It is a process whereby short vowels become long in certain environment. In Kom as in Thadou, a neighboring Tibeto-Burman language, vowels lengthen when followed by a sonorant sound. Consider the following examples:

/daː m/ ‘no’
/daː n/ ‘law’
/dɔː n/ ‘attention’

3.9.4. Free variation

Free variation is the non-contrastive alternation between two or more phonemes in the same phonological environment. In Kom, /v/ and /w/ are differentiated in orthography but in spoken form, they are in free variation. The speed and degree of formality in casual speech determine this condition of the two phonemes. The following examples are noted:

/vaɾpa/ ~ /waɾpa/ ‘polestar’
/vɔ k/ ~ /wɔ k/ ‘pig’
/tʰlavat/ ~ /tʰlawat/ ‘moonlight’

CHAPTER 4
VARIATION

4.1 AN INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter, an attempt is being made to analyse the variation pattern of Kom. Depending on geographical location, there is a marked regional variation found in Kom. For
example, Kom spoken in Sagang in Churachanpur District is different from those spoken in Sinamkom and Saikul villages of Senapati District of Manipur. In order to bring out the variation present in the language, the Kom speech community of Manipur has been broadly divided into six geographical areas (shown in Map in Page-180). The present study is conducted in each of the varieties across the Kom speech community, with each speech variety consisting of several villages. A proper description of the varieties under study is presented in the following chapter.

The Kom speech community is the most scattered people of Manipur. Though less in population, they are found in all the Districts of Manipur except in Ukhrul District. Besides, they do not occupy any compact area in the state and as such other communities numerically out-numbered them and they are minority wherever they settled.

The present study is conducted on the Six Regional Varieties that are given below;

1. Mongtung Variety
2. Sinamkom Variety
3. Moirang variety
4. Mantak Variety
5. Sagang Variety
6. Tonsen Variety

Even though the grouping of the speech varieties given above is based on their geographical location, it also partly conforms to the historical lienage of the community. A study on the history of each of the variety indicates that Koms have the tendency to stay together in groups and sub-groups. Not much can be said about the group composition before
their entry into Manipur, but it appears that ever since they entered Manipur, they scattered into sub-groups and occupied the hills and valleys of Manipur. Till date, inter-village migration continues. Yet, every sub-group maintains their distinctive identity. Whenever they migrate and establish a new settlement, they take their village name along with them.

1. Mongtung Variety

The speakers of Mongtung variety are the group who once inhabited the hilly areas of Tamenglong District of Manipur. The main village of Mongtung speakers is Songphel Khullen in Tamenglong, and the erstwhile Hlongching, Mongkotjang, Songphel and Taitak villages in Tamenglong District are said to have been founded by the people who migrated from Songphel Khullen. Besides Songphel Khullen, there were also two villages, viz., Wakotphai in Nagaland, and another village by the name Mongtung in Karbi anglong District of Assam. Of the three villages, Wakotphai is the only village that exists today and the other villages were deserted; people left for better place in the subsequent years and the village does not exist any longer.

It is believed that the village got its name from a man whose name was Mongtung. Surprisingly, there are no more people in the place called Mongtung in Karbi Anglong District of Assam today. It is not known how they disappeared. They probably became extinct due to calamities like epidemics, high mortality rate or were merged with the Kukis or Hmars of the surrounding area.

The present day Saïkul and Makokching villages were founded from the Songphel village of Tamenglong District. And the last group of people who left Songphel village were the ones who settled in Samulamlan village in Sagang area of Churachandpur District where
they still retain their old village name. Makokching and Saikul are the two main villages of Mongtung speakers of Senapati District besides Ichum Keirap. In the present study the speakers of these villages, viz., Makokching, Saikul and Ichum Keirap, are taken as Mongtung variety speaker. Though Mongtung variety is considered as the standard variety of Kom, however, under the present work, they are studied as one of the varieties of Kom.

2. **Sinamkom Variety**

Sinam Kom variety is spoken in the Senapati District of Manipur. However, the area is much nearer to Imphal East District of Manipur. The Distance between Sinamkom Village and Imphal is 15 (Fifteen) Kms. Therefore, the contact between the speakers of this speech variety and Manipuri speakers are much greater due to their geographical proximity. The Speakers of this variety include, Ngakhapat, Lairok, Maibung Kullen and Maibung Likli villages.

3. **Moirang Variety**

The variety of Kom spoken in the Moirang area of Bishenpur District of Manipur is considered as Moirang variety. All the villages starting from Moirang to Kom Keirap is clubbed under Moirang speech variety. The Kom-Keirap (also known as Project, derived from the Loktak hydro-electric project), Khoirentak, Sengpangjar, Kangathei villages are some of the villages speaking the same variety. It is also true that there is a slight variation within this group itself. However, the variation is relatively less to be considered as a separate variety. Moirang variety is closer to the Sinamkom and Mongtung variety. When enquired
from the Mongtung variety speakers about the differences they perceived between their speech and Moirang variety, the differences in ‘the speed’ is being reported. In other words, the speakers of Moirang variety speak faster than the Mongtung speaker. The study reveals that the vocabularies of the two varieties are more or less the same.

4. **Mantak Variety**

Mantak variety is one of the marked varieties of Kom language. It is spoken in the village of Mantak in Chandel District of Manipur. Mantak is one of the oldest Kom villages having around 1000 (one thousand) speakers. It is situated inside the physical boundary of Thoubal District of Manipur. However, they are officially put under the administrative jurisdiction of Chandel District on ethnic ground. It may be mentioned that the state administration placed most of the tribal communities in hill districts for better administrative purpose. Under the Mantak variety, Litan in Chandel District is included. Thikhup also known as Moirang - Mantak can be clubbed under Mantak variety. The accent and vocabulary of Moirang - Mantak is almost the same with Mantak speech of Chandel District. Mantak village of Chandel District is located near Kakching, a Meitei speech community. Hence, it is sometimes known as Kakching- Mantak. This variety has shown high resemblance with Aimol and Koireng languages which are found in the adjacent vicinity. The Mantak variety is unique because it resembles none of the other varieties of Kom.

