CHAPTER-2

Review of Literature

2.0. Review of Literature:

Karbi is the third largest minority language in the state of Assam in terms of number of speakers, following Boro and Missing. The center of the Karbi speaking area is the Karbi Anglong district of Assam. A number of books and innumerable articles are published in learned journals and greater parts of these published materials deals with many specific aspects of the Karbi culture and society. Only a small number of linguistic works has been done so far on Karbi. Therefore, some available books on Karbi language are selected for the purpose of review.
The most noteworthy to mention here is that the earliest pioneer works on Karbi language is the ‘Linguistic Survey of India’ (1903), Vol.III, Part II, by G. A. Grierson. He mentioned Karbi as ‘Mikir’ clearly said that it belongs to the same group as Kachchā Nāgā, Kabui, and Khoirāo. Like them, it is in an intermediate stage between the Nāgā languages and the various speeches belonging to the Bodo group’.

As per the Linguistic Survey of India, Mikir has 21 consonantal phonemes, - /b, ch, d, h, j, k, l, m, n, ng, p, r, s, t, v, and the aspirates kh, ph, th, bh, dh, g/. /bh, dh, g/ occur only in a few borrowed words and /f, sh, w, y and z/ are not used. /ng/ is never posited in initial, and the /g/ sound in it is never separately audible. He mentioned about five vowels /i, e, a, o, u/ and four diphthongs /ai, ei, oi, ui/ are found in this language. However, in the present study we found 19 consonants, 5 vowels and 5 diphthongs.

He pointed out that the gender is not distinguished except for animate beings and that is done either (1) by difference of termination, or (2) by adding words indicating sex, or (3) by different terms as shown below –

1) /pō/ ‘father’ /pē/ ‘mother’

/phu/ ‘grandfather’ /phi/ ‘grandmother’

2) /sopo/ ‘boy’ /sopi/ ‘girl’

/supo/ ‘grandson’ /supi/ ‘granddaughter’

3) /arlen/ ‘man’ /arloso/ ‘woman’

/ik/ ‘elder brother’ /ingjir or te/ ‘elder sister’
According to him, Karbi number is formed with the plural marker /-tum/, /-ātum/, /-mar/, /-āng/, with the pronouns the suffix /-tum/ is added and other markers are added with all nouns. He didn’t mention about plurality of verb and other vocabulary which denotes plurality. But our investigation has found out that the verb also takes plural suffix and the presence of other words that indicate plural form.

While discussing regarding case, he mentions that the Nominative and the Accusative have no postpositions but are ascertained by their position in the sentence – the nominative at beginning, the accusative following it before the verb, but both where necessary can be emphasized by the particles /-kē/ and /-sī/, which in some sort play the part of definite article. For example,

/-kē/ /nē-kē lādāk ān-kāṅchīr-sī thī-po/ ‘I (distinguished from my father’s servants) here from hunger am dying’

/nāng-kē nē lōng-sī kāitā do/ ‘thou (distinguished from the prodigal son) with me ever art’

/sī/ /konāt āchāinōṅ-ā-ōk-sī ḍākḷē kedo-jī/ ‘where should cow’s flesh be here’.

/konāt ādōhōṅ-sī nāngli kēlōṅg dam/ ‘where did you get so much money from’

He pointed out that the construction of the Genitive is one of the most characteristic features of the language. The genitive always precedes the noun on which it depends. When it is a pronoun of first or second person, nothing intervenes between the two. The Instrumental is generally indicated by /-pēn/ (apēn, ēpēn), /-pēnsī/. The Dative takes /-āphān/. The Ablative is formed with /-pēn/ (apēn) or /-pēnsī/. The Locative is formed with /-sī/. In the present work, we have shown seven cases in total and our data establish the presence of associative and accusative case.
He mentioned that the adjectives are regularly formed by prefixing /ke-, ka-, or ki-/ to the root, and do not change for gender, number, or case. The form of the adjective is precisely the same as that of the present participle of the verbal root used to form the present tense and the abstract or infinitive of that root, and the collocation of the sentence alone determines the meaning of the word used. When particles of comparison or other modifying elements are added to the adjective, the prefix (ke- etc) is often omitted as unnecessary. Thus-

/kelok/ ‘white’ /lok-hik/ ‘whitish’

/keme/ ‘good’ /me-mu/ ‘better’ /me-ne/ ‘best’

Adjectives sometimes precede but more commonly follow the noun, they are usually constructed with the relative prefix /a-/ when joined to a noun. But the present study gives an idea about the adjectives which express the inherent states- including quality, quantity, taste, color and dimension.

