

DECLARATION

I, Ashangbam Samani Devi, bearing Registration Number Ph.D/1414/2011 dated 14.11.2011, hereby declare that the subject matter of the thesis entitled "**THE PHONOLOGY OF SYRIEM**" is the record of work done by me and that the content of this thesis did not form the basis for award of any degree to me or to anybody else to the best of my knowledge. The thesis has not been submitted in any other University/Institution.

This thesis is being submitted to Assam University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics.

Place :

Date:

Candidate

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 The origin of Syriem and the people	3
1.2 Social Composition.....	6
1.3 Linguistic classification of the Kuki- Chin.....	7
1.3.1 Is it a language or a dialect?	13
1.3.2 Proposed classification of the language	14
1.4 Goal of the study	14
1.5 Method of Data collection	14
Chapter 2 Literature Review	15
2.0 Introduction	15
2.1 Previous works in Kuki- Chin languages	15
2.2 Ongoing Researches in Kuki- Chin languages	16
Chapter 3 Segmental Phonology.....	18
3.0 Introduction.....	18
3.1 Consonants.....	18
3.1.1 Stops	19
3.1.2 Fricatives and Affricates	22
3.1.3 Sonorants	23
3.1.4 Consonants and allophonic variations	24

3.1.4.1 Plosives	24
3.1.4.2 Fricatives	25
3.1.4.3 Affricates	26
3.1.4.4 Nasals, Lateral, and Trill	26
3.1.4.5 Voiceless Nasals, Lateral and Trill	27
3.2 Vowels	27
3.2.1 Vowel contrasts	28
3.2.2 Nasalization	28
Chapter 4 Syllable Structure	30
4.0 Introduction	30
4.1 Internal constituents and templates	30
4.1.1 Minor syllables	33
4.1.2 Major syllables	35
4.1.2.1 Smooth syllables	37
4.1.2.2 Stopped syllables	37
4.1.2.3 Onsetless syllables	38
4.2 Word structure	39
4.3 Rhymes	42
4.4 Segmental distributions in syllable	44
4.4.1 Ambiguous consonant determinations	44
4.4.2 Consonant- vowel distributions	44
4.4.3 Vowel- vowel sequences	45

4.4.4 Vowel length distributions	46
4.4.5 Vowel length constraints	47
4.4.6 Monophthong distributions	47
4.4.7 Diphthong distributions	47
Chapter 5 Morphophonemics	48
5.0 Introduction	48
5.1 Phonologically conditioned alternations	48
5.1.1 Vowel shortening (VS)	48
5.1.1.1 Noun stems	49
5.1.1.2 Primary verb stems	52
5.1.1.3 No VS across major constituents	53
5.1.2 Resyllabification	53
5.1.3 Deletion	54
5.1.4 Assimilation	54
5.2 Lexically conditioned alternations	55
5.2.1 Nasal alternations	56
5.2.2 Stop alternations	57
5.2.3 Glottalization	59
5.2.4 Vowel shortening	60
5.2.5 Tonal alternations	60
5.2.5.1 Low tone alternation	60
5.2.5.2 Rising tone alternation	61

5.2.5.3 Falling tone alternation	62
Chapter 6 Tone	63
6.0 Introduction	63
6.1 Tone	63
6.1.1 Rising tone	64
6.1.2 Falling tone	65
6.1.3 Low tone	65
6.1.4 Contrasts	66
6.1.5 Tone dissimilation	68
6.1.6 Tone sandhi	70
6.1.7 Tone distribution	74
Chapter 7 Conclusion	76
7.0 Introduction	76
7.1 Summary	76
7.2 Suggestion for further study	78
Appendix I Wordlists	80
References	116

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

Abbreviations

C	Consonant
F	Falling tone
H	High tone
Imp.	Imperative
L	Low tone
Loc	Locative
Neg.	Negation
1Pl.	Third Person Plural
R	Rising tone
1Sg.	First Person Singular
T	Tone
V	Vowel
W	Word

Symbols

//	Phonemic Slashes
[]	Phonetic Brackets
σ	Syllable

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Map of India showing the state of Assam	4
Figure 2. District Map of Assam	5
Figure 3. Map of Southern Assam showing the location of Syriem villages	5
Figure 4. Schematic chart of Sino-Tibetan Languages (Benedict 1972)	8
Figure 5. Matisoff's Provisional STEDT Family Tree	9
Figure 6. Bradley's Kuki- Chin- Naga classification	11
Figure 7. Grierson's (1904) classification of Chin languages	12
Figure 8. Spectrographic image of a retroflex sound	20
Figure 9. Spectrographic image of a velar sound	20
Figure 10. Spectrographic image of a voiceless trill sound	23
Figure 11. A syllable with coda	30
Figure 12. A syllable with rhyme	31
Figure 13. Division of syllable	33
Figure 14. Disyllabic word pattern	40
Figure 15. Trisyllabic word pattern	41
Figure 16. Quatrissyllabic word pattern	42
Figure 17. Pitch pattern of an open monosyllabic word with a rising tone	64
Figure 18. Pitch pattern of a closed monosyllabic word with a falling tone	65
Figure 19: Pitch pattern of a closed monosyllabic word with a low tone	66

Figure 20: Syriem tone (R,F,L)67

Figure 21. Syriem tone (R,F,L)67

Figure 22. Syriem tone in sentence68

LISTS OF TABLES

Table 1. Consonant phonemes in Syriem	19
Table 2. Vowel phonemes	28
Table 3. Syriem syllable templates	32
Table 4. Minor syllables	35
Table 5. Major syllables	36
Table 6. Onsetless syllables	39
Table 7. Rhyme inventory of Syriem full syllables	44
Table 8. Final consonant phonemes	45
Table 9. Vowel sequence	45
Table 10. Summary of tone alternation	62
Table 11. Tone distributions	75