CHAPTER-3

PHONOLOGY

3.0. Phonology:

Phonemic inventory of Karbi consists of 24 phonemes of which five are vowels and nineteen are consonants. The phonemic inventory of this language is discussed below:

3.1. Vowel:

Karbi has five distinctive vocalic phonemes. These vocalic phonemes are /i, e, a, o, u/. They are two front unrounded vowels; two back rounded vowels and one low central vowel. These vowels of Karbi show contrast in tongue position- front, central and back; tongue height - high, mid and low. Back vowels are rounded while others are unrounded. All the vowels are oral and length is not phonemic. The vowel phonemes are shown in the table below:
3.1.1. Description of Vowel:

The following is the list of vowel phonemes and allophones of Karbi with its descriptions of articulation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>Allophone</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/i/</td>
<td>[i]</td>
<td>high, front, unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/e/</td>
<td>[e]</td>
<td>mid, front, unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/a/</td>
<td>[a]</td>
<td>low, central, unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/o/</td>
<td>[o]</td>
<td>mid, back, rounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/u/</td>
<td>[u]</td>
<td>high, back, rounded vowel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1.2. Contrasting Pairs of Vowel:

Above mentioned vowel sounds are established on the basis of the following minimal pairs and where minimal pairs are not available, sub minimal pairs are used for the purpose. Examples are presented below:

/i/ vs /e/:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/bi/</th>
<th>‘small’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/be/</td>
<td>‘surname’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pi/</td>
<td>‘to give’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pe/</td>
<td>‘cloth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/mi/</td>
<td>‘new’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/me/</td>
<td>‘fire’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/si/</td>
<td>‘to cut’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/se/</td>
<td>‘sound’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/e/ vs /a/:

| /tʰe/ | ‘big’ |
| /tʰa/ | ‘to wait’ |
| /ze/ | ‘to say’ |
| /za/ | ‘to lead’ |
| /me/ | ‘fire’ |
| /ma/ | ‘is it’ |
/ke/ ‘to be’

/ka/ ‘kind’

/a/ vs /o/: 

/ta/ ‘also’

/to/ ‘yes’

/da/ ‘order to go’

/do/ ‘to have’

/la/ ‘this’

/lo/ ‘banana leaf’

/san/ ‘to dry’

/son/ ‘similar’

/i/ vs /a/: 

/ni/ ‘sister’

/na/ ‘where’

/ri/ ‘hand’

/ra/ ‘with’

/tʰi/ ‘short’

/tʰa/ ‘to wait’

/pi/ ‘to give’

/pa/ ‘to attempt’
/e/ vs /u/:

/pe/  ‘cloth’

/pu/  ‘this way’

/me/  ‘fire’

/mu/  ‘seed’

/tʰe/  ‘big’

/tʰu/  ‘to rot’

/se/  ‘voice’

/su/  ‘to touch’

/i/ vs /o/:

/či/  ‘sun set’

/čo/  ‘to eat’

/tʰi/  ‘short’

/tʰo/  ‘to allow’

/si/  ‘a kind of basket’

/so/  ‘fever’

/pi/  ‘give’

/po/  ‘father’

/a/ vs /u/:

/ba/  ‘to carry on the back’

/bu/  ‘to flow’

/ra/  ‘with’
3.1.3. Distribution of Vowel:

All the five vowels of Karbi occur initially, medially and finally. There is no contrast in vowel length. The following examples show the occurrence of the five vowels in all the three positions.

/o/ vs /u/:

/o/ ‘fever’

/u/ ‘to touch’

/ţo/ ‘axe’

/ţu/ ‘hair’

/pʰo/ ‘five’

/pʰu/ ‘head’

/no/ ‘ear’

/nu/ ‘horn’

/i/ Initial position: /ĩnam/ ‘forest’

/ikarbak/ ‘to embrace’
/ilok/ ‘white leprosy’

/ir/ ‘to give name’

/ihi/ ‘one side’

/iŋču/ ‘thorn’

/iŋlon/ ‘hill’

/ik/ ‘elder brother’

Medial position: /mir/ ‘flower’

/kip/ ‘to pour’

/bilit/ ‘lizard’

/birta/ ‘message’

/čini/ ‘to know’

/čili/ ‘seed’

/dim/ ‘place’

/him/ ‘cake’

/zirlo/ ‘mid night’

/kilon/ ‘silk worm’

/nizan/ ‘west’

/pizu/ ‘rat’

/sinin/ ‘sky’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial position:</th>
<th>Final Position:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/e/</td>
<td>/tumī/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/en/</td>
<td>‘yesterday’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ezan̪/</td>
<td>‘cultivation’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ekai/</td>
<td>‘goat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ek̪/</td>
<td>‘know’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/hi/</td>
<td>‘dung’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kačarli/</td>
<td>‘to learn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/roŋpi/</td>
<td>‘a Karbi surname’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/isi/</td>
<td>‘one’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/saini/</td>
<td>‘lime’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tumī/</td>
<td>‘to take’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tumī/</td>
<td>‘surname’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ek̪/</td>
<td>‘life’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ek̪/</td>
<td>‘to break’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/em/</td>
<td>‘for instance’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/em̪/</td>
<td>‘to conclude’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/etan̪/</td>
<td>‘to erect’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/eklir̪/</td>
<td>‘serial’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Medial Position:  /bet/  ‘to press by hand’
               /čebak/  ‘to distribute’
               /čelaŋ/  ‘to unite’
               /det/   ‘sound of thunder’
               /hezan/ ‘each other’
               /heno/  ‘bad’
               /zeŋ/   ‘relation’
               /ken/   ‘leg’
               /lapen/ ‘from’
               /nerkep/ ‘eight’
               /penap/ ‘tomorrow’
               /reŋme/ ‘happy’
               /mek/   ‘eye’
               /men/   ‘name’
               /hepi/  ‘brinjal’
               /teke/  ‘tiger’

Final Position:  /pʰre/   ‘April’
                 /tʰarwe/ ‘mango’
                 /me/     ‘fire’
| /ɪŋze/ | ‘break into small pieces’ |
| /pe/ | ‘cloth’ |
| /re/ | ‘to collect’ |
| /se/ | ‘voice’ |
| /a/ Initial position: | /adai/ | ‘guilty’ |
| | /ahok/ | ‘true’ |
| | /akan/ | ‘garment’ |
| | /alon/ | ‘beauty’ |
| | /arčo/ | ‘to celebrate’ |
| | /asap / | ‘little’ |
| | /atup/ | ‘room’ |
| | /adam/ | ‘wedding’ |
| | /adap/ | ‘morning’ |
| | /an/ | ‘rice’ |
| | /ak/ | ‘wound’ |
| Medial Position: | /talo/ | ‘ocean’ |
| | /laŋso/ | ‘stream’ |
| | /sarpo/ | ‘old man’ |
| | /atar/ | ‘nest’ |
/metən/    ‘dog’
/saŋman/    ‘spider’
/tuŋhap/    ‘wasp’
/laŋ/       ‘water’
/tʰarwe/    ‘mango’
/twar/      ‘road’
/lam/       ‘language’
/kardom/    ‘thanks’

Final Position: /pʰa/    ‘to invite’
/piba/      ‘a kind of cloth’
/nara/      ‘paddy stem’
/marata/    ‘laziness’
/la/        ‘this’
/birta/     ‘message’
/osa/       ‘son-in-law’

/o/  Initial position: /oso/    ‘child’
/orup/      ‘empty place’
/owe/       ‘a group of same age’
/opzoi/     ‘to keep secret’
/u/   Initial position:   /uren/  ‘a type of chameleon’

/uronpi/  ‘dense forest’

/urmi/  ‘Monday’

/un/  ‘able’

/un/  ‘cage’

/ur/  ‘to dry on fire’

/umhei/  ‘sister’s husband’

/uptʰor/  ‘bamboo shoot’

Medial position:  /lun/  ‘song’

/tut/  ‘bounce’

/munpo/  ‘toe’

/tuŋ/  ‘to cook’

/duma/  ‘tobacco’

/čeruŋ/  ‘fox’

/hum/  ‘to pick up’

/dun/  ‘to go’

Final Position:  /pʰu/  ‘head’

/kuru/  ‘teacher’

/kimu/  ‘mushroom’
3.1.4. Diphthong:

Karbi has five diphthongs but no triphthong is found in Karbi. They are:

(i) /ai/ as in /pʰairap/ ‘zero’

(ii) /ei/ as in /pei/ ‘mother’

(iii) /oi/ as in /doidak/ ‘enough’

(iv) /ui/ as in /ruipi/ ‘python’

(v) /eu/ as in /deuri/ ‘priest’

Above mentioned diphthongs are established on the basis of the following minimal pairs.

