1.1. Aim and scope

This study makes a contrastive analysis of English and Dimasa phonology in a Generative framework. Dimasa is the mother tongue of the Dimasa Kachari tribal people of Assam and the present study aims at comparing the phonological pattern of Dimasa with that of English. The study compares segments across languages and in conformity with the principles of Generative phonology this comparison is done primarily at the abstract level. In order to make the contrastive study all comprehensive this study first discusses in details the systematic phonemic representations of the sound segments of Dimasa and English and then undertakes a contrastive analysis of the two languages in the light of the definitions of the Generative phonological descriptions.

So far as English is concerned there is no dearth of phonological literature. But as Dimasa has never been studied scientifically no phonological description of Dimasa is available. To overcome this limitation this study devotes a chapter on the Taxonomic phonology of Dimasa. It is assumed that a discussion on the Generative phonology of Dimasa will be more poignant when preceded by a Taxonomic description. This study on Dimasa phonology is the first of its kind and the theory of the sound structure of Dimasa included in this thesis is a new addition to phonological literature.
A discussion on the principles of Generative phonology and their suitability for a contrastive analysis of English and Dimasa phonology are also included in this study. The theoretical framework underlying Generative phonology owes its development primarily to Chomsky and Halle. Existing literatures on the contrastive analysis of English phonology and the phonology of other languages are generally concerned with Taxonomic phonology. A contrastive analysis on a Generative model is likely to perform a better explanatory function than a study on Taxonomic model. Here we may have identical feature specifications for segments in both the languages under study though they may not be phonetically implemented in the same way. Hence the present contrastive study is a departure from the conventional way of comparing two languages. It is assumed that this contrastive analysis of English and Dimasa phonological patterns would be of great help in diagnosing and solving Dimasa students' problems due to their mothertongue interference.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic of discussion, gives an account of the Dimasa, their geographical distribution and reviews the origin and status of the Dimasa language, the question of script and the future of the language and the extent of literature in the language — both oral and written. The second chapter discusses very briefly the principles of Generative phonology and justifies the suitability of this approach for a contrastive analysis of English and Dimasa phonology. The third chapter provides a description of the sound segments of English and their structural organization from the point of view of Generative phonology. The fourth chapter
discusses the Taxonomic phonology of Dimasa while the fifth chapter
analyzes Dimasa sound segments, segmental sequences and the structural
organization of these sound segments from the point of view of Generative
phonology. The sixth chapter takes into account the similarities and
dissimilarities between English and Dimasa phonology from the point of
view of Generative model.

1.2. Contrastive analysis

Contrastive analysis compares the structures of two languages
and finds out the areas of similarities and dissimilarities. The
contrastive analysis at the phonological level is based on the hypothesis
that the sound pattern of the native language of the learner (hereafter
$L_1$) is likely to adversely affect his acquisition of the sound pattern
of the target language (hereafter $L_2$), since he tends to transfer the
$L_1$ system to $L_2$ — both while trying to understand an utterance in $L_2$
and also while trying to express himself in $L_2$. According to Lado
(1957):

Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings,
and the distribution of forms and meanings of their
native language and culture to the foreign language
and culture, both productively when attempting to
speak the language ...... and receptively when attempting
to grasp and understand the language .... ... as practiced
by natives.

Lado further thinks that the key to ease the difficulty in $L_2$
learning lies in the comparison between $L_1$ and $L_2$. Emphasizing the
need for remedial work in L₂ teaching Fries (1945) suggests that the most effective remedial work is that which is based on "the scientific description of the language of the learned and carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner."¹

Regarding the suitability and usefulness of contrastive analysis, linguists and language teachers are generally divided in three groups. As stated above Lado and others⁵ maintain that contrastive analysis leads to finding out the problem areas in second or foreign language learning and the results of contrastive analysis must be taken into consideration for predicting the trouble spots of an L₂ learner. Moreover, they think that the insights derived from a contrastive analysis must be given due weight in the preparation of teaching materials for L₂ learners. Another group led by Catford (1968)⁷ thinks that contrastive analysis has no predictive value, it has merely an explanatory role in language teaching as the results of error analysis may be explained in terms of contrastive analysis. The third group led by Lee (1963)⁸ maintains that contrastive analysis has at best a marginal role in language teaching as it fails in accurately predicting all areas of difficulty in a language learning situation and cannot contain all errors of an L₂ learner.