5. **Sagang Variety**

The Sagang variety is spoken in the Sagang area of Churachandpur District of Manipur. Sagang is considered one of the biggest Kom populated areas of Manipur. Sagang villages are geographically closer to Moirang variety. Sagang Khupui is the oldest village in
this surrounding area of greater Sagang surrounded by various small villages like Lukhumbi, Tuiringphaison, Lungkhur, Theikakbi, Lukhumbi, Malamphai, Khunomphai, Laimam-wangma and others.

6. **Tonsen Variety**

The other variety of Kom spoken in Chandel District of Manipur is Tonsen and Mahou-tera. It shows some unique features that may be considered as separate variety of Kom. There is a slight variation within these two villages, that is, Tonsen and Mahou-tera. However, there is no significant variation in speech between Tonsen and Tonsen Tampak villages as they are in close proximity with each other. This variety has speakers numbering more than 1000 (one thousand). This variety is closer to Sagang variety.

### 4.2 PHONOLOGICAL VARIATION

#### 4.2.1 Devoicing of nasals lateral and flap

Sagang, Mantak and Tonsen varieties of Kom shows no devoicing of nasals /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/, lateral /l/ and flap /ɾ/ while the other three varieties, Mongtung, Moirang and Sinamkom exhibit this feature though it is not consistent. Their status are discussed in the previous chapter. The following examples are considered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/m̥ɪt/</td>
<td>/m̥ɪt/</td>
<td>/m̥ɪt/</td>
<td>/mɪt/</td>
<td>/mɪt/</td>
<td>/mɪt/</td>
<td>eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/n̥ar/</td>
<td>/n̥ar/</td>
<td>/n̥ar/</td>
<td>/nar/</td>
<td>/nar/</td>
<td>/nar/</td>
<td>nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kɔpi/</td>
<td>/kɔpi/</td>
<td>/kɔpi/</td>
<td>/kɔpi/</td>
<td>/kɔpi/</td>
<td>/kɔpi/</td>
<td>cabbage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s̥əɾ ui/</td>
<td>/s̥əɾ ui/</td>
<td>/səɾ ui/</td>
<td>/səɾ ui/</td>
<td>/səɾ ui/</td>
<td>/səɾan/</td>
<td>squirrel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In some instances in words that are verbs and nouns, /u/ in Mongtung, Moirang, Sinamkom and Tonsen changes to /i/ in Sagang variety if followed by a nasal /ŋ/ or a velar /k/ in the final position. The following are some of the examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/sun/</td>
<td>/sun/</td>
<td>/sun/</td>
<td>/sɪŋ/</td>
<td>/sun/</td>
<td>/sun/</td>
<td>cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/vuk/</td>
<td>/vuk/</td>
<td>/vuk/</td>
<td>/vɪk/</td>
<td>/vɛ l/</td>
<td>/vuʔ /</td>
<td>beat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/suk /</td>
<td>/suk /</td>
<td>/suk /</td>
<td>/sɪk /</td>
<td>/suk/</td>
<td>/suʔ /</td>
<td>come out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kaikun/</td>
<td>/kaikun/</td>
<td>/kaikun/</td>
<td>/kaɪkʊŋ/</td>
<td>/keikun/</td>
<td>/kaikun/</td>
<td>prawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tʃ un/</td>
<td>/tʃ un/</td>
<td>/tʃ un/</td>
<td>/tʃ iŋ/</td>
<td>/tʃ un/</td>
<td>/tʃ un/</td>
<td>ride</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Sagang, one of the Kom Variety /a/ changes to /i/ if followed by /r/ in medial position. It is also found that /r/ and /l/ in this variety are in free variation. This particular feature is exclusive to Sagang only. It is sometimes bidirectional. It is noted that /l/ cannot occur in final positions in any of the Kom varieties except Mantak. However, because of the free variation of /r/ and /l/, there are possibilities of it occurring in the final positions in Sagang. The following examples are considered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/sər i/</td>
<td>/sər i/</td>
<td>/sər i/</td>
<td>/sɪli/</td>
<td>/sər i/</td>
<td>/sər i/</td>
<td>seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kər et/</td>
<td>/kər et/</td>
<td>/kər et/</td>
<td>/kɪli/</td>
<td>/kər et/</td>
<td>/kər et/</td>
<td>eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/mər i/</td>
<td>/mər i/</td>
<td>/mər i/</td>
<td>/mɪli/</td>
<td>/r o̞l/</td>
<td>/mər i/</td>
<td>snake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of /l/ in final position and the interchange of /ɾ/ and /l/:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/kalur/</td>
<td>/kalur/</td>
<td>/kalur/</td>
<td>/kalul/</td>
<td>/aluɾ/</td>
<td>/kalur/</td>
<td>glory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɾ̥eipaɾ/</td>
<td>/ɾ̥eipaɾ/</td>
<td>/ɾ̥eipaɾ/</td>
<td>/ɾ̥eipal/</td>
<td>/ɾ̥eipaɾ/</td>
<td>/ɾ̥eipaɾ/</td>
<td>flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/salɔi/</td>
<td>/salɔi/</td>
<td>/salɔi/</td>
<td>/salɔɾi/</td>
<td>/salɔi/</td>
<td>/salɔi/</td>
<td>buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/məlei/</td>
<td>/məleι/</td>
<td>/məlei/</td>
<td>/məɾ eɾi/</td>
<td>/məleι/</td>
<td>/məleι/</td>
<td>tongue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/ɾ̥/ changes to /s/ in Sagang if preceded by a vowel /a/ in the medial position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/kət̮a/</td>
<td>/kət̮a/</td>
<td>/kət̮a/</td>
<td>/kəsa/</td>
<td>/əsa/</td>
<td>/kət̮a/</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kət̮iŋpa/</td>
<td>/kət̮iŋpa/</td>
<td>/kət̮iŋpa/</td>
<td>/kəsiŋpa/</td>
<td>/kəɾolpa/</td>
<td>/kət̮iŋpa/</td>
<td>my friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/vət̮u/</td>
<td>/vət̮u/</td>
<td>/vət̮u/</td>
<td>/vəsu/</td>
<td>/vət̮u/</td>
<td>/vət̮u/</td>
<td>dove</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Tonsen, another variety of Kom, /k/ does not occur in the final position unlike other varieties. The sound is substituted by /ʔ/. The following are the examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ʔa/</td>
<td>/ʔa/</td>
<td>/ʔa/</td>
<td>/ʔa/</td>
<td>/ʔa/</td>
<td>/ʔa/</td>
<td>/ʔa/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʔiŋpa/</td>
<td>/ʔiŋpa/</td>