/ai/ vs /ei/ /pai/ ‘fencing’

/pei/ ‘mother’

/kai/ ‘life’

/kei/ ‘nation’
/ai /vs /oi/  /ai/  ‘wild betel leaf’
/oi/  ‘yes’
/čai/  ‘wild buffalo’
/čoi/  ‘coat’

/ai /vs /ui/  /dai/  ‘crime’
/dui/  ‘to support’
/phai/  ‘number’
/phui/  ‘to spit’
/zai/  ‘to open’
/zui/  ‘to roam’

/ai/ vs /eu/  /deuri/  ‘priest’
/dairi/  ‘not to protect’

/ei/ vs /ui/  /ruí/  ‘snake’
/rei/  ‘intelligent’
/nei/  ‘smoothness’
/nui/  ‘screwdriver’
/rei/  ‘intelligent’
/rui/  ‘week’
/ei/ vs /oi/  /rei/    ‘intelligent’
/roi/    ‘bangle’
/kei/    ‘nation’
/koi/    ‘to broom and keep the dust in a place’

/oi/ vs /ui/  /oi/    ‘yes’
/ui/    ‘to smell’
/roi/    ‘bangle’
/rui/    ‘snake’

3.1.5. Distribution of Diphthong:

All the diphthongs do not occur in all the positions. The data show that all the
diphthongs occur in word medial position. The occurrence of the diphthongs in words
initial position is very rare. Only two of them viz., /ai and oi/ can occur in initial
position of the word. Except /eu/, all the diphthongs can occur in word final position.
The occurrences of the five diphthongs in the three positions are illustrated below:

/ai/    Initial position:    /ai/    ‘wild betel’
/aini/    ‘lazy’
/aina/    ‘mirror’
Medial position:  /zaime/  ‘jhum field’
/čainoŋ/  ‘cow’
/zainon/  ‘to talk’
/saihem/  ‘office’

Final position:  /rai/  ‘to reserve’
/pʰai/  ‘number’
/waŋrai /  ‘come’
/dokai/  ‘thief’
/ekai/  ‘life’

/oi/  Initial position:  /oi/  ‘yes’
/oizap/  ‘being blown way’
/oipet/  ‘breaking something while taking away’

Medial position:  /doidak/  ‘enough’,
/moičîŋki/  ‘old man’
/zoike/  ‘easy’
/moičo/  ‘back pain’
/doipet/  ‘sacrifice’
Final position: /heloi/ ‘to chew’

/soi/ ‘to cut’

/roi/ ‘bangle’

/ninjoi/ ‘sad’

/ai/ Initial position: It is not available

Medial position: /ruipi/ ‘python’

/duik¹rai/ ‘devil’

/ruidok/ ‘sweet potato’

/ruichehe/ ‘snake’

/huiok/ ‘a type of fish’

Final position: /čeheui/ ‘to help each other’

/zuizui/ ‘to amuse’

/p¹urui/ ‘snake’

/kerui/ ‘again’

/pohui/ ‘pillow’

/ei/ Initial position: It is not available

Medial position: /heihui/ ‘so on’

Final position: /pei/ ‘mother’

/k¹ei/ ‘nation’
There are nineteen (19) consonantal phonemes in Karbi. These consonantal phonemes are: /p, b, t, d, k, pʰ, tʰ, kʰ, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, č, r, l, w, y/. The consonants, as a whole, include 8 stops and 11 continuants. The stops show voice, voiceless and aspirated, unaspirated contrast. Among the continuants, there are three nasals, three fricatives, one affricate, one trill, one lateral, and two approximants. The nasals, the trill, the lateral and the approximants are all voiced and the affricate is voiceless whereas the fricatives show contrast in voiced and voiceless. Place of articulation can be divided into bilabial, labio-dental, alveolar, palatal, velar and glottal.

All the consonantal phonemes do not occur in all three positions. The phonemes /pʰ, b, tʰ, d, kʰ, s, č, z, h, l, w/ do not occur in the final position. On the other hand, the phonemes /ŋ, y/ do not occur in initial position. The consonantal phonemes of Karbi are shown in the following table:
**Karbi consonant Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VL</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>VL</td>
<td>VD</td>
<td>VL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>up</strong> Stop</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>asp</strong></td>
<td>pʰ</td>
<td>tʰ</td>
<td>kʰ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fricative</strong></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>z</td>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affricate</strong></td>
<td>c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nasal</strong></td>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>ñ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lateral</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trill</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S.Vowel</strong></td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table- No.4. Karbi Consonant

**3.2.1. Description of Consonant:**

The following is the list of consonantal phonemes and its description:

/p/ voiceless unaspirated bilabial stop

/pʰ/ voiceless aspirated bilabial stop

/b/ voiced unaspirated bilabial stop

/t/ voiceless unaspirated alveolar stop

/tʰ/ voiceless aspirated alveolar stop
/d/ voiced unaspirated alveolar stop
/k/ voiceless unaspirated velar stop
/kʰ/ voiceless aspirated velar stop
/s/ voiceless unaspirated palatal fricative
/z/ voiced unaspirated palatal fricative
/č/ voiceless aspirated palatal affricate
/h/ voiceless glottal fricative
/m/ voiced bilabial nasal
/n/ voiced alveolar nasal
/ŋ/ voiced velar nasal
/l/ voiced alveolar lateral
/r/ voiced alveolar trill
/w/ voiced bilabial semi-vowel
/y/ voiced palatal semi-vowel

3.2.2. Contrasting Pairs of Consonant:

These consonantal sounds are established on the basis of minimal pairs and
where minimal pairs are not available, sub-minimal pairs are used for the purpose.
Minimal pairs of consonants are presented in the following list:

/p/ vs /b/ /pu/ ‘to cut fire wood’
<p>| /bu/ | ‘to make handicraft’ |
| /pek/ | ‘to give side’ |
| /bek/ | ‘to combat’ |
| /t/ vs /d/ | /te/ | ‘elder sister’ |
| /de/ | ‘tongue’ |
| /ta/ | ‘also/ too’ |
| /da/ | ‘order to go’ |
| /p/ vs /pʰ/ | /pu/ | ‘this’ |
| /pʰu/ | ‘head’ |
| /pen/ | ‘and/ from’ |
| /pʰen/ | ‘dirty water’ |
| /t/ vs /tʰ/ | /teke/ | ‘tiger’ |
| /tʰeke/ | ‘because’ |
| /te/ | ‘elder sister’ |
| /tʰe/ | ‘big’ |
| /ta/ | ‘also’ |
| /tʰa/ | ‘stop’ |
| /k/ vs /kʰ/ | /kelan/ | ‘publicity’ |
| /kʰelan/ | ‘an open place’ |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/kalaŋ/</th>
<th>‘yes’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/kʰalun/</td>
<td>‘ugly face’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/ vs /z/</td>
<td>/sok/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zok/</td>
<td>‘free’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/san/</td>
<td>‘rest’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zaŋ/</td>
<td>‘to fall down’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/ vs /č/</td>
<td>/so/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/čo/</td>
<td>‘to eat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/sar/</td>
<td>‘old man’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/čar/</td>
<td>‘faraway’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/ vs /h/</td>
<td>/si/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/hi/</td>
<td>‘dung’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/seran/</td>
<td>‘loud voice’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/heran/</td>
<td>‘well’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/č/ vs /z/</td>
<td>/čak/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zak/</td>
<td>‘distance’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/či/</td>
<td>‘to hat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zi/</td>
<td>‘to allow’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
/m/ vs /n/  /me/  ‘fire’

/ne/  ‘I’

/meŋ/  ‘cat’

/neŋ/  ‘relation’

/n/ vs /ŋ/  /patun/  ‘ask to cook’

/patun/  ‘ask to drink with other’s help’

/klan/  ‘spread of smell’

/klaŋ/  ‘appear’

/men/  ‘ripen’

/meŋ/  ‘cat’

/l/ vs /ɾ/  /čeloŋ/  ‘buffalo’

/čeroŋ/  ‘to hire’

/ɲloŋ/  ‘hill’
3.2.3. Distribution of Consonant:

It is found out that most of the consonants do not occur in all three position of a word. The twelve phonemes /pʰ, b, tʰ, d, kʰ, s, č, z, h, l, w/ do not occur in the final position. On the other hand, the phonemes /ŋ, y/ do not occur in initial position. The following examples are given to show the occurrence of the nineteen consonantal phonemes in three positions.