It has become academically fashionable nowadays to question the pedagogical usefulness of contrastive analysis. There is also a tendency among second or foreign language specialists to dismiss contrastive analysis as entirely useless. Hesmy and Reibel (1968)⁹ claim that ignorance of L₂ patterns and not L₁ interference is the real cause of
errors that the \( L_2 \) learner makes. But the argument put forward by Newman and Reibel is not tenable. In a second language teaching situation the teacher induces his pupil to perform in the target language only when he has taught that bit of the language which he wants his pupil to use and hence the question of ignorance cannot be the 'real cause'. Moreover, New mark and Reibel do not give an alternative explanation to the theory of \( L_1 \) interference. It is also an established fact that a learner fails to perform correctly in the target language even when he is being taught how to perform in \( L_1 \).

Regarding the predictive value of contrastive analysis it is of course, a fact that the predictions of contrastive analysis are not always accurate at the syntactic level. But the predictions of contrastive analysis are by and large correct at the phonological level. It has been noticed that at the syntactic level choices are available to the learner when he tries to perform in the target language whereas there is hardly any choice available to him at the phonological level. Therefore, whereas the learner can successfully avoid using the syntactic pattern that he does not know well, he cannot, in a very large number of situations avoid using the sound segment or sound patterns while performing in the target language.

1.3. Mihas speech community

The Mihas, popularly known as Hill Kacharis, are the inhabitants of North Cachar Hills District, Karbi Anglong, Cachar and Sowkum. .
districts of Assam and the Dhansiri region of Nagaland. They belong to the Boro group of speech community which is scattered all over Assam, Arunachal, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, West Bengal and north eastern region of Bangladesh. The highest concentration of the Dimasa is in the autonomous district of North Cachar Hills where they constitute more than 40% of the total population of the district. According to the Census of India, 1971, there are 52,552 Dimasa speakers in North Cachar Hills and Cachar Districts of Assam. The actual number of Dimasa living in other districts of Assam is not available as the Dimasa of those areas are often recorded as Assamese. But a considerable number of Dimasa scholars and public leaders maintain that the total number of people who speak Dimasa as their first language will not be less than one lakh.

According to the Census of Assam, 1951, the speakers of the Boro group of languages were estimated at about four lakhs and sixty six thousand. Of this figure Boro speakers excluding the Dimasas and the Meches were estimated at about one lakh and seventy thousand. With regard to this census enumeration we may say that the claim that the Dimasa speakers in 1983 are not less than one lakh is quite justified. Most of the Dimasas are bilinguals—they speak either Assamese or Bengali just outside the jurisdiction of their family. The bilingualism among the Dimasas often misleads census enumerators who fail to record the actual number of Dimasas correctly.

Till 1961 the Dimasa was treated as a subtribe of the Kachari tribe. In 1961 Census they were grouped as a separate tribe. They are
listed in a special schedule issued by the Government of India and thereby they became entitled to special Government protection and constitutional benefits.

1.3.1 Historical background

No historical record is available regarding the place of origin and the route of migration of the Dimasas. The Dimasas of North Cachar Hills believe that they once ruled in ancient Kamrupa and the Dimasa royal family traced its descent from the rulers of Kamrupa. But this tradition has no historical basis. From the beginning of the thirteenth century, references of the Dimasas are found in the history of Assam. According to Gait (1905), in the thirteenth century the Dimasa kingdom extended along the south bank of the Brahmaputra, from the Dikhu to the Kallang river and included the Dhanisiri valley of present Nagaland and the North Cachar Region of Assam. The Dimasas ruled this territory for sometime with the capital at Dimapur on the bank of the Dhanisiri river. The archaeological remains at Dimapur bear ample evidence of their royal grandeur. The ruins also prove that the Dimasas had attained a level of civilization considerably in advance of that of the Ahoms. During the early part of the sixteenth century the Dimasas and the Ahoms had a prolonged vendetta and in 1536 the Dimasas being defeated left the Dhanisiri valley and Dimapur (now in Nagaland). A new capital was established at Haibang in the North Cachar Hills. But the Dimasas could not live in peace at Haibang. A lethal assault from the king of Hoangia compelled the Dimasa King Dharmadhwaś to shift his capital to the
plains of Cachar around 1750 A.D. Khampur near Silchar in Cachar became the new capital of the Dimasa. After the death of the Dimasa King Gobindachandra in 1826, the Dimasa kingdom barring the hilly tract of North cachar Hills came under the British occupation in 1832. The Dimasas in the hilly region enjoyed freedom till 1854 under the rule of a Dimasa Chieftain Tularam. After the death of Tularam in 1854 the remaining portion of the Dimasa kingdom was annexed by the British with the district of Nowgong in Assam.