<td>/ʔiŋpa/</td>
<td>/ʔiŋpa/</td>
<td>/ʔiŋpa/</td>
<td>/ʔiŋpa/</td>
<td>/ʔiŋpa/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʔu/</td>
<td>/ʔu/</td>
<td>/ʔu/</td>
<td>/ʔu/</td>
<td>/ʔu/</td>
<td>/ʔu/</td>
<td>/ʔu/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
/ə/ changes to /a/ in Tonsen variety in medial position. Examples can be illustrated thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/sak əɾ/</td>
<td>/sak əɾ/</td>
<td>/sak əɾ/</td>
<td>/sak əɾ/</td>
<td>/sak əɾ/</td>
<td>/sakəɾ/</td>
<td>horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/hɔ ŋ/</td>
<td>/hɔ ŋ/</td>
<td>/hɔ ŋ/</td>
<td>/hɔ ŋ/</td>
<td>/hɔ ŋ/</td>
<td>/həŋ/</td>
<td>come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tlɔ ŋ/</td>
<td>/tlɔ ŋ/</td>
<td>/tlɔ ŋ/</td>
<td>/tlɔɾ əŋ/</td>
<td>/tlɔɾ əŋ/</td>
<td>/təŋ/</td>
<td>word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/məɾ ɔɾ t/</td>
<td>/məɾ ɔɾ t/</td>
<td>/məɾ ɔɾ t/</td>
<td>/məɾ ɔɾ t/</td>
<td>/məɾ ɔɾ t/</td>
<td>/məɾ əɾ t/</td>
<td>leech</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Tonsen /ɬ/ changes to /ʃ/ in initial and medial position in monosyllabic and di- syllabic words. The following are the examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/希望/</td>
<td>/希望/</td>
<td>/希望/</td>
<td>/希望/</td>
<td>/希望/</td>
<td>/ja/</td>
<td>sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zəŋ/</td>
<td>/zəŋ/</td>
<td>/zəŋ/</td>
<td>/zəŋ/</td>
<td>/zəŋ/</td>
<td>/jəŋ/</td>
<td>penis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/həɾ/</td>
<td>/həɾ/</td>
<td>/həɾ/</td>
<td>/həɾ/</td>
<td>/həɾ/</td>
<td>/jui/</td>
<td>follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/məɾ ɬ əɾ n/</td>
<td>/məɾ ɬəɾ n/</td>
<td>/məɾ ɬəɾ n/</td>
<td>/məɾ ɬəɾ n/</td>
<td>/məɾ ɬəɾ n/</td>
<td>/məɾəɾ n/</td>
<td>urine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zəŋ/</td>
<td>/zəŋ Story</td>
<td>/zəŋ</td>
<td>/zəŋ Story</td>
<td>/zəŋ Story</td>
<td>/ʃəŋ/</td>
<td>monkey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Mantak, another variety of Kom, the vowel /ə/ after a consonant in a word changes to /i/ if preceded by nasals or a flap.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ɾ ǝ dai/</td>
<td>/ɾ ǝ dai/</td>
<td>/ɾ ǝ dai/</td>
<td>/ə dai/</td>
<td>/ɾ idai/</td>
<td>/ɾ ǝ dai/</td>
<td>mist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɾ osa/</td>
<td>/ɾ osa/</td>
<td>/ɾ osa/</td>
<td>/ɾ osa/</td>
<td>/ɾ isa/</td>
<td>/ɾ osa/</td>
<td>voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/mə nli/</td>
<td>/mə nli/</td>
<td>/mə nli/</td>
<td>/minli/</td>
<td>/minli/</td>
<td>/minli/</td>
<td>four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/m̥ǝ npak/</td>
<td>/m̥ǝ npak/</td>
<td>/m̥ǝ npak/</td>
<td>/mə npak/</td>
<td>/minpak/</td>
<td>/mə npak/</td>
<td>praise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As stated earlier, addition of /l/ is seen in the final position in Mantak after a vowel. This is a remote feature to the other varieties of Kom. While the occurrence of /l/ in Sagang variety in final position is an exceptional case due to the free variation of /ɾ/ and /l/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/kutma/</td>
<td>/kutma/</td>
<td>/kutma/</td>
<td>/kutma/</td>
<td>/kutmal/</td>
<td>/kutma/</td>
<td>finger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/be/</td>
<td>/be/</td>
<td>/be/</td>
<td>/be/</td>
<td>/be/</td>
<td>/be/</td>
<td>pot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kuttʃ e/</td>
<td>/kuttʃ e/</td>
<td>/kuttʃ e/</td>
<td>/kuttʃ e/</td>
<td>/kuttʃ el/</td>
<td>/kuttʃ e/</td>
<td>index finger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/aɾ tɔ kʃ e/</td>
<td>/aɾ tɔ kʃ e/</td>
<td>/aɾ tɔ kʃ e/</td>
<td>/aɾ tɔ kʃ e/</td>
<td>/aɾ tɔ kʃ el/</td>
<td>/aɾ tɔ kʃ e/</td>
<td>duck(M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
/pui/ in Kom is a feminine marker and a quantifier. In Mantak, it changes to /pi/ in the final position. That is, the diphthong /ui/ changes to /i/. The following examples can be considered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/lampui/</td>
<td>/lampui/</td>
<td>/lampui/</td>
<td>/lampui/</td>
<td>/lampi/</td>
<td>/lampui/</td>
<td>road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/aɾ pui/</td>
<td>/aɾ pui/</td>
<td>/aɾ pui/</td>
<td>/aɾ pui/</td>
<td>/aɾ pi/</td>
<td>/aɾ pui/</td>
<td>hen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/aɾ ɾkpui/</td>
<td>/aɾ ɾkpui/</td>
<td>/aɾ ɾkpui/</td>
<td>/aɾ ɾkpui/</td>
<td>/aɾ ɾ kpui/</td>
<td>/aɾ ɾ kpui/</td>
<td>duck(F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/sar atpui/</td>
<td>/sar atpui/</td>
<td>/sar atpui/</td>
<td>/sar atpui/</td>
<td>/sar ɾpi/</td>
<td>/sar atpui/</td>
<td>cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/saipui/</td>
<td>/saipui/</td>
<td>/saipui/</td>
<td>/saipui/</td>
<td>/saipi/</td>
<td>/saipui/</td>
<td>elephant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/t/ changes to /tʃ/ in the initial and medial positions if followed by a vowel and a nasal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/tɔ n/</td>
<td>/tɔ n/</td>
<td>/tɔ n/</td>
<td>/tɔ n/</td>
<td>/tʃ ɔ n/</td>
<td>/tɔ n/</td>
<td>word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tun/</td>
<td>/tun/</td>
<td>/tun/</td>
<td>/tun/</td>
<td>/tʃ un/</td>
<td>/tun/</td>
<td>work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/1 nt ɾn/</td>
<td>/1 nt ɾn/</td>
<td>/1 nt ɾn/</td>
<td>/1 nt ɾn/</td>
<td>/1 ntʃ ɾn/</td>
<td>/1 nt ɾn/</td>
<td>sooth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is also seen in Mantak that /s/ also changes to /tʃ/ in initial and medial positions if followed by a vowel /a/ and /e/. Examples are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/1 nt ɾn/</td>
<td>/1 nt ɾn/</td>
<td>/1 nt ɾn/</td>
<td>/1 nt ɾn/</td>
<td>/1 ntʃ ɾn/</td>
<td>/1 nt ɾn/</td>
<td>sooth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.2. Consonant clusters