/p/ Initial position: /pon/ ‘to take’  
/pado/ ‘to stay’  
/pen/ ‘and’  
/po/ ‘father’  
/pi/ ‘to give’  
/pini/ ‘today’  
/pizo/ ‘bee’  
/pu/ ‘to cut with axe’  
/pok/ ‘stomach’
/pinso/    ‘male’
/pekarom/  ‘blanket’
/pira/     ‘box’
/pinrem/   ‘to insult’
/puthot/   ‘again’

Medial position:
/apor/     ‘time’
/lapu/     ‘this side’
/nupi/     ‘whale fish’
/dampizuk/ ‘firefly’
/inprim/   ‘needle’
/zuipre/   ‘roaming’
/kopi/     ‘what’
/niŋpli/   ‘comfort’
/sarpi/    ‘old woman’
/kepun/    ‘to measure’
/ahokpet/  ‘truth’
/sokpum/   ‘straw/thatch’
/inprim/   ‘needle’
/lumlak/   ‘spoon’
/hemepi/ ‘widow’
/zirpo/ ‘friend’
/tepi/ ‘sister-in-law’
/sopo/ ‘son’

Final position:  /zop/ ‘to decrease’
/top/ ‘to repair’
/ke-ap/ ‘Karbi surname’
/čebap/ ‘to put above’
/hop/ ‘to tie’
/inhap/ ‘door’
/zo-ap/ ‘to open the bow’
/keprap/ ‘quick’
/nirep/ ‘south’
/kekap/ ‘to cross’
/bap/ ‘grass’
/kanjup/ ‘to lean’
/kanzup/ ‘to kiss’

/pʰ/ Initial position:  /pʰak/ ‘pig’
/pʰarlo/ ‘dream’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/pʰli/</td>
<td>‘four’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pʰarla/</td>
<td>‘shed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pʰelo/</td>
<td>‘cotton’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pʰelaj/</td>
<td>‘sword’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pʰizu/</td>
<td>‘rat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pʰo/</td>
<td>‘five’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pʰu/</td>
<td>‘head’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pʰi/</td>
<td>‘grandmother’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pʰunu/</td>
<td>‘uncle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/apʰisi/</td>
<td>‘finally’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/wopʰri/</td>
<td>‘sparrow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/hempʰi/</td>
<td>‘house wife’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zaŋpʰon/</td>
<td>‘jack fruit’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ruipʰe/</td>
<td>‘cobra’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/hampʰan/</td>
<td>‘organization’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/hempʰu/</td>
<td>‘god’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/thepʰlut/</td>
<td>‘to beat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/warpʰlut/</td>
<td>‘throw way’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/bapʰulok/</td>
<td>‘a kind vegetable’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final position: It does not occur.

/b/ Initial position: /bap/ ‘grass’

/ba/ ‘to carry on back’

/bi/ ‘goat’

/beŋ/ ‘to close’

/bikron/ ‘betel leaf’

/bilit/ ‘lizard’

/birik/ ‘chilli’

/bon/ ‘bottle’

/bonhom/ ‘pumpkin’

/bok/ ‘to blame’

/bu/ ‘to make handicraft’

/tibuk/ ‘pot’

Medial position: /tebuk/ ‘earthen pot’

/abor/ ‘bundle’

/zabok/ ‘pocket’

/zamburoŋ/ ‘bag’

/laŋbop/ ‘spring water’

/lokboŋ/ ‘snow white’
/loban/  ‘fallen leaf’

/abin/  ‘shade’

/muntokban/  ‘ring’

/kibu/  ‘hammer’

/roŋboŋ/  ‘capital’

/kebui/  ‘load’

Final position:  It does not occur.

/ɪ/  Initial position:  /tebin/  ‘shadow’

/teke/  ‘tiger’

/ti/  ‘egg’

/talo/  ‘ocean’

/tomon/  ‘wind’

/tepi/  ‘wife’s sister’

/teke/  ‘tiger’

/takun/  ‘vulture’

/tuhap/  ‘wasp’

/tari/  ‘knife’

Medial position:  /lamtiri/  ‘main’

/iŋtan/  ‘strong’
/nitur/  ‘south’
/aŋtaŋ/  ‘heat’
/pirte/  ‘planet’
/atur/  ‘ray’
/sanți/  ‘sand’
/aŋtur/  ‘beak’
/bitu/  ‘fly’
/atar/  ‘nest’
/kenți/  ‘heel’
/ketun/  ‘to cook’
/iŋti/  ‘salt’

Final position:  /musit/  ‘a kind of radish ant’
/hinzat/  ‘faith’
/marat/  ‘animal’
/monit/  ‘man’
/bilit/  ‘lizard’
/kaselet/  ‘lazy’
/kanjit/  ‘to be thirsty’
/tʰarmit/  ‘turmeric’
| /lamet/ | ‘literature’ |
| /rat/ | ‘public’ |
| /kʰ/ Initial position: | /tʰa/ | ‘to wait’ |
| | /tʰarnit/ | ‘turmeric’ |
| | /tʰengpi/ | ‘wood’ |
| | /tʰok/ | ‘to write’ |
| | /tʰeklo/ | ‘ashes’ |
| | /tʰoi/ | ‘plain’ |
| | /tʰero/ | ‘monkey’ |
| | /tʰai/ | ‘bow’ |
| | /tʰizok/ | ‘deer’ |
| | /tʰoitʰe/ | ‘cucumber’ |
| Medial position: | /sartʰe/ | ‘village headman’ |
| | /lotʰe/ | ‘banana’ |
| | /turtʰak/ | ‘upper lip’ |
| | /wotʰun/ | ‘pigeon’ |
| | /iŋtʰe/ | ‘to spit’ |
| | /iŋtʰum/ | ‘to boil’ |
| | /iŋtʰur/ | ‘lip’ |
/ačitʰe/  ‘life’
/zaŋtʰu/  ‘oil’
/ɪnʃʰi/  ‘comb’
/hemketʰiɾ/  ‘building’
/ketʰor/  ‘sour’
/metʰan/  ‘dog’

Final position:  It does not occur.

/d/  Initial position:  /dak/  ‘here’
/ding/  ‘long’
/dam/  ‘to go’
/donrap/  ‘relative’
/dampizuk/  ‘firefly’
/de/  ‘tongue’
/donri/  ‘gate’
/dowan/  ‘altar’
/duma/  ‘tobacco’
/dewak/  ‘robber’
/dim/  ‘place’
Medial position: /adun/ ‘next’

/nudeng/ ‘umbrella’

/aduk/ ‘dust’

/loŋdak/ ‘snail’

/adan/ ‘wheel’

/kido/ ‘letter’

/ado/ ‘sin’

/kardom/ ‘thanks’

/kedu/ ‘to fold’

/ador/ ‘price’

Final position: It does not occur.

/ka/ Initial position: /kalaŋ/ ‘yes’

/kep/ ‘ten’

/kodak/ ‘where’

/kanṭiŋ/ ‘darkness’

/kasar/ ‘old’

/kiti/ ‘short’

/kilu/ ‘cockroach’

/karlo/ ‘white ant’
| /keso/   | ‘fever’              |
| /karzøŋ/ | ‘soul’               |
| /keŋop/  | ‘shoe’               |
| Medial position: /akri/ | ‘coal of firewood’ |
| /lamkan/ | ‘drama’              |
| /iŋko𝑖/  | ‘twenty’             |
| /wokak/  | ‘duck’               |
| /iŋki/   | ‘insect’             |
| /okpran/ | ‘health’             |
| /pekarom/| ‘blanket’            |
| /čiklo/  | ‘moon’               |
| /teke/   | ‘tiger’              |
| /takun/  | ‘vulture’            |
| /mekuŋ/  | ‘eyebrow’            |
| Final position: /dak/ | ‘here’                |
| /nuhok/  | ‘useless’            |
| /ok/     | ‘flesh’              |
/anuk/  ‘horn’
/pʰak/  ‘pig’
/wokek/  ‘parrot’
/munasek/  ‘finger joint’
/ripak/  ‘palm’ (hand)
/lumplak/  ‘spoon’
/nok/  ‘sugar’
/ček/  ‘bamboo’
/lek/  ‘neklace’

/kʰ/  Initial position:  /kʰelan/  ‘open place’
/kʰi/  ‘wealth’
/kʰan/  ‘quick’
/kʰalun/  ‘a kind of basket’
/kʰamkʰe/  ‘to protest’
/kʰaŋ/  ‘block’
/kʰat/  ‘bed’
/kʰorot/  ‘expense’
/kʰuri/  ‘clock’
Medial position:  
/okʰi/   ‘deer’  
/akʰat/   ‘character’  
/lokʰu/   ‘dusty’  
/roŋkʰan/   ‘a name place’  
/lankʰan/   ‘place’  
/kekʰor/   ‘to pain’  
/akʰim/   ‘scarcity’  
/akʰok/   ‘greedy’  
/akʰarwan/   ‘ditch’  
/akʰarpak/   ‘line’  
/zaŋkʰun/   ‘itch’  
/kekʰan/   ‘quick’  
/kekhan/   ‘to obstruct’  

Final position:  It does not occur.

