

# **PHONOLOGY OF RENGMA-NZONKHWE**

*A Dissertation Submitted to Nagaland University for award of the  
degree of*  
**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**Registration No: 90/2022**

*Under the Supervision of*  
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2023**

### **DECLARATION**

I, Pikali L Assumi hereby declare that the subject matter of my thesis entitled Phonology of Rengma-Nzonkhwe is the bonafide record of work done by me under the supervision of Dr. Laishram Bijenkumar Singh and that the content of the thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis or any part of it, has not been submitted by me for any other research degree, fellowship, associateship, etc. in any other university or institute. This is being submitted to the Nagaland University for the degree of Master of Philosophy.

.....2023

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### **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that Ms. Pikali L Assumi Roll No. M.Phil 01/21 a student of Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema has completed her dissertation entitled, Phonology of Rengma-Nzonkhwe under my Guidance and supervision.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the facts reported and incorporated in this respect have been collected first hand by the investigator and that other sources wherever elaborated and recorded have been acknowledged.

**This is again certified that the research has been undertaken as per UGC Regulations May 2016 (amended) and the scholar has fulfilled the criteria mentioned in the University Ordinances for submission of the thesis. Plagiarism test of the thesis has been conducted and 0% of similarity has been detected which is permissible under the UGC regulations 2018.**

This dissertation is ready and fit for submission.

(Dr. Laishram Bijenkumar Singh)

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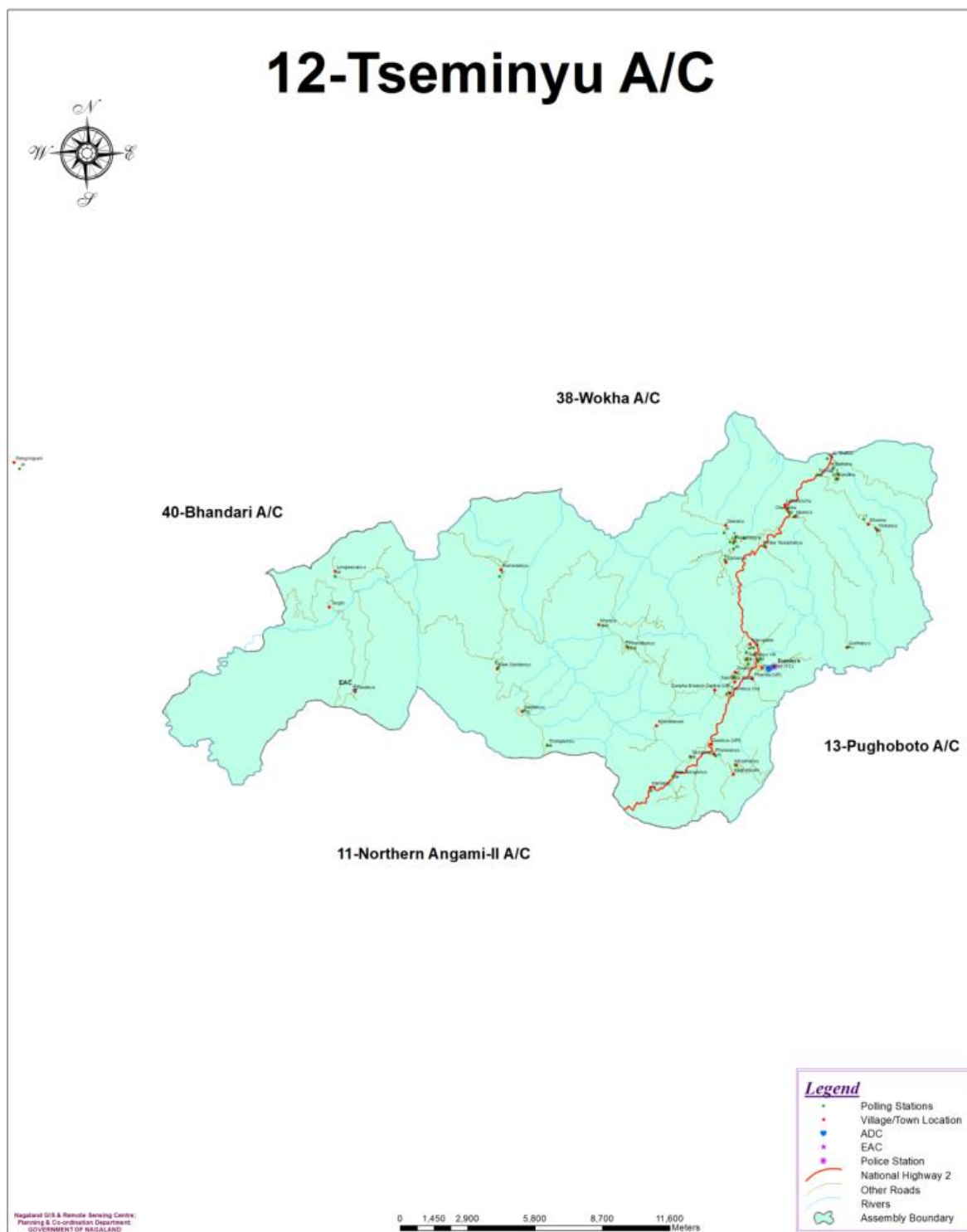
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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.0. Background**

The Nagas are people living in the hilly region of North-East India and on the border of Myanmar. The Nagas are a Mongoloid race speaking the Tibeto-Burman languages. The major tribes are namely: Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Khamniungan, Konyak, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sümi, Yimkhiong and Zeliang. This different tribe speaks their own tribal languages with numerous dialectical variations. Within the fourteen Naga tribes, as many as forty-eight dialects are spoken in the multi-lingual Naga society.

#### **1.1. History of the people**

The term Rengma is derived from the word “Rume” which means ghost. Before the arrival of the British, the Rengma Nagas called themselves “Nzonyu” which means the people of Nzon. J.P. Mills in his monograph on the “Rengma Nagas ” recorded different dialects of the Northern, Southern, and Eastern groups and other Rengmas in the west, in the hills of Assam. The Eastern group has now been identified as Pochury tribe and the western group has now been settled in Assam before the arrival of the British. The Rengmas are bounded by Lothas in the North, Angami in the South, Sümi in the east, and Assam in the west. The Rengmas are identified into two groups; the southern group that speaks Nzonkhwe and the Northern group that speaks Nthenyi. However, the Nzonkhwe of the Southern group widely spoken in Tseminyü area has been used as the Rengma official language for all purposes, in written and oral communication and also as a medium of instruction in churches, schools and social gatherings. According to the division of native villages based on the language spoken; twenty-six villages speak Nzonkhwe, eleven villages speak Nthenyi and four villages speak both Nzonkhwe and Nthenyi. As per the 2001 census 58,590 Rengma speakers are recorded and in 2011 census 65,328 native speakers were recorded. The Rengma Naga also falls under a large Tibeto-Burman language family. “The Rengma Nagas” written by J.P Mills (1936) states that both Lothas

and Rengmas were one tribe, but the splitting, reuniting and re-splitting of various sections of Rengmas have made the details of their later migrations difficult. The main outline of the story are, however, fairly clear. They, with the Angami, Semas and Lothas belong to the group of tribes that place their point to dispersal at Khezhakenoma, which the Rengmas called Khinzonyu, due east of Mao, on the border of the Naga Hills District and Manipur states. As with the other tribes, the cause of this dispersal is said to have been a dispute over the stone which had the miraculous power of increasing rice dried on it. The two sons quarreled over the questions of which had the right to use the stone. Their mother judged their quarrel, and wrongly gave the right to her younger son. Where upon the elder son and his men left the village and set off towards the north. His example was followed by other discontented families, and the migration began, which later split up into the Angami, sema, Lotha and Rengma tribes. According to the Rengma tradition the first recorded settlement of the undivided body of migrants was near the present Angami village of Khonoma. The rest marched towards the north and form a village at Therügunyu. At Therügunyu there were born, of a man named Rententsü, the three brothers, Khasa, Thongsü and Senteng. These three split the village up into different bodies and thus, slowly and gradually new villages began to emerge.