In his discussion on the Karbi numerals, he said that the numeral follows the noun. In composition, /hini/ is reduced to /-ni/ and /kethom/ to /-thom/ as /jo-ni/and /jo-thom/ ‘two and three nights’. /phili/ and /therok/ are often contracted to /phli/ and /throk/. He also mentioned the generic prefixes of the Karbi as:-

/bang/ with persons

/jon/ with animals

/rong/ with trees and things standing up

/hum/ with houses

/pak/ with flat things,
/pum/ with globular things

/hong/ with parts of body and with rings, bangles and other ornaments

But our research has revealed many generic prefixes other than those mentioned above.

He also expressed that the ordinal numeral is formed by prefixing /batai/ to cardinal numeral as /batai kethom/ ‘third’, /batai phili/ ‘fourth’ etc. The distributive numeral adverbs are formed by prefixing /pur/ or /phong/ to the cardinal numerals as /purthom/ or /phongthom/ ‘thrice’

About pronoun, he mentioned Personal pronoun, Demonstrative Pronoun, Relative Pronoun, Interrogative Pronoun and Reflexive Pronoun. About demonstrative pronoun, he stated the Karbi demonstrative pronoun as

/labangso/ or /bangso/ meaning ‘this’

/labangso atum/ ‘these’

/hala/ or /halabangso/ ‘that’

/hala-tum/ or /halabangso atum/ ‘those’

From the above examples, it can be said that the syllable /ha/ connotes distance as /dak, ladak/ ‘here’ /hadak/ ‘there’. According to him, there is no existence of relative pronouns in Karbi. He mentioned that the interrogative pronoun of Karbi is formed with the syllable /ko/. e.g. /komat/ or /komat-si/ ‘who?’ /kopi/ ‘what’, /kopu, kopu-si, kolopu, or kolopusan/ ‘how?’, /ko-an, ko-ansi/ or /kolo-an/ ‘how many’, /konat/ ‘where?’ and /komantu/ ‘when?’ and in the illustration of reflexive pronoun,
he mentioned that it is formed with the words /methang/ ‘self, own’. Our data also support his conclusion in all order.

While discussing Mikir verb, he said that the Mikir verb indicates time, present, past and future by means of particles prefixed or suffixed to the root. The verb does not vary for gender, number or person. The simple present is expressed by the participle with /ke-/ and /ka-/ without any suffix, as

/konatsi nang kedo/ ‘where do you live’

/vo kangjar/ ‘the birds flies’ /

/ne phu kesokon/ ‘my head is aching badly’

The definite or determinate, present is expressed by the same particle with /-lo/ added e.g.

/la kopi kanghoi-lo/ ‘what is he doing now’

The habitual present, including the past is expressed by the verbal root with /lo-/ as,

/vo-atum-ke ne-phu-athak injar-lo/ ‘the birds fly above our heads’

The simple or narrative past is formed by the verbal root with /-lo/ or /-det/ as,

/la pu-lo/ ‘he said’

/la pu-det/ ‘he said’

/ne phu so-det/ ‘my head was aching’

/la keri aphis long-lo/ ‘he, after searching, found it’

Sometimes /-det/ and /-lo/ are used together;
/la ne ington det-lo/ ‘he abused me’

The complete past is indicated by the root with /tang-lo/ as,

/la apotsi ne damtang-lo/ ‘I went or had gone, on his account’

The above given examples show that the present and past aspect is marked with /ke-/, /lo/ and /det/ but the present study has proved that the present aspect is marked with /bom, et/ and the past aspect is marked with /lo, bomlo, etlo/.

He pointed out that the future is represented in two ways only (i) by /-po/ added to the root to indicate an action beginning now and continued in the future, (ii) by /ji/ added to the root for an action which commences latter on e.g.

/ne-tum nonke labangso akam apotsi pu-po/

‘We will talk about this affair now’

/badu arleng-ta thi-ji/

‘All men will die’

G.A. Grierson also mentioned that the Negative verb is formed by adding the syllable /-e/ to the verbal words as /un/ ‘can’ /un-e/ ‘cannot’, however, when the root begins with a consonant, the consonant is repeated before the added syllable as in /thek/ ‘see’ /thek-the/ ‘see not’, /dam/ ‘go’ /dam-de/ ‘go not’. But in the Imperative, the reduplication is not used, the particle /-ri/ is added to the positive root e.g. /thek/ ‘see’ /thek-ri/ ‘don’t see’. The interrogative sentences are formed by adding /-ma/ at the end e.g. ‘are you planting the arums uncooked? /nangtum hen akevei ke-e-ma? /, ‘is it true’ /sakhit-ma? /. But in the present work, we have come across with various
ways of negative formation in Karbi e.g. Negation by negative word, Negation by reduplication, Negation by suffixation and Negative copula.

He mentioned that the causal verb is formed by prefixing the syllable /pe-/ (pi-, pa-), e.g. /cho/ ‘eat’ /pe-cho/ ‘cause to eat’, /tang/ ‘finish’ /pe-tang/ ‘cause to finish’. This syllable takes precedence of /che/ in reflexive verbs. His data also show the presence of compound verb system, e.g.