1.3.2. Social background

The Dimasas are economically and socially very backward. In their social behaviour, a non-Dimasa is almost an untouchable. Eating, drinking or living under the same roof with other people is a taboo. Due to their traditional conservative outlook a Dimasa in fear of pollution always keeps himself in his shell. In recent years, of course, due to the spread of urban influence, education and market economy the Dimasas are gradually coming in greater contact with other people and the Dimasa way of life is fast changing.

1.1. Dimasa -- the language

According to the classification given in the 'Linguistic Survey of India' Dimasa belongs to the Boro sub-section of Boro-Naga section under the Assam Burma group of the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan speech family. (See Table 1). To quote from 'The Linguistic Survey of India'.

"What is called the hill dialect of Kachari is spoken in the North Kachar Hills and in a small tract in the south of Howgong. This is commonly said to be a dialect of Bora, or at least it is contended that the two are common dialects of one language. No doubt, at one time these two speeches were identical, but in the course of centuries, they have developed on such different lines that I prefer to call Hill Kachari, or as its speakers call themselves, Dimasa, the language of the people of the great river, a separate language of the Bodo group."17

Table - 18

Sino-Tibetan Speech family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tibetan-Burman</th>
<th>Sino-Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tibetan</td>
<td>Himalayan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boro-Naga</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boro</td>
<td>Naga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boro</td>
<td>Dimasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garo</td>
<td>Lalung</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Shafer (1955), Dimasa belongs to the Western branch of the Barish section under Baric division of the Sino-Tibetan family (See Table 2 that follows).

Table - 2
Sino-Tibetan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sinitic</th>
<th>Hanic</th>
<th>Daic</th>
<th>Bodic</th>
<th>Baranic</th>
<th>Karenic</th>
<th>Baric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North central</td>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>South Central</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moran</td>
<td>Lelung</td>
<td>Bodo (Boro)</td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Dimasa</td>
<td>Bodgi</td>
<td>Nggama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Robin Burlinga (1955) has divided the Boro group of languages into three sub-groups: (1) Koch, (2) Garo and (3) Bodo proper and maintains that Dimasa belongs to the Bodo Proper group. (See Table - 3 given below):

Table - 3
Proto-Bodo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Koch</th>
<th>Garo</th>
<th>Bodo Proper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Dimasa</td>
<td>Kachari</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is estimated that Dimasa branched off from the ancestral common language about one thousand years back. In its present form it is completely different from Boro spoken in the districts of Sualkhasi, Darrang and Kamrup of Assam though from the point of view of history, tradition and culture there is a large number of common characteristics between the Dimasa and the Boro. Endge (1911) says, "Inter-marriage between the two races (the Dimasas and the Boro) is apparently quite unknown, indeed, the barrier of language would of itself probably go far to prevent such inter-marriage for although the two languages (Dimasa and Boro) have much in common, yet in their modern form they differ from each other nearly as much as Italian does from Spanish and members of the two sections of the race meeting each other for the first time would almost certainly fail to understand each other's speech."

1.4.1. Area and Dialects

Dimasa has at least three dialects spoken in the entire Dimasa speaking region of Assam. They are as follows: (a) The hill dialect covers the two autonomous hill districts of North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong. These regions are adjoining areas constituting a solid block and the data for the present study have been collected from this dialect area. This dialect is spoken by the largest number of the Dimasa and books and journals are also published in this dialect. (b) The plains dialect is spoken in the plains of Cachar. Numerically the speakers of this dialect are in minority though this dialect is used by the All India Radio in its Dimasa broadcasts. (c) The Hojai dialect is spoken in the Nowgong district. The Dimasas living in and around of Hojai and Lanka towns of the district of Nowgong speak this variety.
lexical items of this dialect are heavily borrowed from Assamese.