## **1.2. Geographical location**

Tseminyu is the 13<sup>th</sup> district of the Indian state of Nagaland. It was created on December 18, 2021. The new district has the same boundaries as the former Tseminyü sub-division of Kohima district. It is the district head quarter of the Rengma Nagas with a population of 63,269 (2011) and an area of 256 square kilometres. The district covers an area of 256 Km. The climate is sub-tropical with a monsoon season. The geographical coordination i.e. latitude and longitude of Tseminyü is 25.67 and 94.11 respectively.

Some of the locations of the Rengmas inhabiting in different regions are as follows:

### **1. Central Rengmas Tseminyu**

2. Eastern Rengmas under Phek district.
3. Western Rengmas in Karbi Anglong district of Assam

### **1.3. Migration route of the Rengmas**

The migration wave of the Rengmas are divided into different migration stage;

#### ***1st wave***

NzonTegibu, Keyhon, and Runga Logwa from Mt. Tergogvüthun to Tsogin and Lojvüo and Kvüda.

#### ***2nd Wave***

Ashonphu, Shwenga and Jwembu Logwa from Mt. Terogvüthun to TsoginLojvü. And 1<sup>st</sup> wave group to Bengal, Assam and Zeliang.

#### ***3rd Wave***

Kasha, Tsemi, Senden and Thongsü Logwa from Khwephen to their respective villages. And 2<sup>nd</sup> wave, first group to Assam.

#### ***4th wave***

Further splitting and dispersal from early settlement to Tsogin Lojvü

Gunyonyu from khwephen

Khwephen was abandoned

Lolaphen from Khwephen

Lolasunyu from Khwephen

Zunphanyu from Khwephen

Tsoginyu from Thongsunyu

Tselama from

Khwephen II from

Tesophenyu from Tseminyu

Meja Chakro Runako from

Tsokethonyu abandoned for epidemic

Tsokethonyu from

Nyetsonyu

From Sendenyu to Tsogin Lojvu villages

Pesonsunyu from Sendenyu

Phentetsonyu from

Logwessunyu restablished from sendenyu

Gishonyu from

Tserebinsunyu from

From Tseminyu to Tsogin Lojvu

Chudenbinsunyu from Tseminyu

Tseminyishunyu from Tseminyu

### ***5<sup>th</sup> wave***

Further migration and dispersal to Assam etc

Khenyu from Penshvünyu and Rasunyu

Tsegwenyu Phen Khwephen II Penshvünyu from Thongsunyu from present and also from Khwephen during land slide.

### ***6<sup>th</sup> wave***

Further migration and return of the ramnent from Chonsa-Moilan area to Tesophenyu and Aghonshu.

Penshvünyu from Thongsünyu

Lolaphen abandoned for landslide and sinking

Gvükhanyurestablished from Tseminyü.

From Tseminyu to Arinyu in Lotha area

Ramnent in Kvüda became kachari

Return of ramnent second party to Aghonshü from Chonsa-moilan

From Tsegwenyu Phen to Aghonshü

### ***7<sup>th</sup> wave***

Re-splitting of families in the northern villages

Aghonshüb to Kandinu

Return of Ramnent third party to Aghonshü from Chonsa-Moilan

Aghonshü to Kithaha

Thongsünyu abandoned again

### ***8<sup>th</sup> wave***

Dispersal to Meluri area and splitting

Kandinu and Kithaga migrated to Meluri area

Kandinu abandoned and shifted to Kithaga

Rümesinyu re-established from Tesophenyu

Tsosinyu re-established from Tesophenyu and Tseminyu for the third time

Logwesunyu established from Tsosinyu

Tsokenkhonyu from Günyonyu

### ***9<sup>th</sup> wave***

Migration of families

Kandinu re-established from Kithaga

Logwesunyu abandoned and shifted to Tsosinyu

Families from Kitami and Ghokimi migrated to Gvükhanyui and further shifted to Tseminyü

Families from Mishilimi migrated to Thyügwepekenyü

Families from Nerhema migrated to Kasha villages

Families from Latsümi migrated to Kasha villages

Phiro migrated to Tesophenyu

Latsümi migrated to Tesophenyu

Families from Phenshünyu shifted to Rümesinyu, Khenyu and Tsosinyu

Kithaga shifted families from Tesophenyu and Tseminyü joined Kithaga

Some families from Kandinu and Tesophenyu shifted to Tseminyü, Phenshünyu and Sendenyu.

### ***10<sup>th</sup> wave***

Shifting of residence on account of employment, posting and missionary service after the British administration in the Naga Hills and conversion to Christianity.

Eleventh wave

Establishment of new villages in the neighboring villages.

- a. K. Nyishunyu from Kandinu
- b. Kithaga to Nsünyu
- c. Tseminyu to zisunyu, Tseminyu Hq, Tseminyu New Town, Tsokeda, Ngvüphen, Tseminyu south village



- d. Kandinu to tsosesunyu, K.Station and Tsonsa Tsosesunyu changed to Ehunu
- e. Tsephenyu to Ziphenyu, Tseophenyu New and Siwanu
- f. Thyügewekedenyu: to Kasha Lorin, Kasha lorin changed to phenwehenyu  
Thyügewekedenyu changed to Kashanyu
- g. Günyonyu change to Kasha Lopen to Terogvünyu,fromTerogvünyu to  
khonebinzun new and villages.
- h. Phenwhenyu to Güjü village
- i. Kashanyu: to Kashanyishü village
- j. K.Nyishünyu to Yikhanu
- k. Logwesunyu re-established and chased away
- l. Tsosinyu re-established the abandoned Logwesunyu,again established  
Rengmapani village at the abandoned Zükenurinyu .Later Gwachonlo  
village was established from Tsosinyu.
- m. Rengmapani more families from Sendeny ,Phenshünyu, kasha group  
villages, tseminyu,Tesophenyu, kandinu and Nsünyu join them.
- n. Sendenyu: Sendenyu new and Thongsünyu was established.
- o. Phenshünyu: Phentejun village was established.
- p. Nsünyu: Chunlikha was established
- q. Tsokenkhonyu: became Angami. Thong. S. Joseph( 2016: 8-15)

#### **1.4. Culture and Tradition**

##### **1.4.1. Festival (Ngada Festival)**

Ngada is the greatest harvest festival of the Rengmas. The festival last for eight days. Ngada is celebrated just after the harvest, towards the end of November every year. This is a festival where the poor and rich share with each other without any distinction. During this festival the wrong doings of individuals against each other are forgiven and forgotten. It also marks the remembrance of the death ones by sharing drinks and food in the form of offering at their graveyards. Every Rengma village have their unique, rich and cherished historical legacy and it is handed down to the present generation.