/ke-phlong-dam abang/ ‘a person who will go and set fire’

Pre.p- kindle- go Hum-clf

/kroi-dun-lo/ ‘s/he consented’

agree – go

Charles Lyall’s (1908) ‘The Mikir’: It is worthwhile to mention here that one of the earliest works on Karbi language is done by Charles Lyall. Though this book is written on the social life of the Karbis, but he has placed one chapter for their language and discussed some aspects of Karbi language. In his book, to establish the Karbi phonemes, it seems that he has just put forward the whole contents of A.G. Grierson. In the book, ‘The Mikir’ he mentioned five vocalic phonemes with their allophonic variants. The vocalic phonemes are /a, e, i, o, u/ and four diphthongs /ai, ei, oi, ui/. According to him, the consonantal phonemes that used in Karbi are /b, ch, d, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, ng, p, r, s, t, v, kh, ph, th, bh, dh/. As mentioned in his book, the phonemes /bh, dh, g/ occur only in a few borrowed words. But our data proves that there are five vowels, five diphthongs and 19 consonantal phonemes in Karbi.

While discussing about Karbi gender, he said that the gender in Karbi is not distinguished except for animate beings, either by adding words indicating sex or by
the use of different terms. On number system of Karbi, he pointed out that the ordinary suffix for the plural is /-tum/ but other words are occasionally employed as /-mar/ ‘a mass, quantity or company’, /ong/ ‘many’. When /-tum/ is suffixed to a noun, it takes the prefixed /a-/ of relation. When /-tum/ is added to a personal pronoun, it does not require this adjunct, as will be explained /ne-tum/ ‘we’, /la-tum/ ‘they’ etc. Other than above mentioned data, our work shows that there are some others words which indicate plurality in collective sense.

Lyall mentioned about the existence of seven cases in Karbi. According to him, case is indicated by postpositions. His mentioned the cases as the following:-

i) Nominative Case /Ø/

ii) Acausative Case /-phan/

iii) Genitive Case /a-/ 

iv) Instrumental Case /-pen/

v) Dative Case /-phan/

vi) Ablative Case /-pen/ or /-pensi/

vii) Locative Case /-si/

From the above examples, it is to be noted here that the nominative case has no postposition or marker but it is ascertained by their position in the sentence. He also has shown that the cases exist as- common locative postposition as /athak/ ‘upon, on’ /angsong/ ‘above, upon’ /arum/ ‘below’ /aber/ ‘below’ /along/ ‘together with’ /adun, adung/ ‘beside’ /adak/ between’ /angbong/ ‘in the middle of’ and /aphi/ ‘after’. We have got the existence of associative case in Karbi. We have also found /loŋ/ as a
Locative marker instead of /si/. The morpheme /si/ is a particle used for emphasis in Karbi.

He mentioned that the adjective is formed by prefixing /ke-/, /ki-/ or /ka-/ to the root and do not change for gender, number or case. The present study highlights the inherent states of adjectives. He has given some examples of adjective formation as below:

/me/ ‘to be good’  /ke-me/ ‘good’
/helo/ ‘to be distance’ /ke-helo/ ‘far off’
/dok/ ‘to have savour’ /ke-dok/ ‘savoury’
/ho/ ‘to be bitter’  /ke-ho/ ‘bitter’
/ri/ ‘to be rich’  /ki-ri/ ‘rich’

He pointed out that cardinal numerals are /isi/ ‘one’ /hini/ ‘two’ /kethom/ ‘three’ /phli/ ‘four’ /phongno/ ‘five’ /therok/ ‘six’ /theroksi/ ‘seven’ /nerkep/ ‘eight’ /sirkep/ ‘nine’ /kep/ ‘ten’. But in our study, we have not come across with the word /phongno/ ‘five’ and /therok/ ‘six’. According to him, the ordinals are formed by prefixing /batai/ to the cardinal, as /batai kethom/ ‘third’ /batai phli/ ‘four’ etc. which also found in our study.

He further stated about personal pronoun, demonstrative pronoun, interrogative pronoun, reflexive pronoun. He mentioned here only 6 demonstrative pronouns but our data show 8 demonstrative pronoun. He mentioned here only six interrogative pronoun, e.g. /komat, komatsi/ ‘who’ /kopi, pi/ ‘what’ /kopu, kopusi, kolopu, kolopuson/ ‘how’ /ko-an, ko-ansi/ ‘how many’ /konat, konathu/ ‘where’
/konam-tu, nam-tu, nam-tu-si/ ‘when’. But in our study, we found eight interrogative pronouns, i.e. /kopi, kopilo, kopima/ ‘what’ /konat, konatči, konalo/ ‘where’ /koma, komatlo, komatči/ ‘who’ /kolo/ ‘which’ /koson/ ‘how’ /koan, koansi/ ‘how many, how much’ /komat/ ‘whose’ and /konantulo, konantu, konantuči/ ‘when’.