There are sub-dialectal differences in the hill dialect. Dimasa as spoken by the educated average speakers of the community at important places like Haflong, Haibang and Mphiu has been taken as the standard form of this language. It may be pointed out that the hill dialect and the Burman dialect are the two contenders for the position of the standard variety of this language. The process of standardization has been working in Dimasa and it is likely to evolve an acceptable standard form eventually.

1.4.2. Script

It is a matter of conjecture if Dimasa had a script of its own. It is claimed that in ancient time a kind of Deodhai script was used by the Dimasa and the Boros. But this claim is based on tradition and seems to lack any historical truth in it.

An inscription on the Shiva temple erected by a Dimasa queen at Khaspur, the last Dimasa capital in Cachar, in 1799 is written in Assamese script and it is argued that the Assamese script was in vogue among the Dimasa but they gave up the use of the Assamese script and accepted the Bengali script when they came into contact with the Bengali speaking people of Cachar and its neighbouring areas.

Till 1979 Dimasa was generally written in the Bengali script in Cachar and North Cachar Hills districts. With the publication of a
monthly news journal 'Waimijing' in 1979 the Dimasa of H.C. Hill opted for the Roman script. At present the Dimasa use three scripts for their language. In Nongpong and Karbi Anglong districts the script is Assamese, in Cachar it is Bengali and in North Cachar Hills it is both Roman and Bengali. 'Dimasa Jalairumi Moshom' and 'Dimasa National Organisation' have been trying to evolve a common acceptable script for all the Dimasa speaking regions.

1.4.3 Official status of the language

Dimasa is a recognised tribal language of Assam. The Assam Public Service Commission holds a departmental language proficiency examination in Dimasa. The language is used by the Silchar Station of All India Radio. Both the State and the Central Government publicity departments publish materials in Dimasa. Village Councils of the Dimasa speaking areas issue official circulars in Dimasa. But Dimasa has not yet been introduced in the primary level. Right from his primary level a Dimasa learner is taught either Bengali or English. There is a strong public demand for the introduction of Dimasa in the primary level. During the field work it was noticed that while teaching Bengali in primary classes even a Bengali teacher has to use Dimasa in teaching Bengali. Thus though not yet recognised as a language to be used in the schools the spoken variety of Dimasa is used in schools where Dimasa speaking learners are in majority. The percentage of literacy among the Dimasa could be increased if Dimasa were recognised as the medium of instruction in the primary level.
Dinaasa thinkers and leaders are seized of the problem and Dinaasa is likely to get its due position in the educational institutions in near future. There are, of course, some wrong notions regarding the suitability of tribal languages as medium of instructions. Many educated persons and officials in charge of education at various levels even wonder if the minority languages spoken by small tribal groups are suitable for becoming the medium of instruction even at the primary level.

These people forget that no language in the world is inadequate to fulfill the needs of elementary education. From the linguistic point of view Dinaasa can successfully act as the vehicle of modern civilization. Chatterjee (1967) rightly remarks, "--- in matters of providing an elementary education to Tibeto-Burman speech communities, the claim for using the mother tongue of the pupil, which is psychologically and pedagogically the ideal choice, cannot be disowned on the false pretext of structural inadequacy, lack of grammar and absence of orthography". 29

The Constitution of India also directs every state and local authorities to extend facilities for instruction in mother tongue at the primary stage. The Article 350 A. states, "It shall be the endeavour of every state and of every local authority within the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups; and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities". 30
1.5. Extent of Literature in Dimasa

The Dimasa literature consists of a vast amount of oral literature including folk songs, folktales, ballads, idioms, proverbs, and of an increasing number of published books and periodicals written in Bengali and Roman scripts.

Dimasa folk songs are simple yet suggestive, they use ordinary words used in day to day life of the community but the symphony and the imagery created by these simple words appeal to the innermost recesses of the singer's as well as the listener's hearts. The versification is simple yet the total effect is profound. Dimasa folk songs may be classified into (1) Seasonal songs, (2) Love songs, (3) Lamentation songs and (4) Cradle songs.

