Chapter 6
Conclusion

The present work provides the structural description of Kokborok spoken in the Unakoti District of Tripura. The Kokborok language is a part of the larger Sino-Tibetan family, and has been classified under the Bodo-Garo sub-group of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family of languages.

On the basis of the detailed analysis of the phonological system of Kokborok, the following conclusions can be drawn.

The phonemic inventory of Kokborok consists of twenty consonants i.e., /p, pʰ, b, t, tʰ, d, c, j, k, kʰ, g, s, h, m, n, η, l, r, w and y/. Stops in Kokborok show three way contrasts between voiced, voiceless and voiceless aspirated. So the aspiration is phonemic and the voicing is also the relevant feature in the case of consonantal phonemes in the language.

The voiceless unaspirated stops /p, t, and k/ occur in syllable or word final position while its voiced counterparts normally lack aspiration and never occur in the final position of syllable or word. Thus the lack of voiced aspirated stops is one of the typological features of Tibeto-Burman languages shared by Kokborok. Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages, three nasals /m, n, and η/ are found in the language. The absence of fricatives /s and h/ and palatal /c/ in the syllable or word final position is one of the typical features of Kokborok.

There are six vowels phonemes in the language i.e., /i, e, a, o, u and ü/. Of which, the occurrence of /ü/ is totally absent in the initial and final position of a word. Thus all the vowels occur in the medial position of words. Kokborok does not have non-syllabic vowels i.e., they can be a nucleus of the Kokborok syllable and all the vowels in the language are oral and voiced. Kokborok has three diphthongs, /ai/, /oi/ and /ui/ which occur only in the open syllables in the language rather than the closed ones. All the diphthongs can occur in word
medial and final positions but they never occur in word initial position except /ai/.

Kokborok has two tones viz. i) high and ii) low, which are contrastive to each other by significant pitch differences. Consonant clusters are very rare in the language instead consonant sequences are very common, however it occurs only in word medial position. Generally, Kokborok roots are of monosyllabic type, for instance, even a vowel can be a syllable or a morpheme or a word in the language. It is also observed that disyllabic roots are also frequently found in the language.

There are five phonological processes found in the language viz. assimilation, vowel harmony, glide insertion, metathesis, apocope and voicing.

Morphologically, Kokborok can be classified as agglutinating language. Kokborok lack grammatical gender, instead it is marked naturally on the basis of sex. Kokborok contrast two way distinctions in number viz. singular and plural. Singular is unmarked in the language. However, plural is marked by suffixing -rok to nouns or pronouns and -sok to personal names and kinship terms. Personal pronouns differentiate three persons and two numbers i.e., first, second and third person with singular and plural number. There is no gender distinction in personal pronouns in Kokborok. The reflexive system is nominal rather than verbal, as the reflexive marker is suffixed to the noun. Numeral system is of decimal type. Structurally, it can be classified into four categories, cardinal, ordinal, multiplicative and fractional. Usually, the numerals follow the nouns.

Noun morphology is dominated by numeral classifiers, which are not only able to describe and categorize all nominals, but are also used extensively for enumeration. Most of the classifier roots are monosyllabic with few disyllabic roots. Classifiers generally occur with the numerals and in the form of prefixes. Verbs in Kokborok are inflected for tense, aspect and mood and other verbal
affixes as well. Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages, auxiliaries in Kokborok follow the main verb. Conversely, the adverbs always precede the verbs they modify.

Kokborok has postpositions that mark the relations between the verb and its arguments or between the argument themselves, such as the comparative marker -kuk, conjunctive participle marker -oi, and case marking suffixes: accusative -no, genitive -ni, locative -o and comitative -bai etc.

As for word formation, Kokborok mainly uses three processes viz., compounding, affixation and reduplication, of which compounding is the most productive.

A noun can be a minimal structure of a noun phrase. Nouns can take one or more modifiers. The genitive always precedes the noun it modifies. When a demonstrative and adjective modifies the noun alone, the demonstrative precedes the noun and the adjective follows the noun. The numeral classifier usually follows the noun. Similarly, adjective also follows the noun as well.

Verb phrase in Kokborok must consist of an adverb and some other optional elements (NPs or Adverbs) which generally precede the verb. There are three basic types of clauses viz. declarative, interrogative and imperative. In Kokborok declarative clause is unmarked, however, interrogative and imperative are signaled by affixes particularly the suffixes. As many other TB languages Kokborok lacks relative pronoun, however, relative clause is formed by means of participle. Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages, negation in the language is expressed by means of affixation i.e., either by prefixation or suffixation. There are three negative markers in Kokborok: ta-, -ya and -gilak. The affix ta- and -gilak is used only with verbs, however, the suffix -ya is used to negate nominal and verbal predicates. One of the interesting features of Kokborok is the presence of negative existential predicate kurui as many other Bodo-Garo languages of North East India do.
Causatives in Kokborok can be of two types viz. morphological and lexical. Morphological causatives are formed by affixing the prefixes $p^hV$-, $mV$-, $sV$- and by attaching the versatile verb $ri$ ‘give’ to the verb root.

Typologically, as a verb final language, the unmarked word order is SOV i.e., the sentence is generally predicate-final. As many other SOV languages the alternative order of words in Kokborok is OSV.