The village high priest (Phesengu) announces the date of commencement of the festival.

*Significance and importance of seven day celebration of Ngada*

The first day (Zu KethuZon): It is called rice beer making day. This Day every home prepare rice beer (Zuthu) and make preparation of all kinds of eatable things for offering on the day Genna.

The Second day (Sika lo rünyiketsüzon): On this day the graves of ancestors and loved ones are repaired, and also the village surroundings are cleaned for the festival. The belief says that by repairing and cleaning of graves has manifold meanings. One is to make dead persons happy during Ngada and also that the deceased person who dies during the year stays at home till Ngada is celebrated, another is to get new strength in life.

The third day (Zu Kephen lo sika kentazon): It is called first tasting of rice beer and dead person's leaf-cup placing day. On this day after tasting of rice beer ceremony in the morning, mothers put leaf-cup on the graves of parents, grandparents, ancestors of their loved ones. The ancestors are remembered but no woman should make any offerings on the grave of ancestors that has the same name as her husband. If she does she will be widowed. The belief says that the spirit of the ancestors have power to influence the crops and prosperity of descendants. All the offerings are made in gratitude for the harvest that has been gathered.

The fourth day (kenyhun/Kechwezön): On this day traditional attires are worn for rejoicing and merry making. Ngada procession start from clans Morungs and end at morungs. Procession is usually led by villages priest and when procession come to the chieftains or rich men's compound, young people do stamping and dancing. The Procession ends at sunset.

The fifth day (Phenkerizon): On this day early morning every man goes to their clan's morung and offer Pita modhu (zenzü) to God and Goddess. And thereafter, all men folk walk in procession with full traditional attires and go round the

entire village and cast out (hasun arorin) harmful evil spirits by shouting. On this day, in-laws, relatives, family friends and villagers including unknown guests are welcomed to every house for feasting. On this day even the poorest feed his in-laws, relatives and friends. The feasting continues till the sunset.

During Ngada, the Rengmas also perform a folk dance, with traditional warrior attire. The sixth day (Rünsüzon): it is the day for visiting all the khels/houses. Not the whole village community but young men continue to wear the same traditional attire and go on singing, dancing from khel to khel and eat drink the whole day and collect rice and meat to be consumed on the last day of the ceremony. In the evening they gather in their respective morung and hold a grand feast which marks the last part of the celebration.

The seventh day: It is the last day of celebration. It is a taboo or genna to go to field on this day but can bring fire wood, thatch, house posts etc. On ninth day, the young men in every morung holds feast with the provisions they collected from every household on the previous day. In this closing ceremony, all traditional attires are cleaned up and kept in cane-basket. In this way, the celebration of Ngada comes to an end.

Ngada marks the end of the year and New year begins. As soon as the festival is over, preparation for the new cultivation begins. It is considered as taboo to start new activities for the next year and so every household will start from beginning as fresh and no one is barred from starting new work.

#### **1.4.2. Food**

Rice is considered as a staple food of the Rengmas. The food is usually prepared with the use of hearth and it is consumed with hands. All kinds of vegetarian and non vegetarian foods are an integral part of any meal. Their daily diet include beef, pork, chicken, mutton, fishes, birds, snails and varieties of worms. Smoked meat is commonly found in every household. Spices and chillies is used in all kinds of curries. Locally fermented rice beer from fruits and grains is also consumed by the local folks as it provide rich nutrients. Every household prepare two meals a day, the lunch is eaten early in the morning and dinner at the time of sunset. Henknjvü, meaning a green leaves curry is the main dish of the Rengmas.

The vegetarian dish is made of long slippery yam and seven varieties of leaves to make it delicious. Chilies are also added for the spice. It is commonly found in every household. It is a vegetarian dish and is good for health and it is even fed to infants as its paste is rich in fiber.

#### **1.4.3. Traditional attire**

The ornaments and particularly the clothes of the Nagas reflect a concern for minute identification of social organization and social status. The designs and color of cloths symbolize status such as village, clan, and Morung membership, and achievement of prestige status arising from head-taking and feasting exploits.

The traditional Rengma clothing consists of various types of clothes, which are indicative of the status and position of the weavers. About the time of marriage a man would put on a "Lengta" of the Sema pattern type (Nya tong). A man who has killed a tiger is allowed to have three circles of cowries which symbolizes the Tiger's eye on the outer lap. A man who has not been able to offer a great feast, or has never killed an enemy may wear an ordinary type of cloth called '*Rhikho*' or '*Hekho*'. *Rhikho* is a white cloth with four narrow black bands. This is worn by both young and old, the difference is being that a boy will wear one of two or three bands, according to his size. The number of black bands varies with the age of the wearers. *Moyettsu* is another ordinary type of cloth, worn by the young men. It is a dark blue cloth with a very broad median band, and embroidered with a thin zigzag pattern in red at the edges. *Alungtsu* is a cloth for well to do men who have not yet attained the great feast of merit. It is dark blue with four narrow red bands at the top and bottom and four white border median bands. *Akha haiya* is a cloth worn by a man in Northern Rengma villages to perform an expensive stone dragging ceremony. It is exactly like the "stone cloth" and it is rarely seen except that the two medial bands are embroidered with a Lozenge pattern in red. These shawls are taboo to men to be worn by ordinary persons who have not performed the feast of merit. These weavers should also abstain from physical relations with male members. *Phimhun* is a shawl worn only by male members. The white stripe along the middle white portion should be kept on the upper side of the shawl. *Phusenphi* or *Anyithsu* is worn by a virgin

boy. In order to wear this shawl a young boy must abstain from sexual relations. Chonyuphi is a shawl worn by males who have performed a series of rites. Jvudaphiis only worn by a man and his wife who have performed series of rites by performing a feast merit .Arrhi hu pi (enemies teeth cloth) or Anikezutsü (sap painted cloth) is worn by a western Rengma man to perform the head taking ceremony. The pattern on this band is traditional and is regarded as representing a decapitated men interspersed with men who have taken their heads. Teri Phiketsu is another essential cloth worn by the warriors who has brought trophies of human heads. The cloth is exactly like “Moyetsü” except the median white band is replaced by one band elaborately painted in black. Dr. Brown , writing when in Rengma country was in the process of being annexed, “Women are seen to-day in passing through the village of Tseminyu they are dressed similarly to the Angami Naga women; but scarcely wear their clothes so modestly; the common striped cloth striped cotton sheet is used in a skirt from waist downwards. The usual loose sheet is over the upper part of the body, which they don’t seem to be so careful in covering, the breast being frequently left quite bare. The hair is parted in the middle , and gathered over the areas behind with a loose knot, resting on the nape on the neck”.Nyamhun/aminishukonwo is a common lower garment of females .It can be worn by females of all ages ,forbidden to be worn by males. Before the first sign of puberty appears she assumes a narrow skirt about eighteen inches deep (‘nyatasingu’ or amenyiakhuki), the top third of which is grey and the bottom two-thirds dark blue with very narrow red bands. At the first sign of puberty she wears an outer skirt (nya or kekhalong) which is lengthened as she grows older. It is twenty-two to twenty –six inches deep and is tightly bound around the waist. It is dark blue with very thin red lines and a white median band five inches broad in the middle. If the husband of the weaver has done a Mithun sacrifice, the edges of the white band are embroidered in red. Phirhi/Ananthüsü is a common female shawl worn by females of all ages. It is a cotton shawl, with thin pink borders and black stripes. It comes in two pieces like other shawl. Khaho/Atemyeanyo Kezekiew is a shawl worn by wives and daughters who have done the Mithun sacrifice in the series of feast of merit . A cloth edged top and bottom with coweries between them about four inches in diameter, representing Tiger’s eyes. There is often a red coloured Dog’s hair in the middle of each circle, and the wing cases of