Mongtung, Sinamkom, Moirang have the consonant clusters while Sagang Mantak and Tonsen shows no consonant clusters. Consider the following example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/tlan/</td>
<td>/tlan/</td>
<td>/tlan/</td>
<td>/tlan/</td>
<td>/tlan/</td>
<td>/pʰu/</td>
<td>run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tʃaŋ/</td>
<td>/tʃaŋ/</td>
<td>/tʃaŋ/</td>
<td>/tʃaŋ/</td>
<td>/tʃaŋ/</td>
<td>/lon/</td>
<td>mount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tʰlan/</td>
<td>/tʰlan/</td>
<td>/tʰlan/</td>
<td>/tʰlan/</td>
<td>/tʰlan/</td>
<td>/kʰan/</td>
<td>grave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/antʃ am/</td>
<td>/antʃ am/</td>
<td>/antʃ am/</td>
<td>/antʃ əm/</td>
<td>/antʃ əm/</td>
<td>/antəm/</td>
<td>mustard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/suntʃ im/</td>
<td>/suntʃ im/</td>
<td>/suntʃ im/</td>
<td>/suntʃ ɪm/</td>
<td>/suntʃ ɪm/</td>
<td>/sunṭim/</td>
<td>midday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. LEXICAL VARIATION

It is commonly understood that languages change over time and vary according to place and social setting. We can observe Lexical variation - differences in words and phrases by comparing the way a language is spoken in different places and among different social groups. Despite the belief that the standard variety is widely used in any language, there still remains a great deal of lexical diversity within the language when proper observation is done. This shows that the existence and vitality of the dialects present in the language should not be undermined. The lexical variation in Kom, for instance, is best demonstrated by the variety of
words used for the same item in different parts of the Kom speaking area of Manipur. If one goes, for instance, to Moirang area, Makokching –Saikhul and Sinamkom area, one may eat /binɔ t/ as a curry; sleep on the /ʤekɔ m/ with /kŋkʰɛɾ/ to protect oneself from /ʤaŋsɔ m/ at night. While people in the Tonsen-Mahou area would probably offer /moro/ as a curry and /kʧuŋ/ to sleep with /kŋkʰan/ to protect from /tʰantʰan/ at night. Though the offer may appear to be different, it is pretty much the same. /binɔ t/ and /moro/ stand for the same item that means loofah. So is the /ʤekɔ m/ with /kŋkʰɛɾ/ and /kʧuŋ/ with /kŋkʰan/ that stands for bed/cot and mosquito net. While the the /tʰantʰan/ is the Tonsen-Mahou area counterpart of /ʤaŋsɔ m/, which means mosquito. The same item is manifested into different versions but understood in the same way in different regions of the Kom speaking areas of Manipur. The six varieties of Kom, which is, Mongtung, Sagang, Sinamkom, Tonsen and Mantak exhibit very few variations in the lexical items. Few examples are found where variation is in all varieties that can be illustrated in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mongtung</td>
<td>Moirang</td>
<td>Sinamkom</td>
<td>Sagang</td>
<td>Mantak</td>
<td>Tonsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>/ŋəmiri/</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/kʰəməl/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>/kʰɔn/</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/motɪŋ/</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>/mɑŋɡəl/</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/bejaŋ/</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>/mɑŋɡʰəl/</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/səlɪŋ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>/waiʃʊlʊmɛi/</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>/pʰətɛi/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>/bɪnɔt/</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/bepɔt/</td>
<td>/pʰɔkʰəl/</td>
<td>/moro/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>/ŋəmɔsɔm/</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/sənsan/</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>/tʰantʰan/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>/ŋəekhum/</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/pʰən/</td>
<td>/kʧuŋ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>/kŋkʰɛɾ/</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/kŋkʰən/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>/uilsɔn/</td>
<td>/tuirabɔ nɛei/</td>
<td>/səptɛei/</td>
<td>/lɛ ɲɛei/</td>
<td>/sitabɔ n/</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above examples, we can see Lexical variation, i.e., differences in the vocabulary within the varieties of Kom. Thereby usage of certain vocabulary of the Kom language reveals the identity of the speaker and the geographical location he inhabit.