/s/  Initial position:  /si/   ‘to push’  
/soset/   ‘very hot’  
/se/   ‘voice’  
/saŋtimi/   ‘desert’  
/surin/   ‘sky’
/sarpo/ ‘old man’
/sirun/ ‘jackal’
/sanman/ ‘spider’
/so/ ‘tooth’
/san/ ‘to take rest’
/sanprui/ ‘to pull’

Medial position: /peso/ ‘warm’
/aso/ ‘calf’
/lunse/ ‘singer’
/isi/ ‘one’
/keso/ ‘heat’
/asopo/ ‘son’
/lanso/ ‘stream’
/hemesi/ ‘family’
/apiso/ ‘wife’
/losai/ ‘horse’
/kesan/ ‘rest’

Final position: It does not occur.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Initial position:</th>
<th>Medial position:</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/zu/</td>
<td>/zo/</td>
<td>/lamzir/</td>
<td>‘this’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/za/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘lead’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/zutanʃ/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘culture’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/zun/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to drink’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/zanʃʰu/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘oil’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/zamburoŋ/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘bag’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/zam/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘broad’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/zoyke/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘easy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/zoklu/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘idiot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/zu/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to ask’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/zum/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘shade’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/zupʰi/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘honey bee’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/zut/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘finish’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/čozun/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘a feast of Karbi’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/nizaŋ/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘west’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/kanʃar/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to fly’ (bird)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/karzu/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘answer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/heze/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to chew’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
/ninje/ ‘to talk’

/pʰizu/ ‘rat’

Final position: It does not occur.

/h/ Initial position: /hemepi/ ‘widow’
/hanso/ ‘ginger’
/homsira/ ‘orange’
/hem/ ‘house’
/homon/ ‘honest’
/herai/ ‘ice’
/honi/ ‘Saturn’
/hemisi/ ‘family’
/hilon/ ‘earthworm’
/hor/ ‘rice beer’
/harluŋ/ ‘cup’
/hizap/ ‘fan’
/hipi/ ‘brinjal’
/hidi/ ‘field’

Medial position: /iŋhun/ ‘cloud’
/bonjhom/ ‘pumpkin’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ŋhan/</td>
<td>‘mud’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/lahelo/</td>
<td>‘that’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tuhap/</td>
<td>‘wasp’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/woiŋhu/</td>
<td>‘owl’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/emahan/</td>
<td>‘face’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tehan/</td>
<td>‘headache’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ahu/</td>
<td>‘to bark’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kihi/</td>
<td>‘to paint’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kaŋhon/</td>
<td>‘darling’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kaŋhu/</td>
<td>‘thief’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final position:** It does not occur.

**/č/ Initial position:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/čo/</td>
<td>‘to eat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/čoŋho/</td>
<td>‘frog’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/čiklo/</td>
<td>‘moon’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ček/</td>
<td>‘bamboo’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/četa/</td>
<td>‘lightening’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/čiloŋ/</td>
<td>‘buffalo’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/cainoŋ/</td>
<td>‘bull/cow’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
/čimi/ ‘claw’

/čoŋho/ ‘frog’

/čitim/ ‘mosquito’

/čituŋ/ ‘tortoise’

/čimi/ ‘nail’

/čeŋ/ ‘drum’

/čoi/ ‘shirt’

Medial position: /kačarli/ ‘learning’

/hančebor/ ‘cabbage’

/arčim/ ‘drop of water’

/kačerop/ ‘twin’

/kačiču/ ‘joint’

/kaču/ ‘plate’

/iŋčim/ ‘iron’

/kaŋčir/ ‘hungry’

/ričo/ ‘king’

/kečokče/ ‘guilty’

/kečeŋ/ ‘first’

Final position: It does not occur.
/m/ Initial position: /mir/ ‘flower’

/mo/ ‘rotten egg’

/me/ ‘fire’

/meŋkalu/ ‘cat’

/mukak/ ‘rainbow’

/mek/ ‘eye’

/monit/ ‘man’

/met^an/ ‘dog’

/meresak/ ‘sheep’

/mekun/ ‘eyebrow’

/marat/ ‘animal’

Medial position: /komat/ ‘who’

/zamboron/ ‘bag’

/nampi/ ‘thick forest’

/risomar/ ‘bachelor’

/arme/ ‘tail’

/lamwe/ ‘dumb’

/hemepi/ ‘widow’

/čimi/ ‘nail’
/saŋtimi/ ‘desert’
/tomon/ ‘wind’
/hemisi/ ‘family’
/aŋmi/ ‘feather’

Final position: /arnam/ ‘god’
/kardom/ ‘thanks’
/pardam/ ‘to cross’
/him/ ‘cake’
/čitim/ ‘mosquito’
/tʰokwan/ ‘bear’
/iŋtʰum/ ‘to boil’
/hem/ ‘house’
/iŋčim/ ‘iron’
/iŋprim/ ‘needle’
/kanṣam/ ‘coldness’

/ȵ/ Initial position: /naŋ/ ‘you’
/non/ ‘now’
/nin/ ‘heart’
/nemsopi/ ‘papaya’
| /no/   | ‘ear’          |
| /nuŋ/  | ‘back’         |
| /nok/  | ‘sugar’        |
| /nuzok/| ‘pillar’       |
| /niŋkitʰi/ | ‘anger’   |
| /nerkep/ | ‘eight’   |
| /nohok’tʰa/ | ‘surround’ |
| /nopak/ | ‘knife’        |

Medial position:
| /anam/  | ‘price’        |
| /arnam/ | ‘god’          |
| /penan/ | ‘husband’      |
| /arni/  | ‘sun’          |
| /kani/  | ‘opium’        |
| /arnan/ | ‘ring’         |
| /donri/ | ‘gate’         |
| /hamso/ | ‘ginger’       |
| /honzat/| ‘doubt’        |
| /kazinso/| ‘mercy’    |
| /hini/  | ‘two’          |
/čini/ ‘know’

Final position: /han/ ‘curry’
/lun/ ‘song’
/an/ ‘rice’
/ton/ ‘basket’
/rikan/ ‘wrist’
/čin/ ‘stick’
/inhan/ ‘clay’
/hon/ ‘thread’
/kajhon/ ‘affection’
/aron/ ‘law’
/kepun/ ‘to measure’
/zun/ ‘to drink’

/ŋ/ Initial position: It does not occur.

Medial position: /iŋham/ ‘throat’
/keŋpu/ ‘knee’
/iŋlit/ ‘leech’
/iŋhap/ ‘door’
/saŋti/ ‘sand’
/arloŋ/ ‘stone’
/tʰenŋi/ ‘wood’
/oŋsar/ ‘wife’s brother’
/loŋdak/ ‘snail’
/iŋthe/ ‘to spit’
/laŋok/ ‘fish’

Final position: /iŋloŋ/ ‘hill’
/čeloŋ/ ‘buffalo’
/siruŋ/ ‘fox’
/lanŋ/ ‘water’
/hiloŋ/ ‘earthworm’
/reŋ/ ‘skin’
/nudeŋ/ ‘umbrella’
/adāŋ/ ‘wheel’
/bonŋ/ ‘bottle’
/roŋ/ ‘village’
/čenŋ/ ‘drum’
/kenŋ/ ‘leg’
Initial position:

/la/ ‘this’

/lam/ ‘language’

/laŋ/ ‘water’

/latʰum/ ‘they’

/loŋku/ ‘cave’

/laŋso/ ‘stream’

/losai/ ‘horse’

/laŋtuk/ ‘well’

/lahelo/ ‘so’

/lapen/ ‘and’

/lun/ ‘song’

/lon/ ‘to get’

/lamtʰe/ ‘word’

/laŋroy/ ‘river’

/lim/ ‘to cover’

Medial position:

/klen/ ‘eldest, senior’

/eli/ ‘we’

/klem/ ‘to do’

/pʰli/ ‘four’
/talo/ ‘ocean’

/iŋloŋ/ ‘hill’

/kilu/ ‘cockroach’

/bilit/ ‘lizard’

/kali/ ‘no’

/kelaj/ ‘rich’

/karlu/ ‘to climb’

Final position: It does not occur.

/ʃ/ Initial position: /ri/ ‘hand’

/ričo/ ‘king’

/roŋ/ ‘village’

/roy/ ‘bangle’

/rikan/ ‘wrist’

/rideŋ/ ‘palm’

/raze/ ‘appearance’

/raidan/ ‘cane’

/reŋ/ ‘leather’

/ruipe/ ‘cobra’

/rizoi/ ‘to search’
/rani/ ‘day’

/rap/ ‘to dry’

Medial position: /sarpo/ ‘old man’

/arni/ ‘sun’

/zerso/ ‘small’

/barat/ ‘to divide’

/are/ ‘dew’

/pirte/ ‘planet’

/arwe/ ‘rain’

/arloŋ/ ‘stone’

/zirpo/ ‘friend’

/donrap/ ‘relative’

/aroy/ ‘cage’

/siruŋ/ ‘fox’

Final position: /dor/ ‘enough’

/iŋnar/ ‘elephant’

/asar/ ‘distant’

/osomar/ ‘children’

/atur/ ‘ray’
/towar/  ‘road’
/oŋsar/  ‘wife’s brother’
/hor/  ‘rice beer’
/melur/  ‘lump’
/er/  ‘red’
/set/  ‘gold’
/kewar/  ‘to throw’
/kanjur/  ‘to scold’
/nitur/  ‘north’

/w/:  Initial position: /we/  ‘to pluck’
/wo/  ‘bird’
/waŋ/  ‘to come’

Medial position: /arwe/  ‘rain’
/kirwo/  ‘a kind of tree’
/kowe/  ‘betel nut’
/aue/  ‘no more’
/towar/  ‘road’

Final position:  It does not occur.
/y/ Initial position: It does not occur.