beetles. A cloth called “cowrie-swen cloths” tesukekha pi or aho ha tsu is often worn as outer skirts by girls and women during holidays. It is a dark blue cloth decorated with lines of cowries and cowries swen in fours to represent stars. Ginhunya is a common lower garment of females which can be worn by females of all ages without any restrictions. Male is forbidden to wear this cloth. The upper wear is of a smaller size and has lesser stripes but is of same colour. ‘Ginhuphi’ is female upper garment normally worn as a set with ‘ginhunya’. Phirhepi is the shawl which has three white bands in the centre of the red borders. It can be worn by females of all ages. Normally, it is worn as a set with Phirhenya (lower garment), it has five white bands in the centre of the red borders. Chonyuphi is a cloth worn by females who have performed the rites (Mills J.P :1937).

#### **1.4.4. Indigenous game**

Indigenous game play an important role in various communities. They are a part of people’s heritage and culture. Indigenous games have unique origin and they have been used to promote and preserve the age old tradition. Rengma Tribe performs an indigenous games known as Teme Tenyu. ‘Teme’ means Tiger and ‘Tenyu’ means Goat. In this game the Tiger and Goat is strategically positioned and the Tiger goes after the Goat. According to the tradition, the Rengmas and Lothas were once a single tribe. The oral tradition records the mighty struggle between the combined Rengma villages and the village of Phiro. Kethu, a traditional game of the Rengmas can be played by anyone at any given time. It is from this game that a person’s strength and stamina is recognized. A person who can withstand the pressure and onslaught of the others is considered to have the highest stamina of all.

#### **1.4.5. Marriage**

Nagas generally follow the exogamous principle in marriage. Person of the same clan do not inter-marry and any sort of physical intimacy is prohibited between them. Every Naga man marries and set up his own home however poor or rich he is. In Rengma society the marriage take place after puberty has been attained. However, marriage is not forced on them if they dislike each other. In western areas the rich parents arrange between a boy and a girl during infancy. It is

common to take a partner from the same village. If the whole village knows than the couple has to know each other well by working in the same field and the man becomes the girl's logwaponyu and the girl's the man Logwalenyu. These means no sense of physical intimacy should prevail between them. The practice of polygamy is practically unknown. In the due time the parents arrange and plan about their marriage. The marriage customs of Rengmas has many contrast with the western. Mills J.P (1937: 205-215). Children marry before puberty and polygamy is evident. In contemporary Rengma society marriage is usually arranged when a child attains a marriageable age. When the marriage is planned the betrothed couple offer gifts and invite each other. On the day of marriage there is merry making and feast is prepared and every one join the joyous celebration Thong.S.Joseph (2022:82).

#### **1.4.6. Kinship and inheritance**

Rengmas rules of inheritance is that all property goes to the male heirs. The Rengmas divide land equally among the male heirs. Some provision is kept for the widow from her husband till re-marriage or death. The western Rengma man marries and build a new house for his family. On the death of the father the widow may retain the house till her death or re-marriage, but may not sell it anything in the house. In case of misuse of property the male heirs may cease it. The eastern Rengmas custom is different. The eldest son marriages and brings his wife to his father's house. The father, with his wife and other children has to move out of the house after the next harvest and built a separate home. The same trend happens at the marriage of each son. On the death of man, the widow has the house and movable property but on her death the property goes to the eldest son who performs the death ceremonies of the father. Sometimes a rich Rengma man assign land on his daughters for her life. This case is common if a man does not have a male heir. The woman cannot sell off the land and may sell off to the male heirs of her father after her death. The Eastern Rengma woman brings the dowries of land on her marriage. After her death her husband can utilize this land but on his death it goes back to his father- inlaws-heirs. Mills J.P (1937: 142-145).

#### **1.4.7. Birth and death**

The Rengmas consider giving birth in the field as unlucky. The woman gives birth at her husband's place. Birth of a baby always takes place at the back of the inner room of the house and she is attended by some experienced woman, who is usually her mother-in-law and the mid-wife. The western Rengmas regard the absence of husband as unlucky during the birth of his child. His child will be considered as Tesingkhing and tesinü, meaning "stranger from another village". The Eastern Rengmas does not practice such things. The western Rengmas cut the cord with a bamboo knife and the easter with a sharp piece of wormwood stem. The western Rengmas name a child on the third day after birth. The name of the baby should not include the ones who has died an unnatural death. Eastern Rengmas name the baby boy on the sixth day and a girl on the fifth day. Anyone in the village can suggest the name of the baby and parents decide on the most liked ones. The western Rengmas believe that the soul of the dead men does not know at first that he is dead. Then he sees his own body lying in the outer room ready for burial and understands why his loved ones are weeping. He stays till the Ngada festival is which marks the close of the year. The soul goes to the land of the dead "Teronyuphong" after his soul has been refreshed by the food and drinks during the festival. After the death husband and wives are buried side by side. If a man has been a warrior during his life time a dog is tied near the body. The dogs are said to go ahead of the deceased master. The feet of the body is always taken out in front position during the procession, followed by relatives and friends who holds a spear and calls out the dead man not to be afraid on his way. In case a person dies an unnatural death, he is not buried in the village. They are buried outside the village and no rituals are performed. The household members observe mourning for several days with restriction to certain meats and drinking only rice beer.

#### **1.4.8. Feast of merit**

A central feature of traditional Naga life is the giving of what is known as feast of merit. Feast of merit is a ceremony where the community is fed with rice, rice beer, cattle and bulls slaughtered for the purpose. This is a common characteristic feature among all the Naga tribes where the rich people feed the entire part of the village ceremoniously for gaining status, social privilege and honor. Feast of



merit plays an important role in the life of all Naga tribe J.P.Mills (1937: 181). Feast of merit is distinct from life-cycle and from agriculture-cycle. The feast are ranked in importance and scale, each stage carries rights to new kinds of personal; adornment and house decoration, and prohibitions in terms of permitted foods. In each stage a great number of cattle is slaughtered and large amount of rice beer is prepared to fed the community. The feast of merit mark the social distinctions. A man who has wealth is considered as possession of fertility. The feast marks his status and spread of fertility among his fellow villagers. The feast of merit also share the idea of genna, a rite with taboo or prohibition. Phira.M (1937:2020).

