Chapter-9

Conclusion

The present work provides the structural description of Zeme language spoken in Tousem Sub-division of Tamenglong district of Manipur. Linguistically Zeme belongs to the Kuki-Naga group of the Tibeto-Burman language family. On the basis of the structural analysis the following conclusions can be drawn.

(i) Zeme exhibits the basic six-vowel system found in Proto-Tibeto-Burman and most of its descendants. Six vowels in the language are */i, e, a, ə, o* and *u/*. All the vowels in the language are voiced and oral and they cannot occur in all the three positions. Out of this six vowels, vowel */i, u/* occur in all the three positions, the rest of the vowels */e, a, ə, o/* cannot occur in all the three positions.

(ii) There are twenty (20) consonantal phonemes in Zeme. They are */p, b, t, d, k, g,* p^h, t^h, k^h, *č, s, z, h, m, n, ŋ, l, r, w,* and *y/*. Zeme has nine stops consisting of unaspirated voiceless */p, t, k/,* aspirated voiceless stops */*p^h, t^h, k^h*/* and an unaspirated voiced stops */b, d, g/* which lack their aspirated counterpart */*b^h, d^h, *and* g^h*/*. Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages, aspiration is phonemic in the language and the voicing is also one of distinctive features in the case of consonantal phonemes in Zeme. There are three nasal sounds in the language i.e., */m, n, ŋ/* and all three are voiced and occurs in all three positions viz., initially, medially and finally. Other consonantal phonemes found in the language which includes affricates */č/,* fricatives */s, z, h/,* lateral */l/,* trill */r/* and approximant */w, y/*.

(iii) Like most of the Tibeto-Burman languages, Zeme is a tonal language in which a change in the pitch of the syllable corresponds to a change in its meaning. The number of contrasting tones in Zeme is two i.e., Zeme has two contrastive lexical tones namely (i) high and (ii) low.

(iii) The syllable in Zeme consists of a nucleus with or without an onset and with or without a coda. The nucleus or peak in the language is always a vowel. In other words, the vowel element is essential to the structure of Zeme syllable; that is, a syllable is not possible without the vowel element.

(iv) Noun in Zeme may be defined as a class of words that can be postposed by morphemes for pluralization *{-rəme}***,** gender *{-pəi, -səi, and -pui}* and cases *{-ne, -du, gene-}* etc. Nouns in Zeme can be classified into (i) basic nouns, (ii) derived nouns and (iii) compound nouns.

(v) Zeme has no grammatical gender. Gender distinction in the language is determined on the basis of natural sex i.e, all the male (human and animate nouns) are referred to as masculine and all the female are referred to as feminine.

(vi) Like many other Sino-Tibetan Languages, number is not grammatically significant in this language, i.e., there is no subject predicate agreement as far as number is concerned. Zeme contrast two way distinctions in number viz. singular and plural. Singular forms of the nouns in Zeme are not marked overtly while plural forms are expressed by using plural marker *-rəme*.

(vii) Personal pronouns of the language distinguish three persons and two numbers but not the gender. Zeme does not show inclusive and exclusive distinction in the case of personal pronouns. It is also worth noting that the first, and third persons plural are formed by the suffixation of *-nui* to the first and third persons pronominal clitics: *ə* and *pə*, whereas the plural of second person personal pronoun is formed by the suffixing *-nui* directly to the second person personal pronoun *nəŋ*. This is one of the typical features of Tibeto-Burman languages shared by Zeme language.

(viii) Numeral system in Zeme is mainly of the decimal type. However, the vigesimal system is also found in Zeme however it is not productive in the language. The presence of vigesimal numeral *iŋkai* '20' is one of the typical features of Zeme language. Majority of the numeral roots in the language are mono-morphemic. Bi-morphemic numerals in the language are numeral roots plus formative prefixes for instances, *ə-ket 'one', kə-čum 'three', sə-na 'seven'* etc.

(ix) Case relation in zeme is expressed by means of postposition. More specifically, case relations in Zeme are expressed by postposing the case markers to the noun or pronouns.

(x) Verbs in Zeme are bound roots which can take tense/aspects, moods, imperative markers etc. verbs in Zeme are not marked for person, number and gender. Structurally, verbs in Zeme can be divided into (i) simple verbs and (ii) derived verbs. Semantically verbs in Zeme can be divided into (i) verbs of action

(ii) verb of cognition (iii) verbs of cooking (iv) verbs of existence (v) verbs of grooming (vi) verbs of instrument/fighting (vi) verb of motion (vii) verb of occupation.

