CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Based on the data collected, it is found in the preceding chapters that the eight languages under study share common linguistic features – morphological and morphosyntactic – due to areal pressure. Shillong, which is a multilingual city, has generated many linguistic features that are common at different levels, phonology, morphology, syntax, etc. due to contact. However, this study is limited only to morphological and morphosyntactic features. This chapter will give a summary and discussion of the findings of the preceding chapters.

Chapter I starts with the introduction of Shillong as a capital city which includes Shillong multilingualism. It consists of the Genetic
classification of the four language families. The chapter discusses the location of the different speech communities found in Shillong. The methodology and the organization of the thesis are also included here.

Chapter II discusses the concept of linguistic area as given by different linguists. The chapter provides the concept of linguistic area into two sections, that is, the early views and the current views. The early views base on the work done of Boast (1917), Trubetzkoy (1923), Bloch (1934), Emeneau (1956), Andronov (1964) and Masica (1976). The work done is mainly on Dravidian, Indo-Aryan and Munda languages. It also includes the work done by Moral (ibid) on northeast India as a linguistic area. The concept of morphology and morphosyntax is discussed in this chapter.

Chapter III gives the definitions of different linguistic terms use in this study. This is followed by working definitions for an understanding of such terms.

Chapter IV analyses the six morphological features shared by the selected languages. These are reduplication, affixation, classifier, quantifier causatives and adpositions.

Reduplication is a common feature of Indian languages. It is found from the data in the previous chapters that this feature is shared by all the selected languages. Both morphological and lexical reduplication are areal phenomena which are present in all these languages. Expressive is a kind of morphological reduplication, which indicates the five senses of perception, i.e. of smell, sight, touch, hearing and taste. As these languages have this feature in common so it supports the claim that Shillong is a micro-linguistic area.

Lexical reduplication is divided into echo-formation, compound and word reduplication. Echo-formation is a common areal feature of Shillong, where all the selected languages share this feature. In all the languages,
echo-word constructions are similar, in which a basic word is followed by an echo-word which carries no meaning and the first syllable is replaced by an echo word.

Compound is another type of lexical reduplication which is present in all these languages. In this type of lexical reduplication, only the meaning is reduplicated, whereas the morphemes are different. In all the languages, compound words are formed in this construction: noun + noun = noun.

Word reduplication is divided into total, partial and discontinuous reduplication. All these types of word reduplication are found to be present in all the selected languages of this micro linguistic area. Nouns, verbs, interrogative pronouns, adverbs and adjectives can be reduplicated. Therefore, it can be stated that reduplication is a pan-Indian areal feature, and is also present in the micro-linguistic area of Shillong.

Affixation is another shared morphological feature found in all the eight selected languages. Affixation is classified into three; prefixation, infixation and suffixation. These languages share all these features. In affixation a root can take various kinds of formative affixes to derive nouns and verbs. All these languages except Khasi have both derivational and inflectional affixes. Khasi, being isolated in the hills for many centuries, has retained its Austro-Asiatic linguistic feature as a non-inflectional language. Khasi does not have inflectional affixes, but it it rich in derivational affixes. In almost all these selected languages, suffixation is very productive. Tamil, Telugu and Garo exhibit only suffixes both derivational and inflectional. Santali, Assamese and Nepali exhibit prefixes and suffixes but they have more suffixes than prefixes. Khasi has many prefixes but very few infixes and suffixes. Santali, due to contact for a long time adapted this feature of suffixation, probably from Indo-Aryan. This shows that affixation is a shared feature and Shillong is rightly called a micro-linguistic area.
The extensive use of classifiers in all these languages in this area is another feature which makes Shillong as a micro-linguistic area. These languages use classifier for almost every noun – human, non-human and inanimate objects, and also for every shape like flat, round, oval, etc. The classifiers morpheme constructions are in the following forms:


2. Noun + numeral + classifier: in Assamese


Assamese forms classifiers morpheme construction in two ways as in the form of the above constructions (1 and 2). Moreover, the combination of classifier with a noun and a numeral in construction phrases and sentences in a distinct Tibeto-Burman feature shared by many languages of the Northeast and has influenced Assamese and Khasi. Santali of Munda language family has also been influenced. In Nepali, Tamil and Telugu limited use of classifiers is noted. Nepali has only two classifiers – for human and non-human. Tamil has only classifier per/at which denotes man only. Telugu has two classifiers for human, that is, ru for number two to seven, mandi for number eight onwards, but there is no classifier for non-human and inanimate objects.