### **1.5. Economy**

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Rengma Nagas. Terrace and Jhum cultivation are widely practiced by the tribal communities. Crops such as maize, millets, cotton, ginger, yam, chilies, and potatoes are cultivated. The local folks also rear live stocks as it is one of the main diet of the local people and also it plays an important role in enhancing the economy of the people. Women plays an active role in weaving different kinds of apparels, they contribute massively towards economic growth and prosperity. To strengthen the growth of economy Tseminyu being the newly formed district the government needs to upgrade industrial development, education, medical services and extend more financial help to the local people.

### **1.6. Education**

In the initial stage there were only local primary schools but at present the education system in Tseminyu town has been upgraded with the English medium schools affiliated to the NBSE (Nagaland Board of School Education). Free and mandatory education is provided to all the children above fourteen years. The Rengma community has also developed School academic textbooks prepared by translators, Language Officers and Language Assistants are reviewed and approved by the Literature Committee. Mother Tongue Subject in Rengma is now taught in schools up to class VIII. Class IX and X.MIL course in Rengma is under review by the Literature Board. Both Rengma and English were taught as subjects and medium of instructions in Schools from 1944. From 1958, Hindi

was introduced as well. English remained the medium with some explanations in Rengma. In Primary schools, Rengma was taught as a subject and a medium. In the present times, Rengma language is taught till class eight. At present Tseminyu district is also growing gradually in education with 88.49% literacy rate out of which 90.39% is male and 86.60% is female.

### **1.7. Rengma Language**

The Rengma Nagas are of two groups; the southern group that speaks Nzonkhwe and the Northern group that speaks Nthenyi. However, the Nzonkhwe of the Southern group widely spoken in Tseminyu area, is been used as the Rengma official language for all purposes, in written and oral communication and also as medium of instruction in churches, schools and social gatherings. The pioneer Rengma literature Nzonkhwe, following the steps of Rev.J.E Tanquist (who founded Shalom Bible Seminary in 1946) translated more hymnal, Bible, books and vernacular school text books from Angami into Rengma language. Therefore the British Government of Assam recognized and permitted them to use as school text books from 1943, broadcast in All India Radio Kohima from 1956. The Rengma Baptist Christian Association was formed in 1924 and the 1<sup>st</sup> conference of the association was held at Sendenyu in the month of January 1924. The Rengma Church Council and Bible Society of India developed hymnal and Bible in the Rengma common language of the Southern dialect- Nzonkhwe of Tseminyu area and have been using them as Rengma Official Language of all purposes, in written and oral communication in the Church Ministry, from the inception of Churches in the Rengma areas. However, formal approval order was issued only in 1979 as per the norms to regularize the recognition of the language. Therefore, the Southern dialect Nzonkhwe spoken in Tseminyu area which has been developed in its natural course of history is regarded as the Official Language of the Rengma tribe. (Thong.S.Joseph :2016)

### **1.8. The Native Villages that Speaks Nzonkhwe**

Tseminyu

Zisunyu

Gukhanyu

Tesophenyu Lower

Ziphenyu

Tsokedaphen

Ngvuphen

Tseminyu South

Terogvünyu New

Terogvünyu

Henbenji

Khonibinzun

Phenwhenyu

Gujü

Kashanyu

Kashanyishün

Phenshünyu

Phentejon

Khenyu

Rümesinyu

Sendenyu

Thongsünyu

Sendenyu New

Gwachonlo

Logwesunyu

Tsosinyu

### **1.9. Status of Rengma language**

The status of Rengma has made remarkable progress in the development of the language and literature compared to the previous periods. Numerous changes have taken place in the field of language and literature. Some of the developments of literature are mentioned below: In 1972, Shri.C.T Rengma was appointed as Rengma Translator in Education Department. The department Resource persons developed master copy of school text books in English and the state recognized tribes translated them into their respective languages after which the department published and supply to all Government Primary Schools in the state. Later a new vernacular text book from pre-primary to class 8 was developed by conducting workshop from time to time by Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore, under the supervision of Dr.K Kapfo, Smti. Lt. Sherhinle Keppen, language assistant/ language officer Rengma translated/ developed them from 1976-2005 after the approval by Rengma literature board. Class 7 and 8 text books were officially released by Shri.R Khing, Hon'bleParlimentary Secretary Horticulture Nagaland on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2005 at Tseminyü Town Baptist Church. Class 9 and 10 Modern Indian Language text book in Rengma, Rengma Grammar and dictionary have been developed by Joseph S. Thong L.O Rengma and Kesinle Khing LA/ALORengma from 2011-2015. It was reviewed and edited by Rengma Literature board and published in 2015. The Rengma Literature Board was formed in 1975 under the chairmanship of Shri. Riga Thong, Ex-minister and Shri. Shwehilo Keppen, secretary, RLB and approved by the state Government in 1979. In addition to the supervision works of the school text books as stated above, the Rengma Literature Board have published two reference books and reading materials:

1. JOJVULESU Rengma grammar and composition in 2013 and
2. JODENKON Rengma dictionary in 2015.

In addition to class 9 and 10 MIL text books officially released by Er. Levi Rengma, Honourable Parliamentary Secretary Housing Nagaland on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at Tseminyu Old Town Baptist Church. Few books/booklets on

culture, customary law, history, poetry and gospel literatures has been developed, compiled and translated and published in Rengma-Nzonkhwe from time to time by some individuals.

#### **1.10. The language classification**

The Rengma Naga also falls under a large Tibeto-Burman language family. Several different classifications have been proposed by many linguists. The most important of these include work by Grierson (1903) and Bradley (1997). Grierson (1903) classifies the Naga language into three groups, namely: Western Group, Central Group, and Eastern Group. Grierson (1903), claims that “Naga group of languages comprises a long series of dialects which naturally differ from each other. They are on the whole more closely related to the Burmese under Grierson classification, Rengma belongs to the “western sub-group” of the Tibeto-Burman languages of Nagaland along with Angami and Sumi.

Figure 3: Kuki-Chin-Naga (Bradley 1997)



Figure 1.1 Classification of Kuki-Chin- Naga group by Bradley

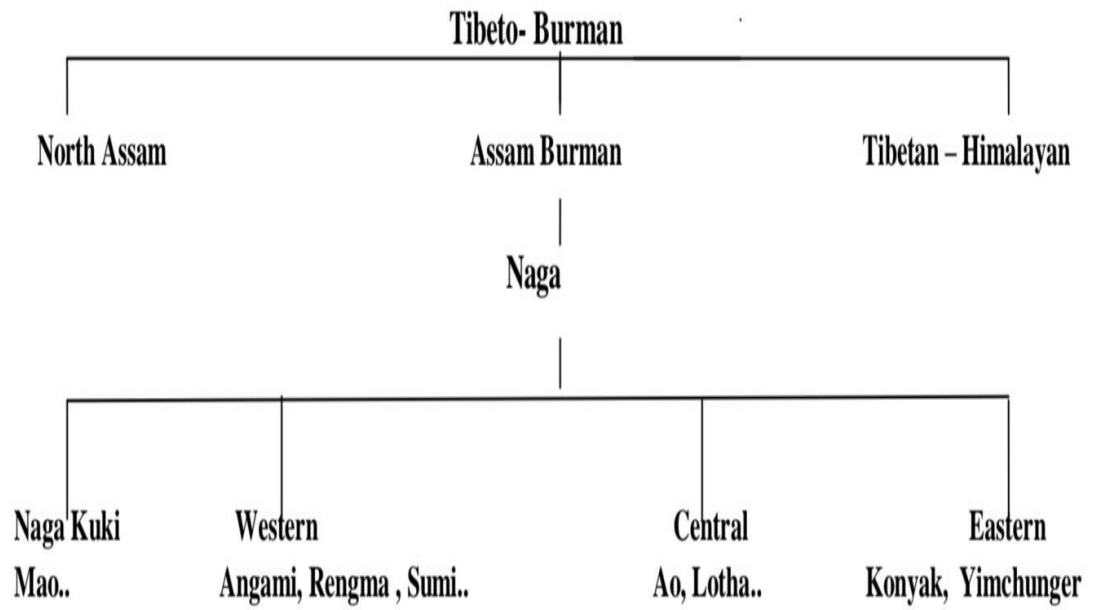


Figure 1. 2. Grierson's classification of the Sino-Tibetan language group  
(1903)