While writing about the verb, it seems that Lyall was influenced by Grierson. The data and explanations given by him are very similar with the works of Grierson.

Prof. Rongbong Terang’s book entitled ‘Karbi Lamtasam’ (1974) is a dictionary of Karbi Assamese; however in the preface of his work, he mentioned some linguistic features of Karbi.

According to him, Karbi has seven separate vowel sounds. These are /ɒ, ɑ, i, u, e, ɛ, ɔ/. Characteristics of these vowel sounds are as in the table.

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There are nineteen consonantal phonemes. Of these, nine are plosive, six of these nine consonant sounds are breathed and the rest voiced. Of these again, five are unaspirated and four aspirated. According to the place of articulation, there are four labial, three alveolar, two velar consonants and one glottal. But in our present study, we have found only five vowels along with five diphthongs and nineteen consonantal phonemes.
In observing the formation of word and its elements, he said that words and phrases from many languages have crept into Karbi. Of these, the most important are: (a) Assamese of Aryan and (b) Khasi of Austro-Asian group. Of these words, some have undergone changes while others retain their original form. The Karbi words are monosyllabic. They retain their monosyllabic quality even after the addition of prefixes and suffixes. Likewise, there is no inflectional change in Karbi words. Haplology in Karbi is important and words formed haplogically are numerous. Besides these, there are many clustered words which become meaningless when broken up. These clustered words are formed by proper nouns used as suffixes.

He further said that in Karbi, the gender is usually determined by using the markers /po, pi, pei, alo, api/. Of these /po, pi, pei/ are used for human beings and /alo, lo and api or pi/ in the case of animals.

The number is ascertained with /-tum, -mar, -hur/ and the verbs also take plural form. The affix /-tum/ is used only in the case of human being and personal pronouns. There are some exceptions to this rule as in the use of /-mar/ or /-atum/, and /-hur/ is usually used for animals. Verbs in Karbi have plural forms.

The words /ne/, /naŋ/ and /alaŋ/ are the personal singular pronoun of all three persons. The honorific marker /li/ is used at the end of a word for both the singular and plural numbers. The separate sets of pronouns of place, time and interrogative are employed in Karbi. For the reflexive pronouns, words like /metəŋ/ and /menaŋ/ are used usually.

The adjectives are derived by affixation /ke-, ki-, ka-. Of Karbi numeral, he said that the independent numerals are first six numbers, ten and twenty only. While discussing about cases, he said that there are no separate case endings for the
nominative and locative cases. But occasionally /ke/ and /si/ are added to words in nominative case. These, however, are not actual case endings indicative of the nominative. These are actually definite articles. The use of /a/ with words in the possessive case is a peculiar characteristic of Karbi. This, instead of being added to the verb, stands before the object to indicate case relationship. On the other hand, it is not posited with the personal pronouns of singular.

The constituent negative affixes of Karbi are /el/, /awe/ and /kali/. Of these, the use of /e/ is peculiar. Usually the first letter of the verb root is repeated at the end and /e/ is added to it e.g. /jun/ ‘to drink’ /junje/ ‘not to drink’. In case of verbs with a vowel as the first word, /e/ is simply added without any repetition of the first letter of the verb root e.g. /i/ ‘to rest’ /i-e/ ‘not to rest’. In multisyllabic verbs, the first letter of the last syllable is repeated e.g. /injir/ ‘to fly’ /injir-je/ ‘not to fly’. The prohibitive negatives /ri/ is added to verbs indicate prohibition e.g. /jun/ ‘drink’ + /ri/ = /jun-ri/ ‘don’t drink’.

The verb in Karbi has no suffix for indefinite present tense. The various suffixes used to denote time are /ke, lo/ for present progressive tense, /et, taŋ/ for present perfect tense /asonte, apotlo/ for past tense and /po, ji/ for future. While our data show, the past tense marker /asonte/ and /apotlo/ is not past tense marker. It may be erroneously affirmed by Terang.

V.Y. Jeyapaul’s book entitles ‘Karbi Grammar’ (1987) is a remarkable work on the structure of Karbi language which includes phonology, morphology and syntax.

According to him, Karbi has five vowels i.e. /i, e, u, o, a/, twenty four consonant phonemes i.e. /p, pʰ, b, bʰ, t, tʰ, d, dʰ, k, kʰ, g, gʰ, ?, m, n, η, c, j, cʰ, h, l, r, v,
Among the phonemes he has mentioned, it seems that Mr. Paul made mistakes by including the phonemes /b, g, h, d, ʔ/. Our data show that these consonant phonemes do not occur in Karbi native words but found only in loan words.

