

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.0 Introduction

This section provides a summary of this analysis and suggestions for further study.

#### 6.1 Summary

The Kuki Chin people originally migrated from China centuries ago and settled around the plain areas, and then moving around the Chin Hills. Syriem belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language families, Kuki-Chin Sub-group. Syriem includes twenty-six consonant phonemes and five vowel phonemes. Vowel length is contrastive only in closed syllables.

The maximal syllable template of Syriem is  $(C_1)V_1(V_1)(C_2)(C_3)$  followed by any tone. All consonants can occur word initially, but only ten can occur word finally. There are two diphthongs, /uo/ and /ie/. Monophthongs can occur word initially, word medially, and word finally but diphthongs can only occur medially and finally. There is no heavy restriction on the co-occurrence of initial consonants with vowels. Almost all consonant phonemes can appear in a syllable initial position with monophthongs as well as diphthongs except the glottal stop. The phoneme /ts/ occupies a single consonant position. Syriem does not permit

consonant clusters. Syriem word structure consists of one to four syllables, usually one. There are vowel length contrasts.

Being a tonal language, tone is the most fundamental contrastive element in the suprasegmental phonology of Syriem. The tone occurs on the whole syllable as a unit, of which the vowel is the peak. The tonal analysis in this thesis is an auditory analysis based on recorded wordlists and text. There are three underlying tones in Syriem: low, rising, and falling. All consonants and vowels can occur with all tones. The relation between tone and syllable structure changes according to its environment. Syllables retain their underlying tones in isolation. In other places some alternations of tone occur according to their neighbouring tone. Tone sandhi also occurs in Syriem with rising and falling tones. Of the three phonemic tones, the low tone never undergoes tone sandhi.

Syriem has morphophonemic alternations. Open syllables which have long vowels become short when they attach to another syllable to create a compound word. Morphophonemic alternations mostly occur with nouns in compounding, verbs, and some nominal phrases. There are segmental alternations, namely nasal alternation, stop alternation and final glottalization. Diphthongs in nouns or verbs do not undergo change.

There is lexical alternation of verb stems, primary and secondary. The secondary stems tend to shorten or stay the same, and never lengthen. Segmental shortenings that affect secondary stems generally involve a single change. Regarding glottalization, syllables with glottal closure are normally shorter and occur with

low and falling tone. It can be concluded that glottalization produces effective vowel shortening. When a stop is added to an open syllable in secondary stem, many vowels tend to be shorter than their equivalents in open syllables (/nǎa – nǎt/ ‘pain’).

There are three tone alternations: one converts rising tone into low tone when the primary stem syllable is closed and converts into low and falling when the primary stem syllable is open, second is the replacement of falling tone into low tone in secondary stem and third a low tone converts into falling tone in secondary stem. Rising tones are never found in secondary stem. The glottal stop is associated with low tone.

In terms of tonal independency, rising tone always alternates, regardless of its syllable type. The most obvious interdependency is when tone is invariant, the situation requires segmental alternations. Finally, conclusions can be drawn for syllables in secondary stems: all syllables are closed, vowels are shortened, many syllables are glottalized, there is no vowel lengthening and vowel change.

## **6.2 Suggestion for further study**

This analysis is an initial phonological description of Syriem. A further acoustic study would be very a helpful tool to be able to further understanding the Syriem sound system. A phonological comparison would also be helpful so that the similarities and the differences among other languages can widely be understood by researchers. The status of glottal stop is still not entirely clear. The historical

relationship between primary and secondary verb stems deserves clarification, and would result on a clearer picture of a single underlying form of each lexeme.