Medial position: /zoyke/ ‘easy’
/keyer/ ‘red’
/kiyi/ ‘devil’
/kiyik/ ‘very black’

Final position: /koy/ ‘to make Powder’
/čoy/ ‘coat’
/roy/ ‘bangle’

3.2.4. Consonant Combination:

Consonant combinations may be classified into three categories, viz. (i) Consonant cluster, (ii) Consonant Sequences and (iii) Geminate. Consonant cluster means combination of more than one consonant occurring together within a single syllable, while consonant sequence means combination of more than one consonant occurring between syllable and geminate means combination of two same phonemes in a word.

3.2.4.1. Consonant Cluster:

The term cluster is used in the analysis of connected speech to refer to any sequence of adjacent consonants occurring in a syllable. Usually a distinction is made within the consonant combination into consonant clusters and consonant sequences. Consonant clusters occur within a syllable while consonant sequences occur across syllables. In this language, consonant clusters occur only in initial and medial
positions whereas a lot of consonant sequences occur in the medial position. The final cluster is found only in the loan words borrowed from English. Following are the examples:

3.2.4.1.1. Initial Consonant Cluster:

As mentioned above, Karbi clusters do not allow more than two consonants. The first member of the consonant cluster is always stops (/p/, /pʰ/, /t/, /tʰ/, /k/). The second member of the cluster is always liquid (/l/, /r/). The table presented below will elucidate the above fact.

**Initial two consonant clusters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Member</th>
<th>Second Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pʰ</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʰ</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʰ</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. 5. Initial consonant cluster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant Cluster</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/pl-/</td>
<td>/pleŋ/</td>
<td>‘full’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/plŋ/</td>
<td>‘rich’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
/plok/  ‘to loosen the tie’
/pr-/  /pranme/  ‘healthy’
/pre/  ‘October’
/prin/  ‘to put into fire’
/prot/  ‘broken rice’
/pʰl-/  /pʰlok/  ‘to open’
/pʰli/  ‘four’
/tr-/  /trop/  ‘sub-clan of Teron’
/trɵŋ/  ‘basket’
/tʰr-/  /tʰroksi/  ‘seven’
/tʰrok/  ‘six’
/kl-/  /klem/  ‘to do’
/klær/  ‘to clean’
/klɵŋ/  ‘the eldest’
/klirdap/  ‘morning’
/kg-/  /kro/  ‘Karbi surname’
/kramsa/  ‘Karbi surname’
### 3.2.4.1.2. Medial Consonant Cluster:

The language has medial two consonant clusters and the various combinatorial possibilities are presented below with a table and examples. However, the occurrences of medial two consonant clusters are very few. In the medial clusters, the first member can be /p, pʰ, k, kʰ/ while the consonants viz. liquids /l, r/ occupy the position as the second member of the clusters. The table presented below will elucidate the above fact.

#### Medial two consonant clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Member</th>
<th>Second Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ph</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kh</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. 6 (Medial consonant cluster)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant cluster</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/-pr-/</td>
<td>/nun-preŋ/</td>
<td>‘to burst out’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/nun-proŋ/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘keeping upright on the ground’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/paŋ-pram/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to measure with palm’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/-pʰr-/</td>
<td>/adap-pʰraŋ/</td>
<td>‘dawn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/nem-pʰru/</td>
<td>‘sweet scented’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.4.1.3. Final Consonant Cluster:

A small number of two consonant clusters occur in the final position in Karbi. Most of the consonants which occur in the final cluster do not occur in the word initial position. Interestingly, most of the words, where the final clusters occur are the loan words from English. At the same time, it is also seen that the final cluster is found only in the speech of educated persons where there is a case of final consonant cluster deletion when the same words are used by uneducated native speaker. The possible combinations of final two consonant clusters are given below:

/-pʰl/- /zon-pʰli/ ‘four person’

/-kl/- /si-klo/ ‘moon’

-par-klok/ ‘to boil water’

/-kr/- /niŋ-kran/ ‘winter season’

/-kʰr/- /ka-kʰre/ ‘a priest who purifies the sin’

/iŋ-kʰran/ ‘satisfied’

/-nt/ /siment/ ‘cement’

/-ns/ /saens/ ‘science’

/-st/ /post/ ‘pillars’

/-lm/ /philm/ ‘film’
3.2.4.2. Consonant Sequence:

As per investigation, consonant sequences in Karbi have a wide variety of consonant sequences. A consonant sequence in Karbi generally occurs in word medial position. Karbi permits up to three consonantal sequences which are discussed below:

3.2.4.2.1. Two Consonant Sequences:

Two consonant sequences are found in abundant numbers in the Karbi language. The most possible combinations of these sequences are shown below:

i. Stop + stop:

\[-p+b-/ \quad /op\text{-bi}/ \quad \text{‘cloudy’}
\]
\[-p+t-/ \quad /rep\text{-tak}/ \quad \text{‘bone’}
\]
\[-p+k-/ \quad /rip\text{-koi}/ \quad \text{‘trap’}
\]
\[-p+t^h-/ \quad /up\text{-t}^{h}\text{or}/ \quad \text{‘bamboo shoot’}
\]
\[-t+p-/ \quad /sat\text{-pik}/ \quad \text{‘to collect’}
\]
\[-t+p^h-/ \quad /čut\text{-pet}/ \quad \text{‘to break up by pricking’}
\]

\[-p+t^h-/ \quad /niop\text{-t}^{h}\text{ip}/ \quad \text{‘gloomy’}
\]
\[-p+t^h-/ \quad /dip\text{-t}^{h}\text{ip}/ \quad \text{‘lid’}
\]
/inut-pet/  ‘only one’

/-t+b-/ /sat-bat/  ‘truth’

/but-bom/  ‘to puff’

/-t+tʰ-/ /ot-tʰip/  ‘to hold on tightly’

/čut-tʰor/  ‘to cut carefully’

/-k+p-/ /pʰak-pule/  ‘a kind of rat’

/ik-pi/  ‘dark colour’

/sek-pen/  ‘to insert’

/-k+b-/ /bok-bok/  ‘tomato’

/sak-bop/  ‘to kill by trampling with foot’

/tok-baŋ/  ‘writer’

/ok-bi/  ‘lake’

/-k+t-/ /kok-taŋ/  ‘dried fish’

/kak-tuŋ/  ‘a kind of hill bamboo’

/lek-te/  ‘Karbi surname’

/-k+tʰ-/ /molok-tʰu/  ‘mushroom’

/rik-tʰap/  ‘unnecessary’

/kok-tʰat/  ‘suicide’

/ok-tʰepi/  ‘big fish’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>phonemic</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/-k+d-/</td>
<td>/ik-det/</td>
<td>‘complete’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/rak-dak/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to tear’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pak-dak/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to jump’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ii. Stop + Fricative/ Affricate:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>phonemic</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/-t+s-/</td>
<td>/et-sot/</td>
<td>‘very yellow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/čet-so/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘a few’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/- t+č -/</td>
<td>/ot-čon/</td>
<td>‘to hold on last portion of thing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/čet-čo/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘a kind of insect’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/apot-či/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘for’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/lut-čok/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘no profit’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/-t+z-/</td>
<td>/et-zo/</td>
<td>‘to shine’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tot-zoi/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to hide’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/sat-zok/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to pull’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/-k+z-/</td>
<td>/mek-zanje/</td>
<td>‘not sleeping’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/rik-zap/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to scatter’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tok-zir/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘prose’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/-k+s-/</td>
<td>/ik-sip/</td>
<td>‘deep black’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tʰrok-sirkep/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘ninety’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ok-so/</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘small fish’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
-k+č-/ /sok-čili/ ‘paddy seed’

/-p+č- /ap-čak/ ‘injured by fire’

/-k+m-/ /tak-mon/ ‘to rise up’

/-k+n-/ /tʰrok-nerkep/ ‘eighty’

iii. Stop + Nasal:

/-p+n-/ /arzap-non/ ‘to stand up’

/-t+n-/ /nat-ne/ ‘somewhere’

/-k+m-/ /tak-mon/ ‘to rise up’

/-k+n-/ /tʰrok-nerkep/ ‘eighty’

iv. Stop + Trill:

/-p+r-/ /čop-ri/ ‘discourage’

/-p+r-/ /dip-rai/ ‘destroy’

/-p+r-/ /up-rok/ ‘to lift’
/-t+r-/ /tut-rup/ ‘to break something’