He further described that vowel /a/ has three allophones [ä],[ə] and [a] low-back unrounded, mean-mid unrounded and low central unrounded vowels respectively, but our data show that the vowel /a/ has no such allophones. He also mentioned that in Karbi, vowel cluster do not occur within a morpheme. It occurs only across morphemic boundary. As per our data, this statement is not correct. The vowel cluster or diphthongs always occur within morpheme. On discussing syllabic types of Karbi, he said that the words in Karbi consist of one or more than one syllable. The maximum number of syllables that a word can have is five. There are three types of open syllables in Karbi, viz., v, cv and ccv and three types of close syllables occur in Karbi, viz., vc, cvc and ccvc.

In his ongoing discussion about supra-segmental phonemes, he affirms that Karbi has three tones e.g. high, level and low.

In respect of Karbi morphology, he arranges the contents as Word formation, Nominal, Pronoun, Noun, Case, Postposition, Numeral, Classifier, Adjective, Verb and Particle but the present work simply arranges like Noun, Gender, Number, Numeral, Case, Pronoun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Postposition, Particle and Word Formation.

Regarding the word formation process, he said that the Karbi words are formed using different morphological processes, viz., inflection, compounding, derivation, affixation, reduplication and contraction. Both prefixes and suffixes occur in Karbi. The prefixes are used to form derived adjectives, verbal noun, agent noun,
causatives and reciprocal. The suffixes denote gender, number, honorific, case, tense, aspect and modal.

He arranged the Karbi pronoun in three groups, viz., personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns and interrogative pronouns. Under the noun sub-heading, he discussed that the Karbi nouns are mono-morphemic or poly-morphemic. A noun consists of a root only and optionally one or more affixes. There are three types of noun roots, viz., simple, compound and derived. But in the present work, we have discussed noun as compounding and deriving under the sub-head of word formation.

Through analyzing and finding on Karbi gender, he mentioned that in human nouns, gender is marked in three ways:

i. among kingship terms, gender is marked lexically in most of the terms.

ii. In other kingship terms, gender is marked by adding the attributes /-po/ ‘male’ and /-pi/ ‘female’ to free or bound base nouns.

iii. The last type of human nouns marks gender by suffixation.

In animate nouns, masculine gender is marked with /-lo/ or /-alo/ and feminine with /-pi/ or /-api/ whereas in the present research, we have found that (i) some nouns in Karbi have no corresponding of feminine forms. For example: /duidi/ ‘drummer’ /dui-əŋ/ ‘Asstt. Drummer’ (ii) some nouns have no corresponding masculine forms. For example /čarhepi/ ‘ritual singer’ /učepi/ ‘ritual cooker’ and (iii) Gender marker /i/ is used to form the feminine gender in place of vowel ending /a/ and /o/ of the words. /sarbura/ ‘old man’ /sarburi/ ‘old woman’

In the course of his discussion about number, he remarked that Karbi number distinction is marked with /-tum/ for human and animate whereas the neuter nouns
have a separate plural marker /-huy/. In other nouns, human nouns are made plural with /-mar/, /-atum/ or /-mar atum/ and a collective meaning ‘many’ /an/ is added to all nouns to mark plurality. Otherwise, plural is not marked in non-human nouns. The above statement is seemed to be wrong. Our data show that there are non-human plural markers, even verbs also take plural marker in Karbi. Examples are given below:

The plural suffix /-ahur/ is added with a noun denoting animate objects non human nouns e.g.

/čainoŋ/ ‘cow’ /čainoŋ-ahur/ ‘cows’

/iŋnar/ ‘elephant’ /iŋnar-ahur/ ‘elephants’

The plural marker suffix /heihui/ is added with both animate (-human) and inanimate neuter nouns to denote plural form e.g.

/meŋ/ ‘cat’ /meŋ-heihui/ ‘cats’

/methan/ ‘dog’ /methan-heihui/ ‘dogs’

/wo/ ‘bird’ /wo-heihui/ ‘birds’

/hem/ ‘house’ /hem-heihui/ ‘houses’

/sangti/ ‘sand’ /sangti-heihui/ ‘sands’

The plural markers /-o/ and /-pik/ ‘more’ posited with verb to denote plurality. Both plural suffixes are posited with all verbs.

/čo/ ‘eat’ /čo-o/ ‘to eat more’

/čo-pik/ ‘to eat more’
Other than the above discussion, there are lexical items like /anut/ ‘every’, /asap/ ‘some’ and /kadokawe/ ‘all’ which generally indicate plural. These are very productive and it can occur with any noun. There are some plural markers that indicate collective form which are marked lexically like /apeŋ/ ‘bundle’ / abui/ ‘heap’ and /deluŋ/ ‘group’.