Some of the vocabularies are regionally specific in nature: for instance, the usage of words like /kahui tan/ and /kahui kʰui/ which means ‘very nice’ is basically a Moirang and Tonsen specific. This is not commonly found in the other varieties of Kom. Whenever the speaker(s) used the word /katui tan/ meaning ‘very tasty’ it indicates the Moirang variety. The same is true of /kutui kʰui/ which refer to the same meaning in Tonsen variety. It can be illustrated thus;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/katui kʰui/</td>
<td>/katui tan/</td>
<td>very tasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kahui kʰui/</td>
<td>/kahui tan/</td>
<td>very nice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4. MORPHOLOGICAL VARIATION

There is a variation in word formation pattern between Mantak variety and the rest of the varieties.

In Mantak variety ‘stealing’ is a compound word. Examples are shown below;
ruk + tʰο= ruktʰo
Steal+ to do= stealing
V+V = N

(1) ruktʰo hi səmək
Stealing is bad
‘Stealing is bad.’

In all the other five varieties, the word ‘stealing’ is a single word as shown below.

ɪ nruk
Steal= stealing
V = N

(2) ɪ nruk hi tʰəmək
Stealing is bad
‘Stealing is bad’.

In other five varieties, ɪ nruk/ which is a one word can stand alone whereas in Mantak variety /ruktʰo/ consist of two words or compound words as /ruk/ alone do not mean ‘stealing’.

It can be further substantiated by the following examples;

(1) Mantak

tuibol tʃe ŋoi

Bathing go IMP
‘Let’s go bathing’
tui + bol = tuibol
Water + bath = bathing
N+V = N

(2) Sinamkom and Sagang

tui-ʔ₁ nsi se ri
Water+ bath go IMP
‘Let’s go bathing’
tui + ʔ₁ nsi = tuib₁ nsi
water + bath = bathing
N+V = N

(3) Moirang and Tonsen

i nsi se ri
Bathing go IMP
‘Let’s go bathing’
i nsi
bathing
N/V = N
In Mantak variety /bol/ ‘bath’, necessarily need /tui/ to mean ‘bathing’. It cannot stand alone. However, in other varieties such as Sinamkom and Sagang, /tui/ meaning ‘water’ is optional. It can be attached to /nsi/ to mean ‘bath’ or detached. In Moirang and Tonsen variety, /tui/ is not required to attach with /nsi/ ‘bath’, and /nsi/ alone can mean ‘bathing’. Therefore, when the Mantak variety speaker speaks other languages, they have the tendency to use their word formation system. For instance if a Mantak speaker produces a Manipuri (meiteilon) sentence, it would probably be produced like the following sentence;

\[
\text{isı} \ η+ɾuba \ tʃat \ se
\]

\[
\text{water+bathing} \ \text{go} \ \text{IMP}
\]

‘Let’s go bathing’

N+V

However, in Manipuri, /isı η/ ‘water’ is not required to mean ‘bathing’. /ɾuba/ alone denotes the meaning of bathing.

4.5. SYNTACTIC VARIATION

It is well known fact that all Tibeto- Burman (TB) languages are verb final languages i.e. it has the construction of Subject +Object+ Verb (SOV). The same is applicable to the sub-group of Kuki - Chin languages. One may confuse the structure of these languages especially when the sentence has the subject and object, which is occupied by personal pronoun due to its richness in verbal agreement.

4.5.1 Verbal agreement
Almost all the Kuki-Chin group has rich verbal agreement. Of them Mizo and Hmar are the striking example. Kom, which is remarkably close to Mizo and Hmar, has shown the similar feature.

Interesting enough, variation in agreement pattern is found between the varieties of Kom.

(a) Intransitive verb with first person

1. Mongtung
   kei  kəŋ ɛŋ
   I    sleep  AGR

   ‘I sleep’

2. Sinamkom
   kei  kəŋ ɛŋ
   I    sleep  AGR

   ‘I sleep’

3. Moirang
   kei  kəŋ ɛŋ
   I    sleep  AGR

   ‘I sleep’

4. Sagang
   kei  kəŋ aŋ
   I    sleep  AGR

   ‘I sleep’

5. Mantak
kei  ki-ʤ al
I   AGR-sleep
‘I sleep’

6. Tonsen

kei  kəja  in
I   sleep   AGR
‘I sleep’

(b) Intransitive verb with second person

1. Mongtung

nəŋ  kəʤ e  if e
You  sleep   AGR
‘You sleep’

2. Sinamkom

nəŋ  kəʤ e  if e
You  sleep   AGR
‘You sleep’

3. Moirang

nəŋ  kəʤ e  if e
You  sleep   AGR
‘You sleep’

4. Sagang
You sleep

5. Mantak

You AGR-sleep

‘You sleep’

6. Tonsen

You sleep AGR

‘You sleep’

The above examples show the variation in the agreement system in this language. In all five varieties, agreement follows the verb whereas in one variety i.e. Mantak, agreement precedes the verb. It is noticed that the agreement of the intransitive verb is with the subject.

Phonological variation is also seen in the agreement markers. Three varieties have the same agreement marker /ɛŋ/ in the sentence 1 in variety 1, 2, and 3. Sagang and Tonsen varieties have agreement markers /aŋ/ and /ɪŋ/ which are phonologically slightly different from agreement marker/ɛŋ/ of the other four varieties.