(xi) Like many Kuki-Naga languages, tense is not prominent in Zeme. So aspect commonly is an important part of the representation of time in Tibeto-Burman languages. Zeme has four aspectual distinctions: (i) simple (ii) progressive (iii) perfective and (iv) irrealis or unrealized.

(xii) Zeme has various types of mood namely (i) imperative mood (ii) permissive mood (iii) capability mood (iv) obligatory mood (v) probability mood (vi) conditional mood (vii) necessity mood and (viii) Optative mood. Imperatives mood in Zeme is mainly expressed by postposing the imperative morpheme -*ləu* to the verb.

(xiii) Polite imperative in Zeme is expressed by postposing the morpheme -*gurəi* to the verb root followed by the declarative marker -*ləi* and imperative mood of request is expressed with the polite imperative word *iŋgiya* 'please'. The permissive mood is expressed by using the lexical verb *pəi* 'give' followed by the honorific morpheme -*gai* followed by the imperative marker -*ləu.* Capability mood is expressed by using the verb *či* followed by the intensive marker -*dui* followed by the declarative marker -*ləi*. Obligatory mood is expressed by the obligatory marker -*ra* which occurs postverbally before the declarative marker. Probabity

mood is expressed by using the morpheme *ləiyu-* followed by the declarative marker -*ləi*. The conditional mood is expressed by postposing the conditional marker -*dina* to the verb root. Necessity mood in Zeme is expressed by the verb *nəŋ* followed by the declarative marker -*ləi.*The intensive mood in Zeme is expressed by using the desiderative verb *nəi* which is attached to the verbal root and followed by the declarative marker -*ləi*.The optative mood is expressed by *verbs like* which is attached to the verb2 in Zeme.

(xiv) Adjectives in the language are derived from verbs particularly from the stative ones by adding suffix in the form of nominalizers -*be.* It is one of the common phenomena to form adjectives in most of the Tibeto-Burman languages of South Asia (Benedict 1972, Matisoff, 2003).

(xv) Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages the adverbs in Zeme always precedes the verbs. In other words, the adverbs in Zeme cannot occur in the postverbal position. It is also important to note that the adverbs in some of the Sino Tibeto-Burman languages like Chinese either precedes or follows the verbs, however all the adverbs in Zeme cannot follow the verbs. Syntactically adverbs in Zeme can be divided into (1) simple and (ii) derived adverbs. Semantically, adverbs in Zeme can be categorized as (i) adverbs of manner (ii) adverbs of location and direction (iii) adverbs of time and (iv) adverbs of degree.

(xvi) Like many other languages of Southeast Asia, the basic order of words in Zeme in an unmarked sentence is subject, object and verb (SOV). Zeme being a

Tibeto-Buman language share almost all the characteristics of universals rule described by the Greenberg as in a declarative sentence with nominal subject and object, the subject always precedes the object, the question markers occur in sentence final position, the conditional clause in Zeme precedes the conclusions, Zeme is exclusively affixing with more suffixes than prefixes as many other postpositional languages do. Some of the suffixes include aspect, mood, plural, nominalising suffix etc.

(xvii) Noun phrase in Zeme consists of a head noun which may be preceded or followed by one or more modifiers. The modifiers may be demonstrative, adjectival, numerals, quantifiers etc. the head noun in Zeme language is not strictly in the right of the noun phrase. Co-ordinate noun phrase in Zeme is expressed by the coordinators, which may be either conjunctive or disjunctive. Verb phrase in Zeme must consist of a verb and some other optional elements (NPs or Adverbs) which generally precede the verb.

(xviii) Clause in Zeme can be analysed in the following way as (i) declarative (ii) interrogative (iii) imperative (iv) adverbial (v) temporal (vi) desiderative clause and (vi) conditional clause. Declarative clause in Zeme is marked by declarative suffix -*ləi*. Structurally declarative clause can be categorized into two types: (i) verbal predicate and (ii) non-verbal predicate. The verbal predicate in Zeme is formed by the verb i.e, the verb is the predicator of the verbal predicate. Non-verbal predicate is formed by juxtaposition of two noun phrase.Imperative clause