Quantifier is one of the shared morphological features of the selected languages. These languages have their own indigenous ways of quantifying or measuring physical entities, to measure height, weight, length, etc. They use a huge number of quantifiers. These languages have quantifiers for countable and uncountable nouns, also include measurement of height and distance. These uncountable nouns include food items, liquid, things in bundles, bunches, groups and things in containers. For instance, a bunch of bananas is used by all these languages in the market. Quantifiers in
countable nouns with a specific number. For instance, a pair of consists of
two things is a quantifier used by all these languages. Quantifiers for
uncountable nouns are more in number than countable nouns. This shows
that this feature is a pan Indian which is used across various language
families and is a shared in Shillong micro-linguistic area.

Causative is another morphological feature shared by all the
languages. In these constructions the agent manifested as the subject will be
the causer of the action and the causee will be the performer of the action.
With the exception of Khasi, all the other selected languages form causatives
by adding suffix to the verb stem. Khasi is the only language of the study
that forms causatives by prefixation. In all these languages, causative is
formed to all verbs both transitive and intransitive.

Adposition is another shared feature of all these languages.
Adposition consists of preposition and postposition. All these languages
except Khasi have postposition. Some prepositions and postpositions mark
cases. For instance in Khasi, dative, Instrumental, commutative and locative
cases are marked by prepositions. In all these languages locative and
instrumental cases are marked by postpositions.

Chapter VI discusses the five morphosyntactic features, viz. person,
number, gender, case marking and tenses.

The use of personal pronouns in regard to the various ages and ranks
of both the speakers and listeners of the language is a grammatical feature
that is shared by all these languages. First person plural in Santali, Tamil
and Telugu have inclusive and exclusive forms, second person singular in
all these languages have honorific and non-honorific.

The use of plural suffixes in all the languages except Khasi is another
feature shared by all these languages. All the languages do not mark
singular, plural is marked by suffixing to the noun. Khasi marks plural by a
Santali is the only language in the study which exhibits dual number.

Gender system is one of the shared grammatical features of these languages. In all these languages, except Khasi, gender is marked by an inflectional morpheme, mostly suffixes. Khasi which is a non-inflectional language marks gender by the use of determiners. Khasi has grammatical gender. It assigns gender to all nouns, human, non-human and inanimate. These languages share the feature of having two gender systems, i.e. masculine and feminine. In plural no gender distinction is maintained. Indo-Aryan languages mostly mark feminine gender by changing $a$ to $i$. This is also the feature shared by Santali which is an Austro-Asiatic language. Some nouns of these languages have separate words for male and female and some other nouns make the distinction between male and female by adding word for male or female to the common nouns. Since they share this feature in common, it can be said that Shillong is a micro-linguistic area which has features across various language families.

Case is marked morphosyntactically in all these selected languages. Mizo, Garo, Assamese, Nepali and Santali are Ergative-Absolutive languages whereas Khasi, Telugu and Tamil are Nominative-Accusative languages. In all these Nominative-Accusative languages, nominative case is not overtly marked. These languages show different types of case marking-accusative/absolutive, dative, instrumental, commutative, locative and ablative are marked by the different case markers. Dative case is Khasi is marked by preposition $ha$. With the exception of Mizo and Nepali, all the languages taken under study showed the presence of dative case markers.

Tense is another grammatical feature present in these selected languages. All these languages marked tense through tense marker. All the languages are very strong in verb agreement with person, number and gender. Khasi expresses through a set of particles that appear after the
agreement markers but before the verb. Present tense marker is not marked morphosyntactically. In Santali there is the concept of time for present, past and future. The presence of copulas expresses time dimension for the present and past respectively. Mizo tenses are clarified by the aspects and the addition of conjugating particles. Garo has three tenses: Present tense, Past tense and Future tense. Tamil has three tenses – present, past and future tense. Telugu is a past and non-past language. It does not mark future tense, to mark future tense time should be mentioned. Tense markers in Assamese depend on person. Since these languages share this feature, so it can be said that Shillong is a micro-linguistic area.

Gender – number – person agreement is in an important feature of these languages. The agreement is exhibited in a linear fashion, so that the number and gender of the noun is encoded in the verb. In Assamese and Nepali tense are formed according to person. Tamil and Telugu, verbs carry tense and person agreement markers.

In previous studies on India as a Linguistic Area, ‘Tribal’ languages of North East India have not been taken into account. In this present study, two Tibeto-Burman languages – Mizo and Garo, and Austro-Asiatic language - Khasi, have been included. Data provided show that these languages share almost all morphological and morphosyntactic features under study. This justifies the statement that Shillong can be considered as a Micro-Linguistic Area. Further research on such Micro-linguistic Areas can be taken up to provide more evidence of shared features in morphology, syntax, morphosyntax and phonology to justify the claim of Sprachbund or Linguistic Area. This will also provide insights into areal linguistics, which is currently an important sub-discipline of linguistics.