/-k+r-/ /ik-rim/ ‘dim light’

v. Stop + Lateral:

/-p+l-/ /up-laŋ/ ‘acidity juice’

/rip-lut/ ‘failure to hold’

/ap-lut/ ‘to fire jungle’

/-t+l-/ /tot-loŋ/ ‘sitting alone’

/det-lut/ ‘thief’

/et-liŋ/ ‘to make hole’

/-k+l-/ /čok-lim/ ‘enough’

/nuzok-lo/ ‘post’

/mok-laŋ/ ‘milk’

vi. Stop + Semi vowel:

/-p+w-/ /zap-wi/ ‘to fan’

/rip-wi/ ‘to hold’

/-k+w-/ /ik-waŋ/ ‘to blacken’

/tok-wak/ ‘to bleed’
vii. Nasal + Stop:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Phonemic Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/-n+t-/</td>
<td>/on-ti/</td>
<td>‘ear ring’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/an-te/</td>
<td>‘and then’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/kʰon-ta/</td>
<td>‘bell’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/-n+tʰ-/</td>
<td>/kin-tʰai/</td>
<td>‘woman’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/pin-tʰe/</td>
<td>‘present’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/lan-tʰe/</td>
<td>‘fishing net’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/pin-tʰi/</td>
<td>‘creation’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/-m+d-/</td>
<td>/dam-de/</td>
<td>‘do not go’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/čam-diŋ/</td>
<td>‘a big type of orange’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/-m+p-/</td>
<td>/čum-pet/</td>
<td>‘Karbi dress’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/ham-pur/</td>
<td>‘a kind of sour fruit’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/-m+pʰ-/</td>
<td>/čam-pʰlak/</td>
<td>‘being wet’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/dam-pʰli/</td>
<td>‘to go’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/nampʰilat/</td>
<td>‘a kind of grass’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/-m+b-/</td>
<td>/keŋham-bi/</td>
<td>‘ankle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/ham-bi/</td>
<td>‘kidney’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/-m+tʰ-/</td>
<td>/krom-tʰe/</td>
<td>‘be fat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/dam-tʰa/</td>
<td>‘to go away’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
/tom-tʰip/ ‘close’
/-m+k-/ /čom-ketʰi/ ‘death’
/tʰom-kep/ ‘thirty’
/-n+p-/ /pin-po/ ‘traditional head’
/dun-po/ ‘will go’
 /kan-pla/ ‘unable to dance’
/-n+b-/ /lun-baŋ/ ‘singer’
/kon-baŋ/ ‘lover’
/dun-bom/ ‘to follow’
/-n+d-/ /kin-du/ ‘rhinoceros’
/ton-diŋ/ ‘to guard’
/man-du/ ‘rest house’
/-n+k-/ /an-ke/ ‘after that’
/pʰan-koi/ ‘to bind’
/tʰan-kir/ ‘to teach’
/-ŋ+p-/ /ŋ-pu/ ‘to open’
/tʰŋ-pi/ ‘tree’
/baŋ-po/ ‘will come’
/donŋ-pet/ ‘to break into pieces’
viii. Nasal + Fricative/Affricate:

/-ŋ+pʰ-/  /aŋ-pʰar/  ‘flower’

/tʰŋ-pʰaŋ/  ‘to beat’

/-ŋ+b-/  /saŋ-basan/  ‘resting house’

/ŋ-ŋ-boŋ/  ‘middle’

/kanj-bura/  ‘village headman’

/-ŋ+t-/  /aŋ-tur/  ‘lip’

/sanj-timi/  ‘desert’

/-ŋ+tʰ-/  /aŋ-tʰek/  ‘symbol’

/zanj-tʰu/  ‘oil’

/kanj-tʰak/  ‘itch’

/kaŋ-tʰaŋ/  ‘strong’

/-ŋ+k-/  /iŋ-koi/  ‘twenty’

/sanj-koi/  ‘to take rest’

/lonj-ku/  ‘cave’

/kaŋ-kai/  ‘to fence’

/paŋ-konj/  ‘to make warm’

/-n+s-/  /man-seronj/  ‘the inner portion of the jack fruit’
/an-so/  ‘hot rice’
/lun-se/  ‘lyricist’
/zin-so/  ‘to grace’
/-n+č-/ /čon-čom/  ‘to jump’
/zan-či/  ‘but’
/hen-čiri/  ‘arum plant’
/lun-četo/  ‘group song’
/han-čeron/  ‘a kind of sour vegetable’
/-n+z-/ /din-zar/  a digging instrument
/lun-zir/  ‘verse’
/čon-zet/  ‘to jump over’
/han-zaŋ/  ‘mustard oil’
/-m+s-/ /polom-so/  ‘little white’
/lom-sowet/  ‘few moments’
/lam-so/  ‘not valuable’
/hem-so/  ‘hut’
/sam-son/  ‘common name of Karbi tribe’
/dam-serak/  ‘to go quick’
/lam-sai/  ‘essay’
ix. Nasal + Liquid:

/-ŋ+s-/ /ŋ+si/ ‘flute’
/-ŋ+č-/ /ŋ+čor/ ‘brother-in-law’
/-ŋ+z-/ /ŋ+zon/ ‘beautiful’
/-ŋ+h-/ /ŋ+hu/ ‘mouth’
/-m+l-/ /m+l/ ‘went’
/-ŋ+hini/ ‘two bottles’
/-ŋ+hon/ ‘darling’
/-ŋ+hom/ ‘pumpkin’
/-ŋ+lo/ ‘very hard’
/dam-lit/ ‘going alone’

/čam-lim/ ‘to clean with water’

/lom-lom/ ‘again and again’

/-n+l-/ /koson-lo/ ‘how’

/dun-lo/ ‘went’

/pʰan-lut/ ‘binding’

/tan-lap/ ‘over done’

/-ŋ+l-/ /iŋ-lim/ ‘to slip’

/iŋ-leŋ/ ‘Karbi surname’

/iŋ-lit/ ‘leech’

/iŋ-loŋ/ ‘hill’

/-m+r-/ /dam-ra/ ‘have gone’

/ham-ren/ ‘long shade’

/tum-rai/ ‘to break by pressing’

/-n+r-/ /hen-ru/ ‘arum plant’

/lun-ri/ ‘don’t sing’

/-ŋ+r-/ /iŋ-ren/ ‘mongoose’

/aŋ-ron/ ‘youth’

/zen-ren/ ‘to move’
x. Nasal + Nasal:

/-n+m/- /hun-melan/ ‘fog’
/tan-mat/ ‘to deduct’
/hon-mi/ ‘a kind of instrument for rolling yarn’
/hun-mili/ ‘jasmine flower’

/-ŋ+n- /iŋ-nar/ ‘elephant’
/kar-nek/ ‘to laugh’
/zaŋ-ni/ ‘idle’
/iŋ-ni/ ‘to sit’

/-ŋ+m-/ /zaŋ-mek/ ‘sleeping’
/ŋ-mi/ ‘hair’
/zaŋ-mu/ ‘mustard seed’
/iŋ-mur/ ‘to wash the face’

xi. Liquid + Stop/Nasal/Fricative/Affricate:

/-r+p/- /ar-poŋ/ ‘wall’
/sar-po/ ‘old man’
/zar-po/ ‘friend’
/-r+pʰ-/ /ar-pʰek/ ‘broom’
/kapar-pʰan/ ‘to carry on shoulder’
/bar-pʰun/ ‘to make powder by pressing’
/-r+b-/ /ar-bak/ ‘to embrace’
/par-bip/ ‘to dive’
/zor-bom/ ‘to buy many things’
/-r+t-/ /kor-te/ ‘brother’
/tor-te/ ‘a kind of fruit’
/-r+tʰ-/ /ar-tʰat/ ‘thick’
/sar-tʰe/ ‘village headman’
/-r+d-/ /klir-dap/ ‘morning star’
/ar-di/ ‘weight’
/dor-de/ ‘insufficient’
/-r+k-/ /ar-ki/ ‘noise’
/par-kup/ ‘to keep opposite’
/sar-ku/ ‘umbrella’
/kar-kok/ ‘to sweep’
/-r+m-/ / ar-me/ ‘tail’
/tʰar-mit/ ‘turmeric’
/hor-mu/  ‘goods’

/-r+n-/  /ar-nam/  ‘god’

/zir-nek/  ‘over eating’

/tʰar-nem/  ‘rough’

/-r+h-/  /zir-hu/  ‘vegetable’

/čar-he/  ‘ritual song’

/ar-hup/  ‘load’

/-r+č-/  /a-rčo/  ‘to thank’

/čor-čet/  ‘to cut slightly’

/hor-čot/  ‘a kind of paddy’

/-r+s-/  /par-set/  ‘lying’

/zer-so/  ‘tiny’

/mir-sa/  ‘son-in-law’

xii. Semi vowel + Stop/Nasal/Lateral/:

/-y+p-/  /čoy-po/  ‘will clean’

/-y+pʰ-/  /kay-pʰo/  ‘a kind of hills bamboo’

/-y+d-/  /čay-du/  ‘wife’s sister’s husband’

/-y+k-/  /zoy+ke/  ‘easy’
3.2.4.2.2. Three Consonant Sequences:

A very small number of three consonant sequences occur only in the medial position. The first member is either a voiceless stop or a nasal. The second member in a -CCC- structure is usually a stop. The third member is always a trill and lateral.