Phonological variation is also seen in the verbs of the sentence. Consider the following:
(c) Transitive verb with first person

1. Mongtung

   kə-pə-ɪ n (kei) avuk ɛŋ
   My-father-EGR 1sg beat AGR

   ‘My father beats me’

2. SinamKom

   kə-pə-ɪ n (kei) avuk ɛŋ
   My-father- EGR 1sg beat AGR

   ‘My father beats me’

3. Moirang

   kə-pə-ɪ n (kei) avuk ɛŋ
   My-father- EGR 1sg beat AGR

   ‘My father beats me’

4. Sagang

   kə-pə-ɪ n (kei) aŋ k ɔŋ
   My-father- EGR 1sg beat AGR

   ‘My father beats me’

5. Mantak
My father beats me

6. Tonsen

My father beats me

(d) Transitive verb with second person

1. Mongtung

My father beats you

2. Sinamkom

My father beats you

3. Moirang
My father- EGR 1sg beat AGR

‘My father beats you’

4. Sagang

kə-pa-ː n (nəŋ) avə k ʃ e

My father- EGR 1sg beat AGR

‘My father beats you’

5. Mantak

ka-pa-ː nə nəŋ avəl

My father- EGR 1sg beat

‘My father beats you’

6. Tonsen

kə-pa-ː n (nəŋ) avuʔ ʃ e

My father- EGR 1sg beat AGR

‘My father beats you’

(e) Transitive verb with third person

1. Mongtung

kə-pa-ː nəma avuk

My father- EGR 1sg beat

‘My father beats him/her’

2. Sinamkom

kə-pa-ː nəma avuk
In transitive sentences, all the five varieties shows agreement with the object whereas Mantak variety lacks agreement. In the five varieties object is optional and can be dropped
whereas in Mantak, object is obligatory because it lacks agreement. It is to be noted that third person agreement is marked by Ø marker.

4.5.2 Question words

Interrogative sentences in Kom are usually comprised of a WH- Question and a Question marker /mo/. Question marker /mo/ in Mantak variety is fixed. It is always attached with the Wh-Q as shown in example 1. When the Question Marker is moved it become ungrammatical. As shown in example 2.

Mantak

1. han-mo  ni-ce  sik?
   Wh-Q     II-go  fut
   ‘Where will you go?’

* 2. han   ni-ce  sik  mo?
   Wh-     II-go  fut  Q

   ‘Where will you go?’

Whereas in other five varieties (Montung, SinamKom, Sagang, Tonsen and Moirang) Q- marker is not fixed. It can occur along with the Wh-Q or with the personal agreement marker. As shown in example 1 and 2 below.

1. k’on-mo  kase-  sik  che?
   Wh-Q     II-go  fut  II
   ‘Where will you go’
2. kʰ on kase- sik che-mo?
   Wh- II-go fut II Q
   ‘Where will you go?’

4.6. SEMANTIC VARIATION

4.6.1 VERBS

A study on the use of verb among the varieties of Kom has revealed variation in the semantics of verb. For example the verb ‘to eat’.

(a) The Verb ‘to eat’

All the varieties use the verb /sak/ ‘to eat’ in Mongtung, Sinamkom, Moirang, Sagang and /tʃak/ in Mantak. Tonsen use /baʔ/ as a verb for ‘eating food’. (All the three differs phonologically but they are same semantically).

Sentence 1

1. Mongtung, Sinamkom, Moirang and Sagang

   kei bu kə-sak
   I rice AGR eat
   ‘I eat rice/ I am eating food’

2. Mantak

   kei bu ki-tʃak
   I rice AGR eat
   ‘I eat rice/ I am eating food’

3. Tonsen
Sentence 2

1. Mongtung, Sinamkom, Moirang and Sagang

   kei bu kə-baʔ
   I rice AGR eat
   ‘I eat rice/ I am eating food’

2. Mantak

   kei an kə-sak
   I curry AGR eat
   ‘I eat curry/ I am eating curry’

3. Tonsen

   kei an kə-sum
   I curry AGR eat
   ‘I eat curry/ I am eating curry’

All the five varieties use the same verb for eating food (rice) and curry but different verb is used in Tonsen Variety. Separate verb is employed for food and curry in Tonsen variety according to the state or type of the food consumed. Food in Tonsen variety falls under the category of solid where the verb /baʔ/ is used while curry falls under the category which is usually vegetables and the word /sum/ is used. However, the verb for curry is not fixed as the types of curry determine the type of the verb assigned. The verb used for
vegetable-curry is different. While Mongtung, Sinamkom and Moirang use the same word /sak/ for ‘meat curry’, the other varieties, that is, Mantak and Tonsen use /ei/. Sagang variety, on the other hand, uses both /sak/ and /ei/. The following examples are considered:

1. **Mongtung, Sinamkom and Moirang**

   kei me kə-sak

   I meat AGR eat

   ‘I eat meat.’

2. **Sagang**

   kei me kə-sak/kəʔ–ei

   I meat AGR eat

   ‘I eat meat.’

3. **Mantak**

   kei me kə-ei

   I meat AGR eat

   ‘I eat meat.’

4. **Tonsen**

   kei me kə-ei

   I meat AGR eat

   ‘I eat meat.’

   Another verb /se/ is also used in Kom. It is optional for ‘eating meat’ in Mongtung, Sinamkom and Moirang varieties. Hence, /sak/ is commonly used. /ei/ is more commonly
used in Sagang variety than the verb /sak/. But in Tonsen variety no verb other than /ei/ is used for eating meat. The verb /ei/ is also used for describing animals that eat flesh. It is uniformed in all the varieties.