in Zeme is formed by using the imperative marker *-ləu* which is attached to the verb in post-verbal positions. The interrogative clause in Zeme is formed by using question word or question particle, sometimes both are used jointly to form the interrogative clause. In Zeme, four strategies are employed to form interrogative clause viz. (i) by using question word (ii) by using question particle (iii) by using question word and question particle and (iv) by using rising intonation. In Zeme adverbial clause is expressed by using the subordinator *dai-liya, dai-gene, dai-ge* in which the subordinator clause may precedes or follows the main clause**.** In other word, the adverbial clause in Zeme is also expressed by using a specific subordinator *'luwa',* which indicates time adverbial.Temporal clause in zeme is formed by the subordinating words such as *soge* 'before' and *cəŋgene* 'after' which is placed before the finite verb in a clause or sentence.The desiderative clause in Zeme is expressed by the morpheme *-nəi-* which is attached to the verb root and declarative suffix *-ləi* follows the desiderative morpheme.Conditional clause in Zeme is formed by suffixing morpheme *-dina* ~ *-dizaine* to the verb root.

(xix) Zeme being a Tibeto-Burman language has no relative pronoun. However, the nominalizers *-be* or *-me* is used to form relative clause in the language and the lack of relative pronoun is one of the typological feature shared by Zeme. Zeme has externally headed relative clause where the relativised noun occurs to the right of the clause. Zeme has headless relative clause. In other words, the headless relative clause lacks an overt nominal head and it is interpretable as 'those who'. In this relative clause construction, a distinct form of relativizer i.e., *-me* is used to

relativize the clause which is followed by the plural markers. This type of relative clause discussed into two types: (i) subject relative clause and (ii) object relative clause. In subject relative construction the subject of transitive or intransitive clauses are relativised by the relativizer -*be* where the relative clause precedes the head noun and in object relative clause, the object is relativized by the the relativizer -*be* in which relative clause follows the head noun .

(xx) Nominalization in Zeme is formed by means of suffixation. Nominalization is one of the productive morpho-syntactic features in Zeme. Like almost all the languages of the family, Zeme makes use of various nominalizers to form nouns from verbs or verb like categories. Verbal nouns are formed by suffixing nominalizer -*be* to the verbal root and adjectival nouns are also formed by suffixing same nominalizer -*be* to the adjectival and the nominalizer -*be* along with the morpheme *ti*- is also used to derive nouns from verbs referring the action of verbs 'who does a lot' .

(xxi) Pronominalisation is one of the morphological features of Tibeto-Burman languages. Zeme, being a Tibeto-Burman language has nominal pronominalization i.e., the pronominal markers are attached the nominal root in the form of prefixes and as a result it expresses the sense of possession.Zeme has three pronominal prefix: *ə* 'first person', *nəŋ* 'second person' and *pə* 'third person'. There is no phonological correspondence between the personal pronouns and its pronominal prefixes in Zeme. Pronominalization in Zeme can be made in semantic domains as

such as kinship terms, body parts, and some of animate or inanimate nouns as many other Tibeto-Burman languages of Northeast India do.

(xxii) Causativisation in Zeme is formed by using the causative morpheme *təiyu* 'do' which may be preposed or postposed to the verb root.

(xxiii) Reflexivization in Zeme is expressed by using reflexive morpheme *-rin* 'self' which is suffixed to the pronominal clitic rather than the noun regardless of gender or number distinctions.

(xxiv) Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages, negation in Zeme is expressed by means of affixation i.e., suffixation. The general negator *mak* is used to negate both the declarative and interrogative clauses. The nominalised claused is also negated by the general negetor *mak*. Zeme has a special form of the prohibitive marker *-so* that does not occur in non-imperative clauses (declarative and interrogative). The intensifier *-zet* in negative construction strengthens the negative statement in Zeme.

(xxv) Interrogative in Zeme can be analysed into four categories viz., (i) yes-no questions, (ii) wh-questions, (iii) alternative questions and (iv) tag questions. Yes/No questions in Zeme are formed by using the question particle *məi* which is postposed to the verb or nouns or adjectives. *wh-* question in Zeme is formed by using *wh-* pronouns along with the question particle *-ləu.* The alternative question in Zeme usually has two possible answers which may be either positive or negative. The disjunctive marker *məkčai* is used to form alternative question

particularly in the case of clausal constructions in Zeme. Tag questions are formed by using the negative form of a positive verb or the positive form of a negative verb as functioning as tag question. In Zeme, tag question is formed by using the question particle *məi*.

(xxvi) In Zeme there are three basic types of sentences viz., (i) simple sentence (ii) complex sentence and (iii) compound sentence.