/-t+pl/- /totplak/ ‘sit alone’
/-m+pl/- /plimplam/ ‘a kind of fruit’
/-ŋ+tʰr/- /banjʰrok/ ‘six persons’
/-ŋ+pr/- /inprim/ ‘needle’
/-p+pʰl/- /zappʰlak/ ‘to open door by wind’
/-t+pʰl/- /atpʰlot/ ‘to slip off from hand’

From the above discussion on various consonant clusters and sequence, it becomes clear that Karbi is very rich as far as the medial two consonant sequences are concerned. In fact, medial sequences that could occur in this language are highest in number, followed by initial and medial clusters.

3.2.4.3. Geminate:

It is a cluster of two identical adjacent segments of a sound in a single morpheme. In Karbi, unaspirated stops and nasals form geminates. Geminate occurs only in the medial position in Karbi. Consider the following examples:

/-pp/- /zappur/ ‘to blow wind’
3.3. Syllable:

Given below are the different types of syllabic patterns that we have found in Karbi language.
3.3.1. Mono-syllabic Words:

Mono-syllabic Open Word: There are five types of open mono syllabic in Karbi viz. v, cv, ccv, cvv and ccvv.

i. V /i/ ‘lying as a sleep’
   /e/ ‘to plant’
   /u/ ‘to rise (head)’

ii. VV: /oi/ ‘yes’

iii. CV /me/ ‘fire’
   /ti/ ‘egg’
   /bi/ ‘keep’

iv. CCV /phli/ ‘four’
   /kre/ ‘ten’

v. CVV: /boi/ ‘strength’
   /soi/ ‘to cut’
   /pei/ ‘mother’

vi. CCVV: /prai/ ‘opposing by several persons’
   /kroi/ ‘to obey’
**Mono-syllabic Closed Word:** There are three types of closed mono syllabic in Karbi, viz. vc, cvc, ccvc.

i. VC

- /is/ ‘trouble’
- /ik/ ‘brother’
- /ok/ ‘flesh’
- /et/ ‘yellow’
- /un/ ‘able’
- /an/ ‘rice’
- /en/ ‘to take’

ii. CVC

- /zop/ ‘decrease’
- /waŋ/ ‘come’
- /dam/ ‘to go’
- /par/ ‘to cross’

iii. CCVC

- /klem/ ‘work’
- /tʰrok/ ‘six’

3.3.2. Disyllabic Word:

**Disyllabic Open Word:** There are seven open disyllabic in Karbi viz., vcv, cvcv, vcvv, cvcvv, ccvcv, cvvcv and cvccvv: The dash stands for syllable division.
i. VCV  
/a-do/ ‘crime’
/i-de/ ‘tongue’

ii. VCVV:  
/a-hai/ ‘blessing’
/a-bui/ ‘heap of everything’

iii. CVCV  
/me-me/ ‘bad’
/kɛ-tɛ/ ‘big’
/ke-me/ ‘good’

iv. CVCVV:  
/do-kai/ ‘to take by force’
/niŋ-oi/ ‘sad’
/baŋ-oi/ ‘come’

v. CCVCV  
/kre-pho/ ‘fifty’

vi. CVV:CV  
/mai-ču/ ‘a kind of paddy’
/rui-pi/ ‘python’

vii. CVCCVV:  
/pa-kroi/ ‘trust’
/hem-ai/ ‘blacksmith’

**Disyllabic Closed Words:** There are eight types of closed disyllabic structure in Karbi, viz., veve, veeve, vv:eve, evve, cveve, eveve, evveve, evv:evc and evv:evc.

i. VCVC  
/o-tan/ ‘to keep down’
/e-peŋ/ ‘one bundle’
ii. VCCVC  /aŋ-tɔŋ/  ‘echo’

/et-sot/  ‘very yellow’

/ɔt-rəŋ/  ‘about to hold’

iii. VV:CVC  /oi-pik/  ‘very sad’

/ai-ret/  ‘a kind of paddy’

iv. CVVC  /pʰu-əŋ/  ‘tree leave becoming old’

/pa-ik/  ‘empty’

v. CVCVC  /do-hup/  ‘excess’

/pe-nan/  ‘husband’

vi. CVCCVC  /pa-krep/  ‘ask to fall down’

/le-tlot/  ‘become instable’

vii. VCCCCVC  /ek-plir/  ‘separate’

/ot-plot/  ‘to slip from hand’

viii. CVVCVC  /soi-čet/  ‘talkative’

/doj-pet/  ‘sacrifice’

3.3.3. Trisyllabic Words:

**Trisyllabic Open Word:** - There are seven types of open trisyllabic in Karbi viz. vcv,cv, vcv,cv, cv,cv, cv,cv,cv, cv,cv,cv, cv,cv,cv, cv,cv,cv.

i. VCVCV  /a-di-či/  ‘habit’
/u-če-pi/ ‘female priest’

ii. VCCVCCV /ok-san-ti/ ‘sand fish’
/a-klim-so/ ‘baby’

iii. VCVCCV /a-taŋ-ka/ ‘some money’
/ok-zAŋ-ni/ ‘become weak’

iv. CVVCVCV /če-ke-du/ ‘to jump down’
/ka-pa-tu/ ‘act of hiding’
/če-ma-ni/ ‘to drink’
/ha-la-pu/ ‘that way’

v. CVVCVCV /pa-roŋ-ro/ ‘play’
/phe-raŋ-ke/ ‘messenger’

vi. CVCCVCV /meŋ-ka-lu/ ‘cat’
/sar-ba-sa/ ‘village headman’

vii. CVCCVVVCV /čeŋ-bai-ko/ ‘drum’
/laŋ-roi-pi/ ‘big river’

**Trisyllabic Closed Word:** There are seven types of closed trisyllabic in Karbi viz. cvecevc, Cvecevc, Cveceve, Ceveve, Vevec, Vevec, veveceve.

i. CVVCVCV /če-ba-rat/ ‘to divide’
/ka-če-lar/ ‘barter’
ii. CVCVCCVC  /čo-man-kan/ ‘a type of dance’
   /ke-paŋ-bar/ ‘to ask’

iii. CVCCVCVC  /nam-pi-lar/ ‘a kind of grass’
   /paŋ-nek-er/ ‘smiling’

iv. CCVCVCVC  /kre-ke-tʰon/ ‘thirteen’

v. VCVCVC  /a-la-duŋ/ ‘rhythmic song’
   /a-we-det/ ‘absent’

vi. VCVCCVC  /o-kar-zaŋ/ ‘girl’
   /o-kaŋ-bup/ ‘departed’

vii. VCVCCCVC  /a-dap-praŋ/ ‘early morning’
   /u-tok-klor/ ‘a kind of bird’

3.3.4. Tetra-syllabic Words:

Four Syllabic Open Words: - There are nine types of open tetra-syllabic in Karbi, viz.

i. VCCVCCCVVV:  /am-ren-so-bai/ ‘a kind of creeper’

ii. VCVCVCCV   /o-kʰi-zok-lu/ ‘a kind of deer’

iii. CVVCVCCV   /ka-pa-ri-so/ ‘adolescent’
   /če-pa-či-ni/ ‘introduce oneself’

iv. CVCVCVCCV  /če-pa-lam-so/ ‘to murmur’
/čo-pi-loŋ-thu/ ‘wild onions’

v. CVCCVCCVCV /har-loŋ-lo-ru/ ‘a kind of creeper’

vi. CVCCVCCVCCV /niŋ-zem-manŋ-hu/ ‘false saying’

/hem-tŋur-lanŋ-no/ ‘funeral’

vii. CVV:CVCCVCV /čai-kenŋ-ke-mo/ ‘a kind of fern’

viii. CVCCVCVCCV /čam-bu-ruk-so/ ‘evil spirit’

ix. CVCVV:CVVV: /če-koi-se-roi/ ‘to suspect’

Four Syllabic is Closed: There are seven types of closed tetra-syllables in Karbi viz.

i. VCVCVCCVC /o-ki-ram-pak/ ‘a kind of deer’

ii. CVVCVCCVCCVC /bi-rik-zanŋ-kek/ ‘a kind chili’

/ka-čar-čim-rap/ ‘falling drop by drop’

iii. CVVCVCCVVC /ka-če-rok-tok/ ‘seriousness’

/čo-pi-liŋ-hep/ ‘a kind of insect’