1. Mongtung, Sinam Kom, Moirang and Sagang

   humpui-ɪ n me a-ei/ sak
   Tiger EGR meat eat

2. Sagang, Mantak, Tonsen

   humpui-ɪ n me a-ei
   Tiger EGR meat eat

   ‘Tiger eat meat/ the tiger is eating meat’

The verb /ei/ and /se/ is also used as bite in Kom. However, the intensity of the bite and the manner of the bite determine the usage of these verbs. /ei/, /se/ and /bak/ are the three possible verbs used to describe for dog bite. In Moirang, the verb /ei/ is used to describe the evil spirits and demon eating human flesh or soul. Hence, the usage is uncommon in Moirang variety because of its negative connotation. The verb /baʔ/ in Thadou language is partially similar with the verb /baʔ/ of Kom’s Tonsen variety. However, /baʔ/ in Thadou is used in a certain form of eating with certain types of food consumptions. The manner of eating is the criteria for assigning the verb in Kuki and Kom. The manner of eating rice and the type of cereal food differ. The word /baʔ/ is exclusively used for eating certain types of dried food in Thadou language. /baʔ/ is used in Thadou for eating certain food like /ʃapal/ which is also
known as /tʃɛŋpək/ in Manipuri which is dried flattened rice made from specific types of rice found in Manipur and beans.

(b) The verb ‘to smoke’

The verb drink /ı n/ is common to all the varieties. There are some languages that use the same verb for ‘eat’ and ‘drink’. Assamese is one of the best examples. Nagamese, for instance, has no separate word for sweet and tasty. The word ‘mitha’ is used for both to mean tasty and sweet. Kom, on the other hand, use separate words to denote eating and drinking. However, there is variation in the word smoking among the varieties of Kom.

1. Mongtung, Moirang, Sinamkom

kei biri kə-in
I bedi smoke
‘I smoke bidi’

2. Sagang

kei biri kə-mut
I bedi smoke
‘I smoke bedi’

3. Mantak

kei biri ki-ɖɔ p
I bedi smoke
‘I smoke bidi’

4. **Tonsen**

    kei   biiri   kə-məhap.
    I   bedi   smoke

‘I smoke bedi/ I am smoking bedi’

The six varieties of Kom use the four different verb for *smoke* In Moirang, Sinamkom and Mongtung varieties the verb /ɪn/ is used for smoking. As stated above, the verb /ɪn/ is used for *drinking* in Kom. Some of the Tibeto-Burman languages use the same verb for drinking and smoking. Manipuri (Meitei-lon) for instance is one where the same verb /bək (pa)/ is used for drinking and smoking. The same is true for Khasi, an Austro-Asiatic language. The six varieties of Kom use the four different verbs for *smoke* is used for both drinking and smoking. The verb /mut/ is used for *smoke* in Sagang variety, /dʒɔ p/ in Mantak variety which also means *kiss or kissing*. In Kom /mədʒɔ p/ is ‘Kiss or kissing’. In Tonsen variety, the verb /məhəp/ is used which has an extended meaning for *inhale*. Hence in Moirang variety, the verb /ɪn/ is used for both smoking and drinking. In Tonsen, /məjɔ p/ which is used as smoking in Mantak, also mean *suck and kissing*. In Thadou, the word /tʃep/ is *smoke* which literary mean *suck or sucking*. Tonsen variety has shown the use of separate verbs for drinking, smoking and eating. In other words, separate verb is used for the intake of solid, liquid, and gas. Moreover, the use of separate verbs for
the intake of vegetable and non-vegetable is also visible. Whereas, in other varieties, there is overlapping in the use of verb at least in one item.

(c) The Noun ‘spider’

It is often said that the Eskimos have many lexical items to describe the different types of snow, and that the Car Nicobarese having different words to describe different stages of coconuts. The environment and the need resulted to the expansion of words in their language to meet their requirements. A similar phenomenon is found with the slightly different manner in the study of the six varieties of Kom

In Sinam Kom variety /raŋ/ is the word for spider. There are two kinds of spider found in Sinam Kom region. They are:

1. /raŋ/ (home)

2. maimum (wild)

/raŋ/ is considered as the main spider. It is found in the walls and ceiling at home. So, the generic term for spider in this variety is /raŋ/. /maimum/, on the other hand, it is found in the fields and mountains. It is considered the specific type of spider in Mantak variety, the word for spider is also /raŋ/. There is no other name for /raŋ/ other than the one found in the region. In Sagang variety, the generic term for spider is /wain m/ /wain m/ is one of the types of spiders.

1. /wain m/ (home)

2. /ʃraŋ ʃaŋ pu/ (wild)
In Moirang variety, there are three names for spider.

1. /ɾaŋkeipu/ (home).

2. /mɛntekeipu/ (wild)

3. /maimum/ (wild)

In Tonsen variety and Mongtung, there is only one term for spider.

1. /maimumpa/ (home and wild)

/ɾaŋkeipu/, which is found in homes, is considered as the main spider. /mɛntekeipu/ is found in the fields and forest. /maimum/ is a small spider that is less significant. It is considered as spider because of it resemble to/ɾaŋkei/. Both Sagang and Moirang variety have the same word for spider. They call it /maimum/ as this particular type of spider is found in these regions. In Tonsen and Mongtung variety, the term for spider is /maimumpa/. There is no other name for spider other than /maimumpa/. All the spiders found at home or outside are considered as one. /maimumpa/, the main spider in Tonsen and Mongtung is less significant types of Spider in Sagang and Moirang varieties. /maimumpa/ in these varieties is the one that does not make cobweb. In Mantak, web making is the basic characteristic of a spider. While in other varieties, differentiating the types of spiders is based on their physical structure. /ɾaŋ/ in all varieties means ‘cobweb’. /kei/ is to weave, and /pu/ is the doer of
action. Hence, /τανκείπου/ literary mean ‘the one who weave cobweb’. However, in some
varieties spiders that does not weave web are also included in the group. In some way the
spider which is labelled as a weaver of cobweb is not so. Almost similar case is reported from
Trinidad and Tobago where the migrant ethnic Indians painted the goddess maa kali into pink
in order to differentiate from the indigenous people who are mostly black. Maa Kali, as the
name suggests, is normally black in India and elsewhere but in Trinidad and Tobago due to
ethnic tension and hatred between the two communities resulted in the change of the colour
of Maa Kali into pink. Hence, for this community Maa Kali can be pink and still considered
as black. This shows that different cultures have different ways of perception, relating and
interpreting the world around them according to their needs and worldview.

