2.1 Thadou Language:
There are not many grammatical studies on Thadou. Grierson (LSI Vol. III Part III, 1904) was the first to describe the language. Grierson presents a very elementary sketch of Thadou grammar and does not go beyond describing the consonantal and vocalic phonemes of the language.

The linguistic works related to the structure of Thadou are too scanty. The book entitled "Thadou: A Grammatical Sketch" by Shree Krishan (Anthropological Survey of India, 1980) presents the grammatical sketch of Thadou in the light of taxonomic descriptive linguistics. It has detailed sections on the morphology and syntax of Thadou and also a section on phonology but the generative and typological aspects of the phonology have not been taken into account. Thadou Phonetic Reader by M.S. Thirumalai (CIIL, 1972) also misses the generative and typological aspects of Thadou.

The book entitled "Thado Grammar" by T.C. Hodson, (1906), contained little sections on phonology. It is purely based on the grammar and few notes on the morphology and syntax. It also contained a brief dictionary in Thadou-English Dictionary and English-Thadou. In the chapter on alphabet, Hodson has listed r which is not present in native Thadou, but present in loan words and other closely related languages, viz., Hmar and Mizo. There is also no mention of the phonemes $h^n$, x, z, $l$ and $\gamma$. The long and short vowels listed
by Hodson are not separate phonemes but variants, as all vowels are long when followed by sonorant sound or word finally. Hodson also mentioned few lines on tones by saying that "the principal stress is laid on the syllable containing the theme or the root. Other than this, there is no system of tonal modification, and the only emphasis is that which the natural exigencies of conversation demand, and it may therefore be called emphasis". He has not looked the presence of tone in monosyllabic and disyllabic words.

In the system of phonemic inventory, Shree Krishan lists 23 consonants, 6 vocalic phonemes and 5 tones, viz., level tone/mid, sharp rising, sharp falling, slow rising, and slow falling. He is also of the opinion that the contrast between slow rising vs. sharp rising and slow falling vs. sharp falling tones is very much limited. M.S.Thirumalai has listed 22 consonantal phonemes, 8 vocalic phonemes and three tones, viz., rising, level and falling.

Let us consider the lists of phonemes presented by Shree Krishan and Thirumalai.
The phonemic inventory of Thadou (After Shree Krishan: 1980).

**Fig 4. Consonants:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Labio-dental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>t</td>
<td></td>
<td>k</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
<td>g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pʰ</td>
<td>tʰ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td>η</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hᵐ</td>
<td>hⁿ</td>
<td></td>
<td>η</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affricate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>z</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hˡ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phonemic inventory of Thadou (After M.S. Thirumalai: 1972).

**Fig 5. Vowels:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>i</th>
<th>u</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[y] is an allophone of /j/ in the above figure.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both Shree Krishan and M.S. Thirumalai have treated /t, d, tʰ/ as alveolar stops, but under the present study they have been treated as dental stops. But in the production of these sounds the tip of the tongue is more towards the denti-alveolar region.

In the vowel system, Thirumalai has established /e/ and /ɛ/ as separate phonemes. These are allophones, conditioned by high tone. Again in the consonant system, he included the palatal stop /c/ and /ʃ/ but missed the affricate /ħʃ/.

Shree has included the pre-aspirated nasals viz., /rn, hŋ/ in his consonant chart which is not present in Thadou. The source of his data might be from the speakers who are influenced by the features of Mizo and Hmar and who lived in close proximity with the Thadous. Again, both Shree Krishan and Thirumalai have treated devoiced lateral /l/ as pre-aspirated /ɾl/.

In the system of vowels, Shree Krishan misses the lower mid front vowel /ɛ/ and the higher mid back vowel /ɔ/. He also treated mean mid vowel schwa
/ə/, as mid back vowel. This is an allophone of /ə/ which occurs in the in
environment of high consonant. The back unrounded vowel /a/ given in his
consonant chart, is an allophone of central low vowel of /a/ which is
pronounced as back when it occurs with high consonants, viz., /k/, /ɡ/ and
/ŋ/. Shree Krishan also had a section on Morphophonemics in the chapter
on phonology. But his statements are quite dubious and hard to accept by
the native speakers.

The point of disagreement will be pointed out in the appropriate chapters.

2.2 Thadou Literature:

As far as the written literature is concerned, it is mostly based on religious
writings, devotional songs and biblical stories. They also have variety of
styles and genres that include folk narrative, songs, proverbs, riddles, tales,
nursery hymns, war songs, sacrificial chants. The Thadou-Kuki Literature
Committees is the sole agency involved in the publication of school text
books and other creative writings in Thadou.

Thadou had a very rich oral tradition before the arrival of Christian
missionaries. The oral pre-Christian oral literature is more diverse in nature
than the literature after being reduced to writing after conversion to
Christianity. The content of the oral literature includes telling of legends and
stories celebrating the last victory and exploits, riddles and moral fables, the
chanting of Gamlen and Gar la (hunting and war cry), songs of merry and
dancing bents etc. there are legends and myths flowing down the centuries
pointing to deeper experience of cataclysmic events of races and languages,
giants and angels, superhuman, dragons, ghosts and hobgoblins, magic and
witchcraft etc.

The lists of varieties of folklore as found from existing literatures are as
follows:

1. The myth of *Chinlung or Khul*, a cave or hole, whence people issued.
2. The legend of Galngam le Hangsai, the great warriors.
3. The legend of Chemtatpa.
4. The legend of Lengbante.
5. The story of Jamdil.
6. The story of Sangah le Ahpi.
7. The poignant romance of Khupting le Ngambom.
8. The poignant story of Jonlhing le Nanglhun.
9. The poignant story Changkhatpu le Ahshijolneng.
10. The poignant story of Khalvompu le Lenchonghoi.
11. The story of Chipinthei le Mailangkoh.

There is no systematic documentation of the rich oral tradition though a few
writers and poets are doing some work in this regard.

Apart from these literatures in Thadou, some Christian literatures and hymns
were translated and published in Thadou. Ngulhao Thomsong translated the
first New Testament of the Bible and later the whole Bible was translation by
Dr. T. Lunkim. Other recently published daily newspapers include,
Thinglhang post edited by Thangboi Haokip; Sumkon edited by Thangtinlen
Lhungdim; Jingvalpa edited by P. Robert Haokip and Chenna Gam by
Thongneo Khongsai etc. Few monthly bi-lingual magazines have also come
up such as, Cholha edited by Benny Khongsai and Manmasi by Lenneo Haokip. The school text books prescribed by the Board of Education Manipur on Thadou include prose and poetry like, “Thimthu Zaila” and grammar book “Paogil zu”. Though Dr. T. Lunkim has followed the same spelling with that of Ngulhao Thomsong, there is no standard orthographic system in the literary writings of Thadou. Though few individual attempts have been made to modify the spelling system, it is not acceptable as they are not based on proper phonemic analysis of Thadou. Thus far, two dictionaries in Thadou have come out, viz., Songmantam by T.S. Agou and School Chapang Dictionary by Boishi Hangshing.