Poetry books like 'Dimasa Dingyang Safonang' by Shri J.C. Thaosen and 'Dima Zirikia' by Shri Romesh Thaosen possess high literary value. Both the books are published in Bengali script. Short stories and articles are regularly published in various magazines. Annual souvenirs of 'Dimasa Jugakoobu', a Dimasa Youth Organisation, contain creative writings rich in literary values. Those souvenirs contain articles written in both Bengali and Roman scripts. Christian missionaries have also published a book of psalms in the Roman script. Books meant for primary classes were published by Asam Publication Board in 1976 though the books are not yet used in the schools. These text books were, of course, written in Bengali script.
1.6. Method of data collection

The materials analyzed in this study on Dinama were collected from a selected number of speakers hailing from Haflong and Haibang areas of North Cachar Hills. The materials were generally collected from the informants through direct method. In some cases speeches of these informants were recorded with the help of a tape recorder and were analyzed later. The investigator had long sittings with his informants and the materials were checked and rechecked, for which also a tape recorder was pressed into service on a number of occasions. The responses of the informants were always transcribed phonetically in their presence and were reproduced by the investigator to find out if the informants accepted the utterances as natural. After collecting the materials they were analyzed both on the models of the Taxonomic phonology and the Generative phonology.

1.6.1. Informants: their bio-data

(1) Shri Romesh Theosen, aged 25, an M.A. student of the University of Guwahati, was the chief informant. He was born in a village near Haibang but spent his school and college days at Haflong. Unlike Dinama, he knows Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, English and Nepali. He has published a poetry book in Dinama and has contributed a few articles in Dinama journals.

(2) Shri Pabitra Kemprai, aged 35, Judge, North Cachar Hill District Council, was another enthusiastic informant. He is a young intellectual born and brought up at Haflong. Besides Dinama, he speaks fluently Assamese, Bengali, Hindi and English.
(3) Shri Prasanna Langthasa of Habdilangting village near Hailang also helped the present researcher as an informant. He is about 40 years old and lives at Habdilangting permanently.

(4) Shrimati Molon Thosen of Haflong was one of the two female informants. She was born and brought up at Dibrui, Haflong. Besides Dimasa, she can speak Bengali and Hindi. She read upto class X at a Bengali medium High school.

(5) Shrimati Molina Hakaoua, a B.A. student of Haflong Government College was an informant from the very beginning of the present research work. She hails from Haflong and has a keen aptitude for language and literature. Besides Dimasa, she can speak English and Hindi. She never read Bengali in her school days and cannot speak Assamese or Bengali.

All the informants except Shri Prasanna Langthasa were bilinguals. But all of them use Dimasa while communicating with the members of their own community. All the informants had thorough knowledge of their mother tongue, Dimasa culture, tradition and society.

1.7. Relevance of the study

This contrastive analysis of English and Dimasa phonology is significant from the point of view of theoretical importance as well as practical utility. Few linguists have undertaken the study of minority languages of India in the framework of Generative phonology. This study points out the unexplored field and indicates the scope of further research in the field of Tibeto-Burman linguistics, particularly phonology, and language typology in general. The discussions on the underlying
phonemes of Dinasa after an examination of the surface contrasts and the setting up of the distinctive features necessary for capturing systematic contrasts and phonological processes are great from the theoretical point of view. The study is relevant to the latest trend in modern linguistics as it tries to use the Generative model in analysing the phonological processes of an apparently little known language.

India has a tribal population of about forty million and the language education of these tribals faces complex problems due to the existence of numerous tribal tongues. Regarding language education, tribal learners of the Dinasa community are at a disadvantage as the regional language through which they are taught is often a second or a third language for them and consequently English becomes a third or fourth language for them.

The learning of English in India is no more a privilege of the rich and the elite. It has to be taught effectively to the pupils coming from poor and culturally deprived sections of the society. In the United States of America a great deal of valuable work has been done in teaching English to the disadvantaged ethnic minorities but in India no special effort has been made to devise a strategy for teaching English to the disadvantaged tribal pupils. In order to make our BLP situation relevant to the needs of our underprivileged tribal learners we should make a departure from our traditional elitist methodology. Special text books should be written and new teaching methods should be devised to suit our tribal learners whose specific problems need specific solutions.
As already stated in Sec. 1.1., this contrastive analysis will provide a blueprint for the development of an effective pedagogy. Thus the present study is not an end in itself; it has a very practical import also.

