ABSTRACT

This dissertation is concerned with a descriptive study of the Noun Phrase in Khasi from the point of view of constituents constituting it. The NF in Khasi is endocentric in nature and so the head word is its most important constituent. Lexis which function as head words are noun words, personal pronouns and pronominal adjectives. The focus in this study is, however, on constituents which may occur on both sides of the head word. Those on the left hand side of the head word are called Pre Modifying Constituents and those on its right hand side are called Post Modifying Constituents.

The inductive methodology which examines the data in the light of different linguistic frameworks is used in this study. This approach in terms of linguistic theories is used basically because as a native speaker of Khasi I am convinced that the use of only one linguistic model cannot sufficiently describe the language.

The organisation of the dissertation is in five chapters. The first chapter is introductory in nature. It gives a summary of views expressed about the origin of the people. The views are not conclusive and so no definite conclusion could be arrived at. The language family to which
Khasi belongs is Monkhmer, a parent language which forms one branch of language under the super family Austro Asiatic Language. Starting from a late beginning in 1842 Khasi literature has developed commendably. But the development has been more on the literary rather than on the linguistic side. Indeed from a linguistic point of view, Khasi is a fallow land. The problems of spelling, junctural marking and vowel length are discussed in passing. They are listed as problems that need to be sorted out.

The second chapter is a review of related literature. The review reveals that the existing materials deal with each class of words as individual items in the language and that analysis in the context of co-occurrence with other language items has not been adequately done. The review also shows that there are a number of things that need reexamination and redefinition e.g. the Particles u/ka/i/ki, the Adjective and the Relative Pronoun.

The third chapter deals exclusively with the possible pre-modifiers in the noun phrase. The first important pre-modifying constituent is what in this study is called Number and/or Gender Markers (NGM). These are u/ka/i/ki. The NGM is an obligatory noun marker occurring immediately before a noun word. Its position is fixed here. Other pre-modifying constituents are the pronominal
Adjectives marked by $u/ka/i/i + ne/to/ta/tai/tei/thie$, the Distributive Particles and the Quantifiers which consist of Cardinal Numerals and Quantitative Adjectives. The complementary distribution, co-occurrence and mobility of these constituents is discussed. Wherever a mobility of a particular constituent causes a semantic change in an NP that is indicated.

The fourth chapter deals with the constituents that occur after the noun or its proform as head word. The important lexis occurring as post modifying constituent is again $u/ka/i/i$ as in $u$ John $u$ (John). The $u$ occurring before John is differentiated from $u$ after John by marking the former NGM and the latter Subject Enclitic (SE). An important feature of the SE is that it is a discontinuous constituent of an NP.

This chapter also includes detailed examination of the morpheme $ba$ (that/who) which has been traditionally described as a marker of adjectives and of relative pronouns. On close analysis, however, it is found that its function is none of the above. On the other hand, its sole function is that of a relater of adjectivals and subordinator of relative clauses in an NP. Detailed examination of the Genitive Clause and its markers and
the Prepositional Phrase is also done in this chapter.

The fifth and last chapter is a conclusion summing up major findings.