

## A SKETCH STUDY ON SYLLABIC STRUCTURE IN REANG

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Reang is one of the indigenous languages of Northeast India spoken in Mizoram, Tripura and Assam including neighboring countries like Bangladesh and Burma. According to the 2011 census of India report, the total population of Reang is about 1, 88,080. Like many other endangered languages of Northeast India, linguistic work on Reang is very limited. The main objective of the proposed work is to study the syllabic structure of Reang spoken in Tripura. Reangs are found in the West, South and Northern Parts of Tripura. It has three syllable pattern; they are monosyllabic CVC /k<sup>h</sup>um/ 'flower', disyllabic CVC.CV̆/ ten.toi/ 'tamarind', trisyllabic CVC.CV̆.CV̆ /keŋ.kui.ya/ 'papaya'.

*Keywords: Reang, Tibeto Burman, Syllable Structure in Reang.*

### 1. Introduction

Reang is one of the ethnic tribal languages of Tibeto Burman family. Reang do not have their own script, however Roman script has been adopted to write their own language. The Reang language has not been taught at school or college as a medium of instruction or as a subject. Actually the correct nomenclature of this ethnic group of Reang is 'Bru'.

#### 1.1. Methodology

The data in this research is collected from the oral source. Both the sexes of different age groups were taken for this work. The methods of acquisition of data were both direct and indirect. In the direct approach the spoken forms like – conversations were recorded from my study area for repetition and closer study as per requirement. The data were cross-checked with other speakers of this dialect from different age groups, sexes and occupation. The secondary sources of data have been done through the library works, referred journals and thesis, books etc.

#### 1.2. Objective of the study

The main purpose of this paper is to describe the syllabic structure in Reang language spoken in the state of Tripura

### 2. Syllable

Syllable is a unit of pronunciation consisting of a vowel alone or of a vowel with one or more consonants. Phonologically, the syllable is a unit containing one and only one vowel either alone or surrounded by consonants in certain arrangements". (O'Connor 1973). It is

generally accepted that nucleus is obligatory in all languages, thus, the same is true in case of Reang. According to Catford (1988), the syllable is defined “as a minimal pulse of initiatory activity bounded by a momentary retardation of the initiator, either self imposed, or more usually, imposed by a consonant type of articulator stricture”. Ladefoged (2000), contends that there is no satisfactory definition for this unit of speech, but that syllables seem to be necessary units in the mental organization and production of utterances.

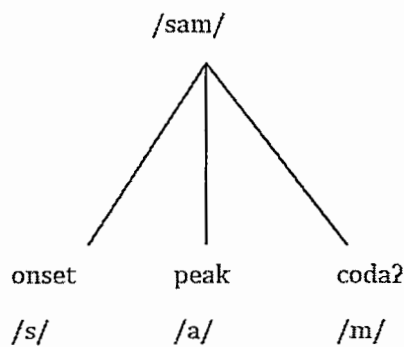
**Onset and Coda Consonant:**

There are twenty consonants in Reang language i.e. /p, p<sup>h</sup>, b, t, t<sup>h</sup>, d, ts, z, k, k<sup>h</sup>, g, s, z, h, m, n, ŋ, l, r, w, y. Out of these twenty consonants, there are fourteen Onset and six Coda consonants in Reang, these are given below:

Onset Consonants: /p, p<sup>h</sup>, b, t, t<sup>h</sup>, d, ts, z, k, k<sup>h</sup>, g, s, h, w, y, /

Coda Consonants: /k, m, n, ŋ, l, r /

The following structure of Reang syllables are discussed below:



V structure in Reang is limited. The example is shown below:

| Syllabic structure | Word | Gloss  |
|--------------------|------|--------|
| V                  | /a/  | 'fish' |

The CV structures in Reang are shown in the following examples.

| Syllabic structure | Word | Gloss         |
|--------------------|------|---------------|
| CV                 | /si/ | 'hand fan'    |
|                    | /ka/ | 'step'        |
|                    | /tu/ | 'cooking pot' |
|                    | /sa/ | 'little'      |
|                    | /ra/ | 'mature'      |

The CVC structures in Reang are shown in the following example.

| <b>Syllabic structure</b> | <b>Word</b> | <b>Gloss</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| CVC                       | /nuŋ/       | 'you'        |
|                           | /taŋ/       | 'work'       |
|                           | /suŋ/       | 'ask'        |
|                           | /tuŋ/       | 'hot'        |
|                           | /taŋ/       | 'work'       |
|                           | /nuŋ/       | 'you'        |
|                           | /tuŋ/       | 'hot'        |