Mr. Paul mentioned that there are eleven cases in Karbi. They are: Nominative /-Ø/, Instrumental /-pen/, Associative /-pen and –loŋ/, Accusative /-phan/, Dative /-Phan/, Purposive or Benefactive /-phan/, Genitive /-a/, Locative /-loŋ/, Allative /-loŋ/, Ablative /-pen, -loŋpen/, and Intrusive /-pen/. Whereas, this present study ascertain only eight cases in Karbi, viz. Nominative case/-Ø/, Instrumental case/-pen/, Associative case/-loŋ/, Accusative case/-phan/, Dative case/-phan/, Genitive case/-a/, Locative case/-loŋ/ and Ablative case/-pen/.

In his book, Mr. Paul said that the Karbi postpositions can occur with the genitive form of noun. They are added immediately after the noun and cases such as the ablative and the particle /-chi/ can occur after the postposition in the phrase. The postpositions in Karbi are listed as- /-thak/ ‘above’, /-run/ ‘below’, /arlo/ ‘inside’, /acar/ ‘away’, /aray/ or /paray/ ‘near’, /aŋchoŋ/ ‘up’, /aduŋ/ ‘near’, /roytan/ ‘out’, /iŋno/ ‘in front of’/nuŋ/ ‘back’ /phi/ ‘after’ /aŋboŋ/ ‘within’ /chon/ ‘like’ and /apar/ ‘over’

In Karbi grammar, the writer said that the Karbi derived numeral has three processes, viz., addition, multiplication and subtraction. But the present work
confirms that the derived numerals processes employed in Karbi can be divided into five groups’ viz. (a) Additive compound, (b) Multiplicative compound, (c) Subtractive compound, (d) Multiplicative and Additive compound and (e) Multiplicative, Additive and Subtractive compound. He also said that in Karbi, the ordinal numeral numbers are different only in two numbers ‘one and ‘two’ and all other ordinal is same as cardinals formally. Stating this, he left the other ordinal number from discussion. In this dissertation, we have included:

(a) **Multiplicative numerals:** Multiplicative numerals are used in answering the question like how many times? In Karbi, multiplicative numerals are formed by adding a prefix / batai-/ to the cardinal forms of the numerals e.g. /batai-isi/ ‘once’ /batai-hini/ ‘twice’

(b) **Lexical fractional:** In Karbi, there are a few numbers of Lexical fractional numerals e.g.

/čitim/ ‘half’

/deŋlim/ ‘quarter’

(c) **Approximate Numerals:** In Karbi, approximate numerals are formed by adding a suffix /bak/ to the cardinal numerals.

/baŋ-kep-bak monit/

Clf.-ten-Aprx man

‘About ten man’

He mentioned about 28 classifier in Karbi like /-nut/, /baŋ-/, jon-/, /pak-/, /jeŋ-/, /hoŋ-/, /plaŋ-/, /dum-/, /roŋ-/, /the-/, /phu-/, /pum-/, /ro-/, /mu-/, /beŋ-/, /cum-/,
About Karbi adjective, he shows two types of adjectives, viz. primary and derived. The primary adjectives are mostly loan words. For example:

/dhuni amonit/ ‘rich person’
/lubi amonit/ ‘greedy person’
/duchto amont/ ‘wicked person’
/gyani amonit/ ‘wise person’

The derived adjectives are derived by adding the adjectival prefixes /ki-, ke-, and ka-/ to the verbal roots.

/duk/ /ki-duk/ ‘to be poor’ ‘poor’
/thor/ /ke-thor/ ‘to be sour’ ‘sour’
/ardi/ /ka-ardi/ ‘to be heavy’ ‘heavy’

In the present work, we have shown derived and comparison of Adjective. The derived adjectives are again grouped as per the expression of inherent states into quality, quantity, taste, color, and dimension. The comparison of adjective namely (a) positive, (b) Comparative and (c) Superlative are discussed in the present work.
In his book ‘The Karbi Grammar,’ Paul mentioned that the verb may be broadly divided into two classes, viz., stative and active verbs. These two classes of verbs behave differently to express negation. The stative verbs do not take the transitive and causative prefixes where the active verbs take these prefixes.

Regarding adverbs, he has broadly classified it into two types, viz., primary and derived adverbs. He also omitted the discussion of reduplication of adverb while in the present work, it has been divided into different semantic groups, viz., time, place, manner, order, quantity, cause, assertion adverbs. The reduplication of adverb is also discussed.

While discussing the syntax of Karbi, he mentioned that a simple sentence consists of a noun phrase (NP) and a verb phrase (VP). The noun phrase consists of a noun which is obligatory and optional set of elements, viz., adjectives, numerals case, postpositions, and particles. The noun may be simple, compound or derived. It may be followed by gender, honorific, number adjective, etc. The verb phrase consists of an obligatory verb and optional one or more noun phrases, adverb, postposition and particle. The verb may be simple, compound or derived and finite or non-finite. It functions as predicate of a sentence. He also mentioned that the predominant word order in simple sentences of Karbi is SOV (subject, object and verb) but OSV is also found.