### **1.11. Review of literature**

The arrival of Christianity and Christian missionaries brought a considerable development in literature. The early Christian leaders like Rev. Selezhü Angami and Rev. Vilezhü Kent began to educate the converts to learn, read and sing the hymnals. Later under the guidance of American Baptist Missionaries like Rev. J.E. Tanquist translated the hymnals and bible portions into their mother tongue. Rev. J.E. Tanquist and Rev. Vilezhü Kent published the first literary work in the Rengma language: Hymnals and scripture portion in Rengma Naga which was published by American Baptist Mission Society, Kohima, Assam, 1924. The work contains 50 hymnals, scripture portions and 355 Rengma-Angami- English.



Vocabulary and also a beginners guide to reading and writing in Rengma. The works of the early foreign missionaries and literates were used as a study material in Rengma language. In 1950 the Rengma Literature Board was set up and in 1979 the Committee was recognized by the state government. In 1972, Shri. C.T Rengma was appointed as Rengma Translator in Education Department. Later on department resource persons developed master copies of school textbooks in English and the state-recognized tribes translated them into their respective languages after which the department published and supplied to all the Government Primary Schools in the state. Later a new vernacular textbook from pre-primary to class 8 was developed by conducting the workshop from time to time by the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore, under the supervision of Dr.K Kapfo and Smti. Sherhinle Keppen, language officer in 1976-2005 after the approval by the Rengma literature board. Class 7 and 8 textbooks were officially released by Shri. R Khing, 4th March 2005 at Tseminyü Town Baptist Church. Class 9 and 10 Modern Indian Language textbooks in Rengma, Rengma Grammar and dictionary have been developed by Joseph S. Thong LO Rengma and Kesinle Khing LA Rengma from 2011-2015. It was reviewed and edited by Rengma Literature Board and published in 2015. In addition to classes, 9 and 10 MIL textbooks were officially released on 14th November 2015 at Tseminyu Old Town Baptist Church. Some published works in Rengma are as under:

1. *Hymnal and Scripture portion in RengmaNaga* by Rev. J.E Tanquist and Rev.

Vilezü published by American Baptist Mission Society Kohima, Assam 1942.

2. *Hymnal in Rengma* published by a committee: 1. BaboAzutoRengma. II)

Babo Rüshvüyhun Kent . III) BaboKeyhon Thong and IV) P. Sentsin Kent.

3. *A primer book, “ Abakulesu ”* in Rengma by P. Sentsin Kent in 1940.

4. *Aesofables in RengmaNaga* translated by Babo Azuto Rengma in 1949.

5. *Four gospels in Rengmaby* KhetsoKeppen in 1952-53.

6. *Apostel* by KhetsoKeppen in 1954.
7. *Vernacular School Textbooks* for class A-II by C.T Rengma, Rengma.  
Translator, Education Department.
8. *New Testament* by Rev. M.K Lorin.
9. *Holy Bible* by M.K Lorin.
10. *School Textbooks* for class PP to VIII by SherhinleKeppen, LO (Rengma)  
School Education Dept. /CIIL Mysore.
11. *Jwenyukenjwe (Pilgrims progress)* by Joseph. S.Thong 1987.
12. *Rengma migration history* by ShwenkhaloTep. 2008.
13. *NzonyuLüron( Rengma poetry)* by Yhunilo Khing, DB, 2006.
14. *Rengma Grammar and Composition-* Joseph. S. Thong. 2012.
15. *Ethnology of Rengma prose and poetry* for class IX MIL Course by Joseph .S. Thong.
16. *The Rengma History and Culture* by Joseph .S.Thong, 2012.
17. *Nagaland Linguistic profile* by Joseph.S.Thong, 2013.
18. *Migration wave of the Rengmas* by Joseph. S. Thong. 2016.
19. *The Rengma official language* by Joseph.S. Thong. 2016
20. *Basic communication in Rengma* by Joseph.S. Thong and Hichulo Semy.

21. *Jodenkon-Rengma School Dictionary* – Joseph. S. Thong and Kesinle Khing.

22. *Hindi-Rengma- English Dictionary*- BB Kumar, Nagaland Bhasha Parishad.

23. *Rengma Hindi Self Teacher*- Nagaland Bhasha Parishad.

24. *Outline Grammar of Rengma*- Nagaland Bhasha Parishad.

Various literary works on culture, customary law, history, poetry and gospel literature have been developed, compiled, translated, and published so far. In terms of linguistics description of the language, few works (MA dissertation, Department of Linguistics, NU) are available on some selected topics. But an exhaustive phonological description of the language is the need of the hour.

### **1.12. Aim of the study**

Rengma community has made tremendous progress in various literary works but linguistic knowledge is unfamiliar to many and there is less linguistic work available in this language. This research is an effort to place information about the Rengma-Nzonkhwe language through an exhaustive linguistic description. There is an urgent need to create interest among the concerned community to study and value their own mother tongue and also to enlighten the uniqueness of their language. It will study the organized principles and information about the sound pattern in the language. The study will analyze the most important phonological concepts such as the distribution, variation, grouping and patterning of sounds in Rengma-Nzonkhwe. It will study the major phonological features of the language i.e., the discrete unit that is identifiable physically in the speech pattern. It will deal with the prosodic features and analyze how sounds are organized and articulated in the language.

### **1.13. Methodology and structure of the book**

The methods to collect appropriate data have been planned systematically. The proposed study has used a qualitative method for data collection. Primary data has been collected through experiments or surveys, interviews and the process of observation. Informants who are well aware of the cultural norms and values was chosen to collect the data. At least six to seven participants were selected from both the gender and different age groups. The proposed study used Zoom H4N voice recorder for better data recording. An acoustic analysis of the sound has been attempted by using PRAAT. The thesis consist 4 chapters, and each chapters has been discussed briefly below:

Chapter -1: In this chapter the socio-linguistic profile of the Rengma community, its history, geographical location, population, economy, literacy and status of Rengma language and teaching, etc at present has been discussed.

Chapter-2: This chapter discusses the phonological structure of Rengma, the phonemic inventory of Rengma, minimal pairs in the Vowels and Consonants of Rengma and their different levels of contrasts, diphthongs, consonant clusters and consonant sequence.

Chapter-3: This chapter discusses the supra segmental features and Phonological process.

Chapter-4: Major findings and conclusion about the language has been discussed.