(d) The verb ‘to run’

In Mongtung, Moirang, Sinamkom, Sagang and Mantak, /tlan/ is used for both
‘run’escape and elope. All the varieties have the same form except the Tonsen variety, which
have the word /kan/. The tonsen variety /kan/ is the counterpart of /tlan/in othe variety.
However, it is debatable whether the two words are synonymous or not. One may argue that
they are not synonymous at all. Synonymy here refers to dialectal synonyms. Dialectal
synonyms are those in which pairs of words belongs to different dialects of the same
language. Ideally, the two words should be synonymous as they are from the varieties of the
same language. Dialectal synonymy would only consider the synonyms of two or more
dialects with an extended meaning escape and elope. /kapʰu/, /antʃ’om/ and /kan/ of which
/kapʰu/ and /antʃ’om/ are synonymous.

1. Mongtung, Moirang, Sinamkom, Sagang and Mantak
The above example indicates the literal/primary meaning of the verb ‘tan’ is run while the others ‘elope’ and ‘escape’ are the two extended meanings of it. /kan/ on the other hand has ‘escape’ as literal/primary meaning while ‘elope’ as its extended meaning. The difference between /tlan/ and /kan/ is in the literal/primary meaning of the two. Unlike /tlan/ the word /kan/ does not have ‘run’, even as extended meaning.

In Tonsen variety /pʰu/ and /antʃ om/ are used for the verb run. Interestingly /pʰu/ and /antʃ om/ seem to exhibit the phenomena of complete synonymy. Total or complete synonymy is words, which can interchange in all contexts without the slightest change in the meaning. It should be noted that complete synonym of two words or more is extremely uncommon in a language. Ullmann (1972) held that ‘it is almost a truism that total synonymy is an extremely rare occurrence, a luxury that language can ill afford’. However, analysis of these words /pʰu/ and /antʃ om/ do not show any change of meaning in all context. Semanticists are also of the view that two lexical items bearing the same semantic resemblance to one another will not survive in a natural language. There is a possibility that either one of the two words in question may have been borrowed from other language and the meaning which it holds earlier undergone changes and resemble with the adjacent word. As it stands today, the two words emerge as a complete synonymous word in this variety. It may be noted that all the variety do not have any other word for run other than /tlan/.

11 /tlan/ is /tan/ in Sagang and Mantak since there are no consonant clusters in these varieties.
4.6.2. COLOUR TERMS

It generally held view that colour perception is similar across linguistic communities, but the way how colours do categorized in the language differs widely depending on one’s perception. It is established that numbers of colour terms varies from one community to another.

The present study will focus only on the basic color terms and one non-basic color terms of the six varieties.

Kom basic colour terms may be presented based on the Berlin and Kay’s classification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Colour terms</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. /kabaŋ/</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. /kadum/</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. /Kase n/</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. /akat e n/</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Basic Colour term</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. /ai? e n malu/</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kom would fall under the stage III (third) category, having the above given basic colour terms. However, there is overlapping of green and yellow in the language. Twenty-two informants consisting of a man in the age group of 40-66 years and a lady aged 58 years, and
20 younger people consisting of 10 boys in the age group of 25-32 and 10 girls in the age group of 23-25 years were interviewed. The two older persons reported /ɛ η/ or /akɛʔ /ɛ η/ for green. And 8 (eight) boys and 4 (four) girls reported /ɛ η/ for green.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mongtung</th>
<th>Moirang</th>
<th>Sinamkom</th>
<th>Sagang</th>
<th>Mantak</th>
<th>Tonsen</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ɛ η/</td>
<td>/ɛ η/</td>
<td>/akɛʔ /ɛ η/</td>
<td>/saŋlen/</td>
<td>/ɛ m/</td>
<td>/ɔɛʔ /ɛ η/</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly 6 (six) girls and (2) two boys reported /nabumatʃ u/ which means *colour* of the leaf that is *green*. And all of them reported /aiʔɛ η/ or /ɛ η/ as *yellow*. Hence, there is an overlapping of green and yellow in the language. To them /ɛ η/ is derived from /aiʔɛ η/ which is *turmeric* in Kom. The colour of ‘turmeric’ /aiʔɛ η/ is yellow. Hence, /ɛ η/ cannot be the colour green.

This is a case of overlapping of colour terms since basic colour terms are believed to be ‘resistant to change’. Yellow is one of the frequently used term in Kom society. However, yellow is not treated as a basic colour term as the colour /aiʔɛ η/ is derived from the turmeric colour. There is wide variation in the usage of non-basic colour terms in the varieties of Kom. Yellow colour is one of the best examples as shown below;

**Mongtung**

1. aiʔɛ η *turmeric colour*

**Moirang**

2. aiʔɛ η *turmeric colour*

**Sinamkom**
3. aiʔ e η mətʃ u  

turmeric colour

Sagang

4. komola mətʃ u  

orange colour

Mantak

5. antʃ əmpar  

mustard flower

Tonsen

6. jeiŋaŋ mətʃ u  

turmeric colour

Kom use the word for colour as /mətʃu/ is probably borrowed from Meiteilon\(^\text{12}\). 

\( /mətʃu/ \) colour. Most of the Kuki-Chin languages also used a borrowed word for colour. The two Kuki-Chin languages who used \( /rɔ η/ \) a borrowed word from Indo-Aryan are Kuki and Vaiphei.

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\(^{12}\) *Meiteilon* means Meitei language, which is commonly known as Manipuri. The word *Meiteilon* and Manipuri is interchangibly used in this present study.