One of the most important linguistic works on Karbi is “Karbi: The People and the Language” (2003) written by Dr. Arpana Konwar. In the chapter-V, “The phonology of the Karbi language”, she presented seven vowel phonemes in Karbi language, viz., /i, e, ɛ, ā, a, ɔ, u/ and stated, “in articulation there is no long and short distinction of these vowels excepting /ā/. All of them are of equal length in
articulation.” Again, she mentioned a lot of diphthongs present in Karbi, viz. /ii, iɛ, iɔ, ei, ee, eɛ, eu, eɔ, ai, au, āɛ, ɔi, ɔɛ, ɔa, ui, ue, uɛ, uã, uɔ/ and triphthongs viz., /aie, aiɔ, aiu, ɔie, ɔie, ɔee/. But our data has found out only five vowels and five diphthongs. Of the five diphthongs, four involve glide [i]. They are /ai,oi,ui, and ei/; one moves towards [u]. All these five diphthongs can be termed as falling diphthongs because the first member is more prominent than the second one.

As per her observation, she mentioned the presence of nineteen consonantal phonemes in Karbi, viz. /p, ph, b, t, th, d, k, kh, ch, z, c, h, m, n, ŋ, l, r, w, y/. Our research agrees with her data. About the consonant clusters, she mentioned 115 numbers of two consonant clusters in Karbi. But our data shows very few numbers of two consonant clusters. From her data, we can assume that she placed both cluster and sequence of consonant as same. In our dissertation, we separately discussed the consonant cluster and consonant sequence.

In the chapter VI, “The Morphology of Karbi Language”, Konwar has analyzed the morphological characteristics of Karbi. Regarding the nouns, she mentioned that nouns in Karbi are monomorphic or polymorphic. It consists of a single root and sometimes it consists of one or more affixes. There are mainly three types of noun roots in Karbi: simple, compound and derived. Accordingly, she described these three types of noun with the help of data. However, in our work, excluding simple noun the entire noun forms are discussed in the word formation section. In the section of noun, we have discussed about simple, common, proper, abstract and material noun.

In the gender part, she mentioned that Karbi has four gender viz. masculine, feminine, neuter and common gender and explain six kind of gender marker. i.e. (i) by
using feminine suffix /-pi/ (ii) by the word denoting male and female as suffix /-po/ for male and /-pi/ for female (iii) by using different terms denoting male and female (iv) by using feminine suffixes /-pi/ and /-api/ to animal or animate object other than human beings after the word indicating common gender (v) by using suffixes /-alo/ ‘male’ and /-api/ ‘female’ to animals or animate objects other than human beings. (vi) by using female suffix /-i/ one used after the Karbi word of masculine gender. Here the rule No. iv seems dissimilar with our work. The gender marker /-pi/ is never posited with animal objects to mark feminine gender. It is only a phonological condition that when the noun ending is vowel, then the animate marker /-api/ is not directly posited with the nouns but construct form /-pi/ is posited. She also skipped from her discussion some forms of gender like- corresponding feminine forms and corresponding masculine forms which are not possible in Karbi.

Regarding the number, she said that in Karbi the plural is formed by suffixing /-tum/, /-mar/, /-hor/, /-heihui/, /mokha/, /-chizam/, /penabak/, /menan/ etc. Bit we have got some other markers also. Our data show that the plural in Karbi is also marked in lexical item and collective form such as, /anuthin/ ‘every’, /asap/ ‘some’, /kadokawe/ ‘all’, /apen/ ‘bundle’, /abui/ ‘heap’ and /delun, armu/ ‘goup’ which generally signify plural.

While discussing about case, she said that Karbi language has seven cases in total. These are – Nominative case /zero element/, Accusative case /phan, aphan/, Instrumental case /penchi, pen/, Dative /phan, aphan/, Ablative case /pen, penchi/, Genitive /-a/ and locative case /chi, ala/. Our work has found eight cases, viz. Nominative case /-Ø/, Instrumental case /- pen/, Associative case /-loŋ/, Accusative case /-phan/, Dative case /-phan/, Possessive case /- a/, Locative case /-loŋ/ and Ablative case/-pen/.
In the section of pronoun, the work of Konwar illustrated only two pronouns viz. personal pronouns and demonstrative pronouns which she has sub-divided the personal into three classes viz. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd personal pronouns and demonstrative into four class viz. far demonstrative, near demonstrative, interrogative and reflexive pronoun.