## Chapter-2

### Segmental Phonology

#### 2.0. Introduction

Segmental phonology analyses speech into discrete segments, such as phonemes and studies the phonological rules that govern the way sounds function in a language and sound patterns. According to the Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics (2014) “ Any element, at any level of representation, which is described as forming sequences with others. Thus phonemes are in general segments; also morphemes. Hence, especially in the analysis of sound systems, where consonants and vowels are distinguished as the topic of segmental phonology from supra segmental tones or units of intonation. Segmentation is likewise any process, in descriptive analysis or in speech processing, by which a form of representation at one level is divided into a succession of discrete units at another: e.g. one which splits a representation of continuous speech into successive phonemes”.

#### 2.1. Consonants

“ In phonetic terms, most consonants are sounds in whose production the flow of air is obstructed at some point in the mouth, throat, or larynx, atleast sufficiently to cause audible friction is called: i.e. they are produced with a degree of stricture greater than open approximation ( Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics: 2014)”. The study found out 28 consonantal phonemes in Rengma –Nzonkhwe: They are: **p, p<sup>h</sup>, b, t, t<sup>h</sup>, d, k, k<sup>h</sup>, g, m, n, ɲ, ŋ, r, f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h, ts, tʃ, dʒ, l, w, ɹ, j**. The 28 consonants of Rengma-Nzonkhwe represents seven distinctive places of articulation, viz. bilabial, labio-dental, alveolar, post-alveolar, palatal, velar, and glottal and seven distinctive manner of articulation, viz. stops, nasals, trill, fricatives, affricates , approximants, and lateral approximants.

The table of consonants follows the conventional form of presentation in which the place of articulation is found on the horizontal axis and the manner of articulation is on the vertical axis. When there is a contrast in voicing, the sound

on the left is voiceless and the sound on the right is voiced. There are nine stops out of which three are aspirated, six are voiceless and three are voiced. There are four nasals, one trill, seven fricatives, three affricates, one lateral approximant and three approximants.

	<b>Bilabial</b>	<b>Labio-Dental</b>	<b>Alveolar</b>	<b>Post-Alveolar</b>	<b>Palatal</b>	<b>Velar</b>	<b>Glottal</b>
<b>Stops</b>	p      b p <sup>h</sup>		t      d t <sup>h</sup>			k      g k <sup>h</sup>	
<b>Nasals</b>	m		n		ɲ	ŋ	
<b>Trill</b>			r				
<b>Fricatives</b>		f      v	s      z	ʃ      ʒ			h
<b>Affricates</b>			ts	tʃ      dʒ			
<b>Lateral Approximant</b>			l				
<b>Approximant</b>	w		ɹ		j		

Table no.2.1. Consonants of Rengma-Nzonkhwe

### 2.1.1. Consonant Minimal Pairs

Rengma-Nzonkhwe has 28 consonant phonemes and contrasts are shown in terms of place and manner of articulation.

#### Plosives

##### Contrast of /p/ versus /b/

/pĩ/	‘bangle’	/bĩ/	‘seat’
/pĩ.dá/	‘extremely foolish’	/bĩ.dá/	‘center’
/pě/	‘fresh spring water’	/bě /	‘to hatch’

##### Contrast of /p/ versus /pʰ/

/pĩ/	‘bangles’	/pʰĩ/	‘bind’
/pě/	‘to’	/pʰě/	‘opening the flow of water’
/pě/	‘grain’	/pʰě/	‘lung’

##### Contrast of /t/ versus /d/

/tí/	‘reach’	/dí/	‘slap’
/tè/	‘decay’	/dè/	‘to paste’
/taĩ/	‘encroachment’	/daĩ/	‘too fat’

##### Contrast of /t/ versus /tʰ/

/tè/	‘rotten’	/tʰě/	‘follow’
/tố/	‘appropriate’	/tʰố/	‘arrow’

##### Contrast of /k/ versus /g/

/kâ/	‘house’	/gâ/	‘to kill an animal with spear’
/kũŋ/	‘cold’	/gũŋ/	‘to return home’



### **Contrast of /k/ versus /kʰ/**

/kà/	‘bind’	/kʰā/	‘demand’
/kē/	‘knee’	/kʰē/	‘leave’
/kò/	‘call’	/kʰô/	‘knee’

### **Nasals**

#### **/m/ vs /n/**

/mé/	‘root’	/né/	‘receive’
/mì/	‘physical structure’	/ní/	‘cook’

#### **/m/versus /ŋ/**

/mâ/	‘fire’	/ŋâ/	‘ulcer’
/ámā/	‘tail’	/áŋá/	‘baby’

#### **/p/versus /ŋ/**

/pá/	‘trouser’	/ŋá/	‘festival’
/pá.dá/	‘wrap’	/ŋá.dá/	‘harvest festival’

#### **/r/versus /ɹ/**

/rí/	‘stitch’	/ɹí/	‘intestine’
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### **Fricatives**

#### **/f/ versus/v/**

/fê.lā/	‘something that has been found’	/vê.lā/	‘beaten’
/fê/	‘mat’	/vê/	‘beat’

### **/s/ versus /z/**

/sí/ ‘die’

/zí/ ‘pond’

/sĩ/ ‘add’

/zĩ/ ‘filter’

### **/h/ versus /s/**

/hí/ ‘this’

/sí/ ‘to die’

/hě/ ‘cover’

/sě/ ‘use’

### **/h/ versus /z/**

/hō.ɸə/ ‘release’

/zō.ɸə/ ‘tell’

/hó/ ‘party’

/zó/ ‘speak’

### **/ʃ/ versus /ʒ/**

/ʃě/ ‘small’

/ʒě/ ‘machete’

/ʃá/ ‘knowing’

/ʒá/ ‘pour’

## **Affricates**

### **/ts/ versus /dʒ/**

/tsə/ ‘drink’

/dʒə/ ‘slap’

### **/tʃ/ versus /dʒ/**

/tʃě/ ‘liquor vat’

/dʒě/ ‘age’

/tʃó/ ‘mating’

/dʒò/ ‘word’

### **/l/ versus /j/**

/jě/ ‘thousand’

/lě/ ‘is’

### **/w/ versus /l/**

/wá/ ‘love affair’

/lâ/ ‘pot’

### **ɹ/versus /j/**

/ɹ̃/ ‘intestine’

/jĩ/ ‘tongue’

/a.ɹí/ ‘its intestine’

/a.jí/ ‘its tongue’

Minimal pairs for the lateral approximants, that is, /l/, /r/ and /w/ and affricate /j/ are rare in the consonant phonemes of Rengma-Nzonkhwe.

## **2.1.2. Distribution of consonants**

### **Bilabial stops : /p/, /p<sup>h</sup>/ and /b/**

/p/ is a voiceless bilabial stop and /p<sup>h</sup>/ is a voiceless aspirated bilabial stop and occurs in the initial and medial position. /b/ is a voiced stop and it occurs in initial and medial position.