/hi-pi-mar-lanŋ/ ‘wild brinjal’

iv. CVVCVCCVCVC /če-rin-ti-pet/ ‘co-operation’

v. CVVCVCCVC /če-he-lo-bor/ ‘a kind of insect’

/ka-pa-če-rap/ ‘adhesion’

vi. CVCCVCCVCCVC /če-klanŋ-lem-det/ ‘appear again and again’

vii. CVCCVCCVCCVC /čiŋ-nan-lo-ban/ ‘a kind of tree’
3.3.5. Penta-syllabic Words: The penta syllabic word is very rare in Karbi. Some of them that come across in our study are given below:

Five Syllable is Open:

i. CVCCVCVCCVCV /kor-lo-boŋ-ke-tʰe/ ‘a kind of tree’

Five Syllables is Closed

i. CVCCVCCVCCVCV /saŋ-tet-čo-en-dam/ ‘expiry date’

iii. CVCCVCCVCCVCV /ni-ka-če-ber-tʰip/ ‘suppressing deeply’

iv. CVCCVCCVCCVCV /čoŋ-ho-prok-se-nok/ ‘a kind toad’

3.3.6. Syllable Initially:

As far as the syllable initial sounds are concerned with the exception of /ŋ, w, y/, all the consonantal phonemes can occur in a word in the initial position. This are listed below along with examples:

/p/ /pak/ ‘a kind of tree’

/pe/ ‘cloth’

/pʰ/ /pʰak/ ‘pig’

/pʰu/ ‘head’

/b/ /bi/ ‘goat’

/biʰi/ ‘betel leaf’

/t/ /talo/ ‘ocean’
| /teke/  | ‘tiger’          |
| /tʰ/   | /tʰarmit/ ‘turmeric’ |
| /tʰ/   | /tʰarwe/ ‘mango’   |
| /d/    | /duk/ ‘poor’       |
| /dam/  | ‘to go’           |
| /k/    | /kerot/ ‘to cut’   |
| /klem/ | ‘to work’         |
| /kʰ/   | /kʰat/ ‘character’ |
| /kʰ/   | /kʰei/ ‘race’      |
| /s/    | /sok/ ‘paddy’      |
| /so/   | ‘be hot’          |
| /z/    | /zun/ ‘drink’      |
| /zen/  | ‘thread’          |
| /č/    | /čini/ ‘to know’   |
| /č/    | /čo/ ‘to eat’      |
| /m/    | /men/ ‘name’       |
| /mu/   | ‘seed’            |
| /n/    | /niŋ/ ‘heart’      |
| /n/    | /naŋ/ ‘you’        |
3.4. Supra Segmental:

3.4.1. Tone:

Tones are prominent in Karbi which play a very important role in varying the meaning of a word. Tones are the supra-segmental features in Karbi. Karbi has two registered tones, high, low. The level tone is unmarked. Like the other Tibeto-Burman languages, tone plays a significant role.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Karbi Tone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/h/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/han/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/raze/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/riso/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/lam/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/lun/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. 7 (Tone)
The following are the words used to establish tones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/bi/</td>
<td>‘goat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/bi/</td>
<td>‘to keep’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/bi/</td>
<td>‘small’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ti/</td>
<td>‘egg’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ti/</td>
<td>‘to clean’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ti/</td>
<td>‘packet’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/me/</td>
<td>‘fire’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/me/</td>
<td>‘sister’s husband’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/me/</td>
<td>‘good’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pi/</td>
<td>‘what’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pi/</td>
<td>‘to give’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pi/</td>
<td>‘a piece of cloth used to carry child at the back’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pʰi/</td>
<td>‘to bear fruit’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pʰi/</td>
<td>‘to burn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/pʰi/</td>
<td>‘grandmother’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ri/</td>
<td>‘hand’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ri/</td>
<td>‘rope’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ri/</td>
<td>‘search’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5. Morphophonemics:

Morphophonemic refer to the analysis and classification of the phonological factors which affect the appearance of morphemes or correspondingly, the grammatical factor which affects the appearance of phonemes. The morphophonemic rules of Karbi are presented below.

3.5.1. Voicing Assimilation:

If a morpheme ends in a voiceless stop and the following morpheme begins with a voiced consonant then the voiceless becomes voiced.
/dop/ ‘packet’        /dop +ni/ → /dobni/ ‘two packets’
packet+Num.

/waŋet/‘come’       /waŋet + ma/ → /waŋedma/ ‘has come?’
come + Intr.

/ap/ ‘shoot’         /ap + non/ → /abnon/ ‘you shoot’
shoot+Imp.

/ap/ ‘shoot’         /ap + ri/ → /abri/ ‘don’t shoot’
shoot+Neg.

3.5.2. Aspiration:

When the numeral marker or numeral is added to noun root that ends with unaspirated sound becomes aspirated. The application of this rule is illustrated in the following example.

/lek  +  i+zir/ → /lekʰizir/ ‘a small necklace’
necklace + Num.+Clf.

/nuk  +  isi/ → /nukʰisi/ ‘one horn’
horn + Num.

/marat  +  ni/ → /maratʰni/ ‘two animals’
animal + Num.
3.5.3. Consonant Deletion:

If the final consonant of the preceding morpheme and the first consonant of the following morpheme are identical, one of the identical consonants is optionally dropped.

\[ /\text{waŋwer} - \text{ri/} \rightarrow /\text{waŋweri/} \text{ ‘don’t come’} \]

\[ \text{come +Neg.} \]

\[ /\text{arzap} - \text{po/} \rightarrow /\text{arzapo/} \text{ ‘will stand’} \]

\[ \text{stand + S.Fut.} \]

3.5.4. Vowel Deletion:

When a morpheme beginning with the vowel /i/ and if /a-, ka-/ prefixed, then the first vowel of the following morpheme is dropped.

\[ /\text{iŋloŋ}/ \rightarrow /\text{aŋloŋ}/ \text{ ‘of hill’} \]

Poss.+hill

\[ /\text{iŋsam/} \rightarrow /\text{kaŋsam/} \text{ ‘feeling cold’} \]

Adj.Pref.+cold

Sometimes when possessive case marker /a/ is added between two nouns to give a new related meaning, this case marker is dropped automatically.

\[ /\text{sok +a+puru/} \rightarrow /\text{sokpuru/} \text{ ‘granary’} \]

\[ \text{rice +Poss. + building} \]
3.5.5. Syllable Deletion:

Some words are formed by dropping one or two syllables. It happens when the last word is disyllabic. In that case, the first syllable of the disyllabic word gets dropped.

/silk + Poss. + cover/

\[
/honki+a+hom/ \rightarrow /honkihom/ \quad \text{‘cocoon’}
\]

\[
/mir+kardon/ \rightarrow /mirdon/ \quad \text{‘an orchid flower’}
\]

flower + mount

\[
/mek + awe/ \rightarrow /mekwe/ \quad \text{‘blind’}
\]

eye + no

\[
/pini + niŋwe/ \rightarrow /piniŋwe/ \quad \text{‘tonight’}
\]

today+night

\[
/dim+kerap/ \rightarrow /dimrap/ \quad \text{‘post position’}
\]

place+help

\[
/dim+awe/ \rightarrow /dimwe/ \quad \text{‘no place’}
\]

place+no

\[
/ren + hini/ \rightarrow /renni/ \quad \text{‘double lines’}
\]

line+Num.
In some cases, the first syllable of first word and first syllable of second word are deleted. Consider the following examples:

/arni + atur/ → /nitur/ ‘sunlight
sun + ray

/arłoŋ+aplak/ → /loŋplak/ ‘broad or flat sized stone’
stone+flat

/arłoŋ+kereŋ/ → /loŋreŋ/ ‘solid rock’
stone+alive

/keza+abaŋ/ → /zabaŋ/ ‘one who leads’
lead+Clf

3.5.6. Addition of Vowel:

The addition of vowels is found in all positions of a word (i.e. initial, medial and final position). The function of the vowel addition process is to break up consonant cluster for simplifying the syllable structure of the language.

a. *Prosthesis:* It is the addition of vowel in the word initial position to remove the initial cluster.
It must be noted here that the phonemes /g/, /gh/, /bh/ and /dh/ occur only in borrowed words, never in native Karbi words. For example, /gakhir/ ‘milk, /gyani/ ‘wise person, /bogori/ ‘a fruit, /bhag/ ‘share, /ghori/ ‘clock’, /ghonti/ ‘bell’, /ghiu/ ‘ghee’, /dhila/ ‘become loose’ /dhubi/ ‘washerman/ /dhuni/ ‘rich’ /adh/ ‘half’

The above mentioned words have been borrowed from Assamese. Hence, we are not showing these four phonemes separately in the inventory of Karbi consonants. The other reason is that minimal pairs for these borrowed phonemes are also not available. Therefore, it seems that Karbi has not nativized these phonemes. They remain only as distinct sounds.

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