1.7.1. **English and Dimasa pupils**

The motivation to learn English is very high among the tribal people of the North-eastern region of India. Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim governments have adopted English as the official language of their respective states or union territories. It is the sole medium of instruction at all stages of teaching in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim and in other states and union territories it is the medium of instruction at the post-primary level. In the autonomous district of North Cachar Hills of Assam English is held in high esteem by the numerous tribal people including the Dimasas. In many Dimasa areas English is the medium of instruction in the primary level also. A large number of Dimasa pupils prefer English medium schools to Assamese or Bengali medium schools.

Though there is a strong motivation for learning English the spoken English of the Dimasa pupils is not at all satisfactory. An attempt is made to teach correct pronunciation to these pupils. Moreover, the teachers teaching English to Dimasa pupils lack the knowledge of Dimasa and hence they fail to guide the learners when the problem of mothertongue interference arises. The strong pull of the mothertongue prompts the pupils to speak English in which they speak their mothertongue.
hoped that the findings of the present contrastive analysis of BirjAish and Diaasa will serve as reference materials for the preparation of suitable text books for Diaasa-speaking learners of English.

1.2. NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A small section of the Diaasa lives in the Dhansiri region (near D太原) of Nagaland. The variety of Diaasa spoken by these people is excluded from the purview of the present study.


6. Some recent research in the field of second language learning has shown that the assumption that the linguistic elements of the second language that are similar to those of the first language are easy to learn is not necessarily true. Neisser(1971) tested the predictability of interference phenomenon in the English speech of Hungarian speakers and found that error rates were "far lower than..."
anticipated" and "they were as high in familiar as in unfamiliar contexts". (Hessar, William, "The predictability of interference phenomenon in the English speech of native speakers of Hungarian" in Nickel, Gerhard (ed.). *Papers in Contrastive Linguistics*, Cambridge University Press, 1971).


11. The learner can, however, use lexical items having easily pronounceable sounds. But these are exceptional cases and do not negate our general hypothesis.

12. Census of India, 1971, Assam, Paper 1 of 1971. The population figure is based on the Census report of 1971 as there was no Census in Assam in 1981.

13. Census of India, 1951


18. Though this table is based on Grierson (1903) it is presented in a modified form.


In his discussion on "Proto-Bodo" Burlings does not mention "Bajborok" spoken in Tripura though it is a prominent language of the Tibeto-Burman group and is closely related to Dimasa. (See Chatterjee, Susa. Kaborakbhasar Likhiborupa Utraran (Revising a writing system for Kaborak), Calcutta, 1972, for a criticism of Burlings' Classification.


23. The language of the inscription is Sanskrit though it is written in the Assamese script and not in Devnagari.

25. It is a monthly journal published in Roman script. The journal is edited by Shri Samarjit Thauson and is published from Haflong, North Cachar Hills, Assam. The publication of the journal is temporarily suspended for a year.

26. The choice or selection of a script is bound up with the question of standardization. In the absence of such a standardization the evolution of an acceptable script is rather a grim possibility. In December, 1982 a cultural meet of the Dimasas living in different regions was held at Haflong and the open session of the meet which was attended by various M.L.A.s and M.P.s decided to accept Dimasa as the common script for all the Dimasa speaking regions.

27. The question of the introduction of Dimasa in the primary level is also bound up with the question of standardization.


32. The data for this research work were collected during the winter of 1978 and the summer of 1979. For a final check-up the informants were last contacted during the winter of 1981.


35. Singh, V. D. "English in the North-eastern Hill region of India", in CIEFL Newsletter, Vol. XVI, Nos. 1 & 2, 1980. Singh (1980), of course, does not refer to North Cachar Hills which is also a part of the North-eastern region. There are a number of English medium primary schools in this district and though both Assamese and English are the media of instruction at the college level.
As the only college of this hill district impart instruction through English only. It has also been observed that the tribal students who read Bengali as a Major Indian language at the school level offer Alternative English in lieu of Bengali at the college level.