The CVV structures words in Reang are also shown in the following example.

| <b>Syllabic structure</b> | <b>Word</b> | <b>Gloss</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| CVV                       | /toi/       | 'water'      |
|                           | /soi/       | 'dog'        |
|                           | /poi/       | 'fart'       |
|                           | /mai/       | 'rice'       |

### 2.1. Monosyllabic words

A word that consists of a single syllable is called monosyllabic or monosyllable word. Consider the following examples

#### 2.1.1. Open monosyllabic words:

| <b>Syllable structure</b> | <b>Word</b> | <b>Gloss</b>        |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| V                         | /a/         | 'fish'              |
| V̄                        | /ai/        | 'handover'          |
|                           | /oi/        | 'roll'              |
|                           | /ou/        | 'expression of yes' |
| VC                        | /oŋ/        | 'become'            |
|                           | /aŋ/        | 'I'                 |
|                           | /or/        | 'belch'             |
| CV                        | /bi/        | 'fly'               |
|                           | /tu/        | 'pot'               |

|      |                      |               |
|------|----------------------|---------------|
|      | /ku/                 | 'grasshopper' |
| CV̄  | /hai/                | 'meat'        |
|      | /mai/                | 'rice'        |
| CCV̄ | /lai/                | 'leave'       |
|      | /hnai/               | 'hair'        |
|      | /k <sup>h</sup> nai/ | 'tomorrow'    |
|      | /klai/               | 'burgain'     |

**2.1.2. Monosyllabic word closed**

| <b>Syllable structure</b> | <b>Word</b>          | <b>Gloss</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| CVC                       | /som/                | 'salt'       |
|                           | /lum/                | 'fever'      |
|                           | /raŋ/                | 'money'      |
| CV̄C                      | /nouʔ/               | 'house'      |
|                           | /k <sup>h</sup> ouʔ/ | 'basket'     |
|                           | /touʔ/               | 'knock'      |
| CCVC                      | /k <sup>h</sup> raŋ/ | 'green'      |
|                           | /kruŋ/               | 'expert'     |
|                           | /sloŋ/               | 'lemon'      |
| CCVC                      | /kraŋ/               | 'dry'        |
|                           | /p <sup>h</sup> raŋ/ | 'thunder'    |

**2.2. Disyllabic Structure**

A word that consists of distinct sounds is called disyllabic or dysyllable. Consider the following example.

**2.2.1. Disyllabic Open Syllable**

| <b>Syllable structure</b> | <b>Word</b>          | <b>Gloss</b>  |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| V.CV                      | /a.pa/               | 'father'      |
|                           | /a.čʉ/               | 'grandfather' |
|                           | /u.ri/               | 'hibiscuses'  |
|                           | /a.t <sup>h</sup> u/ | 'prawn'       |

|         |                         |                    |
|---------|-------------------------|--------------------|
|         | /a.bu/                  | 'unholy'           |
|         | /a.ta/                  | 'brother'          |
| V.CV̄   | /a.toi/                 | 'unty'             |
|         | /a.kao/                 | 'species of fruit' |
|         | /a.mai/                 | 'species of fruit' |
|         | /a.p <sup>h</sup> oi/   | 'species of fish'  |
| CV.CV̄  | /ho.roi/                | 'mustard'          |
|         | /mu.k <sup>h</sup> oi/  | 'mushroom'         |
| CV.CV   | /ha.la/                 | 'slope'            |
|         | /la.ma/                 | 'road'             |
|         | /no.ba/                 | 'wind'             |
| CVC.CV  | /yak.si/                | 'left hand'        |
| CV̄.CV̄ | /mui.lao/               | 'gourd'            |
|         | /tui.lao/               | 'species of gourd' |
|         | /t <sup>h</sup> ai.čao/ | 'species of fruit' |
|         | /t <sup>h</sup> ai.bai/ | 'species of fruit' |
| CVC.CV̄ | /ham.bai/               | 'thank'            |
|         | /koh.soi/               | 'bean'             |
|         | /ten.toi/               | 'tamarind'         |
| CVC.CCV | /pon.dri/               | 'napkin'           |

