chaga Ngee, population, Religion, socio-culture, Dress, occupation, where it is spoken, education and literacy, data and methodology and organisation of the chapter.

The second chapter deals with the literature review, few selected books of Liangmai are used for review as no literature is available which can be used for the purpose of review; The only piece of work on the language is that of LSI, which made mention of the language as *Kwoireng* or *Lyang*. G.A. Grierson (1903) described the grammatical sketch of *Kwoireng* or *Lyang* in his *Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III, pt. II*. R. Tale, in his book '*Paphibang*' which means '*in the beginning*' which is published in 1947. Another early work was a compilation of poems by Guisongbou Daimai, which was published under the title '*Kadih Rapen Jah*', in 1957. Some Dictionaries, viz., "*The English-Liangmai Sentence Dictionary*" edited by Dee Abonmai 2007, '*The Faringki Liyangmai naga compicamrakeng 2000 Millennial Dictionary*' compiled by Niumai Lunkingbou RTD.A.I. There are also some hymn books and Bible "*Old Testament Genesis to New Testament Revelation*" translated by N.K. Sying.

The third chapter deals with the phonology of Liangmai, there are twenty consonants, six vowels, nine diphthongs and three tones. Out of 20 consonant phonemes in Liangmai, only six phonemes can occur in all positions, the phonemes which can occur in all positions are; /p/, /t/ and /k/ in stop series and /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/ in nasal. The phonemes which cannot occur in final position are; /ph/, /b/, /th/, /d/, /ts/, /kh/, /g/, /s/, /z/, /h/, /l/, /r/, /w/ and /y/. Liangmai permits up to two consonant clusters in a syllabic-initial position and medial position, but Liangmai does not permit clusters of consonants in syllable-final position. Occurrence of syllable or word-final position is totally missing in fricative, laterals, trills and semi-vowel /w/ and /y/. The vowels /e/ and /o/ are very rare in word-initial positions compared with the other remaining vowels. Liangmai is an agglutinative language having the characteristics of SOV

language. The majority of the monosyllabic words of Liangmai have the CV structure, that is, they are open ended syllables. Three tones viz., high, mid and low which are contrastive to each other but different pitch variation as in /pá/ ‘read’, /pa/ ‘foot print’ and /pà/ ‘he’.

The fourth chapter deals with Morphology of Liangmai in detail. There are three pronominal markers such as- /ə-/first person, /nə-/second person and /pə-/third person. Gender distinction in Liangmai is determined on the natural recognition of sex. Human and animate nouns are referred to as Masculine or feminine genders on the basis of natural sex. For human being [+human – inanimate] in Liangmai is marked by /piu/ ‘male’ and /pui/ ‘female’. And in case of animals, /tsi/ ‘male’ and /pui/ female’, but in case of pigs the suffix -/kiu/ is marked for male and -/ηee/ for female which haven’t give birth to young one. There are eight case markers in Liangmai. Nominative /-niu/, Accusative/-tu/, Genitive/-gu/, Locative/-k^hu/ /-gə/, /-ləm/, Instrumental /-niu/, Ablative/-gəsu/, /-ləmsu/, Associative/-nai/, /-pənai/ , Dative /-leŋ/. Quantifier in Liangmai are /keŋziu/ ‘many’ /inkiuziu/ ‘more’ /keŋkhə/ ‘much’ /khənsia/kəsia/ ‘some’ /pakhian/ ‘all’ /mathiu/ ‘all’ /poina/ ‘little’ etc. Classifier is very rich in Liangmai. Liangmai makes use of classifier for denoting shape, size, physical and state etc. Classifier in Liangmai usually follow the noun and precedes the numeral, for examples -/daŋ/: This classifier is used for any object which are short but longer than its wide or breadth. An object may be round, flat or in any shape. -/k^həŋ/ it is used after noun to indicate the human being only. -/kaŋ/ indicates any objects which are solid and irregular in shape. -/keŋ/ it indicates that an object is long or short but thin in shape, ropelike structure which are thin. -/muai/ it signifies any things which are in a state of powder. -/poi/ this classifier indicates both animate and inanimate size and age. This classifier ‘poi’ is usually followed by the suffix ‘na’. -/kem/ this classifier is used to signifies any creepers plant. -/nian/ this classifier signifies anythings which are in the form of powder or paste. Liangmai personal pronoun differentiates three persons: first person, second person and third person. These three persons can be distinguished into three numbers: singular, dual and plural. The first person singular pronoun is -i ‘I’ and opposite of it is -əliu ‘we’. There is no question of inclusive or exclusive in the first person plural form. There is also dual form- əniah, əne, ənai (ə-first personal pronouns, -nia, -ne ‘two’). It has also objective singular form: -ək^hugə ‘to me’ and -ək^hu-gəsu ‘from me’. Liangmai has four negative

particles namely- /mək/, /lək/, /ma/ and /dulo/. The negative marker /mək/ is used in both past and non-past aspect, /lək/ is used only in non past aspect, the negative particle – /ma/ is used in imperative negation. The word always follows the verb and takes the suffix –/ne/ in the imperative sentence, and /dulo/ is used in lets negation.

The chapter five form the concluding part of the research work; this chapter sums up the research findings (in the preceding chapters to present) a comprehensive idea about the language.