In ‘North East Indian linguistics’ (2010), Volume-2, edited by Stephen Morey and Mark post an article entitled ‘The Numeral ‘One’ in Khasi and Karbi’ by U.V. Joseph shows that the Karbi has its own complete set of numerals. However, it can easily be seen that Karbi build the entire system from basic monomorphemic numerals. This set comprises of numerals 1 to 6, 20, 100 and 1000. Although words for numbers 1, 2, and 3 (along with those for 4, 5, 6, 10, 20, 100 and 1000) are synchronically monomorphemic, numerals 1, 2, 3, show the presence of fossilize prefixes, which are absent in their combining forms. Numeral 7, 8 and 9 are analyzable. It appears that when two monomorphemic numerals are combined, the smaller number is to be added to or to be subtracted from the larger number depending on whether it occurs to the right or to left of the larger number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Freeform</th>
<th>Combining Form, if any</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>isi</td>
<td>i- ~e-, -si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>hi-ni</td>
<td>-ni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>ke-thom –thom</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>phli</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>pho</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>throk</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>throk-si</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>ner-kep</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>ser-kep</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Ten    | kep      | kre-
Accordingly, we have /throksi/ ‘7’ (throk ‘6’ isi ‘1’); /nerkap/ ‘8’ (kep ‘10’, -ni ‘2’) accompanied by regressive vowel assimilation and intrusive /r/, /serkep/ ‘9’ (kep ‘10’ - si ‘1’ accompanied by regressive vowel assimilation and intrusive /r/), with a literal meaning something like, one less on the way to ‘10’.

/kre-/, which is the combining from of /kep/ ‘10’ in number 11 to 19, are probably a contraction from /kep/ ‘10’ and /ra/ ‘and’. So we have /kre-isi/ ‘10+1 or 11’, /kre-hini/ ‘10+2 or 12’, and so on up to /kre-serkep/ ‘10+9 or 19’.

/iŋkoi/ ‘20’, /pharo/ ‘100’ and /suri/ ‘1000’ are monomorphemic. However, to say ‘one hundred’ and ‘one thousand’, one must say /pharo isi/ and /siri isi/ respectively. From 21 onwards, /ra/ ‘and’ appears in its full form: /iŋkoi ra isi/, ‘20 and 1 or 21’, /iŋkoi ra hini/ 20 and 2’ or ‘22’. 30, 40, 60 and 70 are formed by multiplication: /thomkep/ ‘30’ or ‘3multiplied by 10’. 80 and 90 appear to follow a different logic: /throknerkep/ ‘80’ (throk ‘6’ + ni ‘2’, the result multiplied by /kep/ ‘10’. /throknerkep/ ‘90’ (throk ‘6’+ isi ‘1’+ (ni ‘2’), the result multiplied by /kep/ ‘10’.

While discussing the Karbi classifier, he mentions that the Karbi has an elaborate system of classifier just like other languages that have a rich set of classifier used with specific nouns depending on various parameters like size, form and other attributes or criteria. The order of classifier construction in Karbi is the classifier and numeral like the classifier constructions of many other Tibeto-Burman languages, have a CL-NUM order.
2.1. Scope of Study:

The review and evaluation of the available literature on the Karbi language provided an adequate rationale for a further more detailed study of the Karbi language. A few linguistic research works have been undertaken on this language as far our knowledge goes. But quite a large number of research works are available on social and cultural aspects of Karbi.

2.2. Methodology:

The data for this descriptive analysis of Karbi was collected in the course of several trips made to different places of Karbi Anglong district between 2010 to 2015 and informants belonged to different age groups. The method of approach for the acquisition of data was direct and these are collected from the informants through the field work. The spoken communication comprising of narratives, folk tales and stories, songs and natural conversations were taped for repetition and close study. The data for this work was entirely taken from the speeches of the Karbi native speakers living in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. This included words, phrases, sentences, live conversations, tales etc. We also compared our collected data, wherever possible, with that of J.Y. Paul’s (1987) and Arpana Konwar’s (2003) work.

The sources of our data were a number of informants, as we mentioned above, of different age groups, professions and occupations as well as sexes. Some of the informants were multilingual- having knowledge of English, Assamese, Hindi and the mother tongue Karbi whereas the others were purely bilinguals- knowing only two languages- Assamese and the mother tongue Karbi. The informants who were mainly associated with this work are listed below:
1. Mr. Mr. Mondalsing Bey (Diphu)
2. Mr. Boneswar Rongpi (Pharokowa)
3. Mr. Babu Teron (Bakalia)
4. Mr. Krishna Rongpi (Tumpreng)
5. Mr. Flawersing Krams (Langhin)
6. Miss Marilyn Killingpi (Diphu)
7. Mrs. Sermily Trangpi (Dongka)
8. Mrs. Mausumi Treangpi (Dengaon)
9. Mr. Puhorsing Teron (Dhentaghat)
10. Mr. Pansing Bey (Dhentaghat)
11. Mr. Burasing Ronghang (Dokmoka)
12. Mr. Chanrasing Teron (Dokmoka)
13. Borsing Kro (Dokmoka)

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