### 2.2.2. Disyllabic Closed

| <b>Syllable structure</b> | <b>Word</b>                           | <b>Gloss</b>                         |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| CV.CVC                    | /da.yuŋ/                              | 'a priest carrying a dao'            |
|                           | /pa.loŋ/                              | 'bed'                                |
|                           | /du.lem/                              | 'a traditional game'(hide and seek)  |
| CVC.CVC                   | /sam.p <sup>h</sup> aŋ/               | 'leafy vegetable'                    |
| CV̄.CV̄C                  | /kai.reiŋ/                            | 'high platform house made of bamboo' |
|                           | /tau.poi/                             | 'Indian crow pheasant'               |
|                           | /k <sup>h</sup> ao.p <sup>h</sup> oi/ | 'dandruff'                           |

**2.3. Trisyllabic words**

Trisyllabic is a word having three syllables. The following example.

**2.3.1. Trisyllabic open**

| Syllable structure | Word                                    | Gloss        |
|--------------------|---|--------------|
| CV.CVC.CV          | /go.ren.da/                             | 'broker'     |
|                    | /bu.sun.da/                             | 'trunk'      |
|                    | /da.k <sup>h</sup> un.t <sup>h</sup> a/ | 'knife'      |
| CVC.CV.CV          | /koŋ.ki.la/                             | 'cuckoo'     |
|                    | /sal.ka.ra/                             | 'sunshine'   |
|                    | /kol.ke.da/                             | 'spear'      |
| CV.CV.CṾ          | /ho.k <sup>h</sup> a.loi/               | 'nausea'     |
|                    | /ča.ma.roi/                             | 'bridegroom' |
|                    | /ri.su.nai/                             | 'washer'     |
|                    | /ba.ti.bau/                             | 'brew'       |

**2.2.3. Trisyllabic Closed**

| Syllable structure | Word                       | Gloss      |
|--------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| CV.CV.CVC          | /ri.ka.tok/                | 'shawl'    |
|                    | /ha.ya.t <sup>h</sup> ar/  | 'altar'    |
| CV.CVC.CVC         | /ma.giŋ.gan/               | 'camel'    |
|                    | /k <sup>h</sup> a.tuŋ.suŋ/ | 'sympathy' |
| CV.CV.CCVC         | /ča.pai.gruŋ/              | 'bulbul'   |
| CCV.CV.CVC         | /kču.so.yan/               | 'God'      |
| CṾ.CVC.CṾC       | /mai.suŋ.nou?/             | 'kitchen'  |
| CṾ.CV.CṾC        | /kua.re.nou?/              | 'church'   |

**3. Syllable structure of basic Nouns.**

|      |        |         |
|------|--------|---------|
| CṾ  | /tao/  | 'bird'  |
| CṾC | /nou?/ | 'house' |
| CVC  | /sal/  | 'sun'   |
| CVC  | /tal/  | 'moon'  |

**3.1. Syllable structure of basic Pronouns.**

|     |       |       |
|-----|-------|-------|
| VC  | /aŋ/  | ‘I’   |
| CVC | /nuŋ/ | ‘you’ |
| CVC | /buŋ/ | ‘he’  |

**3.2. Syllable structure of basic Adjectives.**

|      |                      |         |
|------|----------------------|---------|
| ĊCVC | /ksom/               | ‘black’ |
| CCVȲ | /kp <sup>h</sup> ui/ | ‘white’ |
| CCVȲ | /kčao/               | ‘red’   |

**3.3. Syllable structure of basic Verbs.**

|     |                     |         |
|-----|---------------------|---------|
| CV  | /ka/                | ‘cry’   |
| CVȲ | /p <sup>h</sup> ai/ | ‘come’  |
| CVȲ | /k <sup>h</sup> ui/ | ‘throw’ |

**3.4. Syllable structure of basic of Adverbs.**

|         |           |           |
|---------|-----------|-----------|
| CV      | /zu/      | ‘always’  |
| CCV.CV  | /mli.ma/  | ‘cleanly’ |
| CCVȲ.CV | /klai.ma/ | ‘easily’  |

**Conclusion:**

Generally, Reang roots are of monosyllabic type. For instance, even a vowel can be a syllable, a morpheme, or a word in the language. It is also observed that disyllabic roots are also frequently found in the language.

The most commonly used syllable pattern in Reang is CVC.

In Reang as in other Tibeto-Burman languages the syllabic splitting depends mainly on the foregoing and the following environments of the syllable peak.

**Abbreviations:**

- V Vowel
- C Consonantal
- CC Cluster `
- VȲ Diphthong

## REFERENCE

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