#### **/p/**

##### **Initial**

/pə.ɹú/ ‘jhum’

/pē.ri/ ‘snake’

/pe.tú/ ‘cap’

##### **Medial**

/kə.pè/ ‘wrestle’

/sî.pě/ ‘following’

/k<sup>hi</sup>.pe.bĩ/ ‘deposit’

#### **/p<sup>h</sup>/**

##### **Initial**

/p<sup>ha</sup>.lũ/ ‘ladder’

/p<sup>hi</sup>/ ‘cloth’

/p<sup>hā</sup>.rō/ ‘rake’

##### **Medial**

/mā.p<sup>hũ</sup>/ ‘hearth’

/p<sup>hā</sup>.fə/ ‘my cloth’

/tsò.p<sup>hā</sup>/ ‘duck’

**/b/**

**Initial**

/bà/ ‘fart’

/bě/ ‘bright’

/bě / ‘to hatch’

**Medial**

/kə.bà/ ‘wrong’

/kə.bě/ ‘bright’

/təbó/ ‘pig’

**Alveolar stop: /t/ and /tʰ/**

/t/ is a voiceless alveolar stop and occurs in initial and medial position while /tʰ/ is voiceless aspirated alveolar stop and occurs in both initial and medial position.

**/t/**

**Initial**

/tə.mì/ ‘human’

/tə.hě/ ‘jungle’

/tì.lā/ ‘reach’

**Medial**

/à.tí/ ‘to reach’

/kâ.tī/ ‘courtyard’

/khò.tó/ ‘level’

**/tʰ/**

**Initial**

/tʰá.kʰĩ/ ‘box’

/tʰá.kəĩ.ní/ ‘thread’

/tʰón/ ‘long’

**Medial**

/sâ.tʰə/ ‘partition’

/sî.tʰě/ ‘following’

/sè.tʰə.lā/ ‘tore’

**Alveolar stop: /d/** is a voiced alveolar stop and it occurs in the initial and medial position.

**/d/**

**Initial**

/dō/ ‘weave’

/dà.pé/ ‘very fat’

/dà/ ‘fat’

**Medial**

/kə.dá/ ‘large’

/à.dá/ ‘uncle’

/sè.dō/ ‘back of the head’

**Velar stop: /k/ and /k<sup>h</sup>/**

/k/ is a voiceless velar stop and it occurs in initial and medial position and /k<sup>h</sup>/ is a voiceless aspirated velar stop and occurs in initial and medial position.

**/k/**

**Initial**

/kə.hí/ 'breeze'  
/kə.sî/ 'dry'  
/kə/ 'tie'

**Medial**

/hì.ká/ 'here'  
/kə.bî.kā/ 'dwell'  
/pê.kə.dû/ 'see upwards'

**/k<sup>h</sup>/**

**Initial**

/k<sup>h</sup>î.fə/ 'give'  
/k<sup>h</sup>à.ʒə.nā/ 'tax'  
/k<sup>h</sup>î.zə/ 'bee'

**Medial**

/dī.k<sup>h</sup>ò/ 'rate'  
/kâ.k<sup>h</sup>î/ 'door'  
/kə.k<sup>h</sup>î/ 'end'

**Voiced velar stop: /g/** is a voiced velar stop and occurs in initial and medial position.

**/g/**

**Initial**

/gà.kə.lā/ 'killing'  
/gû/ 'to go away'  
/gə.n.dā/ 'Rhinoceros'

**Medial**

/tsə.gà/ 'chew'  
/kə.gá/ 'fight'  
/tə.gí/ 'iron'

**Nasals**

**Bilabial nasal : /m/** is a voiced bilabial nasal sound and it occurs in initial and medial position.

**/m/**

**Initial**

/mè.tsê/ ‘black’  
/mâ.kê.bě/ ‘lamp’  
/mâ.gī/ ‘charcoal’

**Medial**

/kâ.mí/ ‘family’  
/kén.tò.ìò.mè/ ‘cob web’  
/ʃě.mě/ ‘one month’

**Alveolar nasal:** /n/ is a voiced alveolar nasal sound occurs in initial and medial position.

**/n/**

**Initial**

/ní.ʃə/ ‘sent’  
/ní/ ‘thread’  
/nîŋ.pé / ‘sent to’

**Medial**

/kéní/ ‘nearby’  
/tsó.ní/ ‘again’  
/kàn.dō/ ‘your wish’

**Palatal nasal:** /ɲ/ is voiced palatal nasal sound and it occurs in the initial and medial position.

**/ɲ/**

**Initial**

/ɲá/ ‘trouser’  
/ɲá.wú/ ‘cat’  
/ɲá/ ‘trouser’

**Medial**

/t<sup>h</sup>é.kə.ɲé/ ‘in practice’  
/sè.ɲě/ ‘clan’  
/kē.tě.sə.ɲə/ ‘small red ant’

**Velar nasal:** /ŋ/ is voiced velar nasal sound and it occurs in initial, medial and final position.

**/ŋ/**

**Initial**

/ŋé/ ‘burning sensation’  
/ŋì/ ‘gum’  
/ŋà/ ‘festival’

**Medial**

/áŋá/ ‘baby’  
/ʔě.tsì.ŋà/ ‘centenary’  
/t<sup>h</sup>á.zəŋ.sə/ ‘symbol’

**Final**

/bîŋ/ ‘tree’  
/t<sup>h</sup>əŋ/ ‘staff’  
/t<sup>h</sup>á.zəŋ/ ‘noun’

**Trill:** /r/ is a voiced alveolar trill and it occurs in the initial position.

### Initial

/rá/ ‘serve’

/rè/ ‘bind’

**Fricative sounds:** The fricative sounds available in Rengma language are: /f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/. Fricative sounds are articulated by close approximation of two articulators so that the airstream is partially obstructed and turbulent airflow is produced.

/f/ is a voiceless labio-dental fricative sound. It occurs in initial and medial position.

The production of /f/ requires the upper teeth and the lower teeth to come so close that when air flows through the mouth, friction is produced. It occurs in the initial and medial position in Rengma language.

### /f/

#### Initial

/fə/ ‘mat’

/fə.lā/ ‘goal’

/fə.dá/ ‘nettle’

#### Medial

/kâ.fə.p<sup>h</sup>ě/ ‘window’

/kâ.fə.kə p<sup>h</sup>ě/ ‘side door’

/t<sup>h</sup>ā.fə/ ‘searching for something’

### /v/

#### Initial

/və.lā/ ‘beat’

/və/ ‘spoiled’

/á.və/ ‘mine’

#### Medial

/kə.və/ ‘trouble’

/lé.və/ ‘Catapult’

/ká.və/ ‘fight’

**Alveolar fricative:** /s/ and /z/

/s/ is a voiceless alveolar fricative and /z/ is a voiced alveolar fricative. /s/ occurs in the initial and medial position and /z/ occurs in all the three positions.

/s/

**Initial**

/sĩ/ 'ten thousand'

/sêŋ/ 'use'

/sâ.t<sup>h</sup>ẽ/ 'partition'

**Medial**

/kə.só/ 'love'

/və.sa.la/ 'badly beaten'

/lə.sə/ 'paper'

/z/

**Initial**

/zê.rí/ 'river'

/zê.dá/ 'sea'

/zê.kə.dĩ/ 'drought'

**Medial**

/kə.zə/ 'brief' or 'short'

/mâ.zə/ 'fuel'

/kə.zì/ 'blue'

**Final**

/mĩz/ 'table'

**Post-alveolar fricative:** /ʃ/ and /ʒ/

/ʃ/ is voiceless post-alveolar fricative and /ʒ/ is a voiced post-alveolar fricative which occurs in initial and medial position.

/ʃ/

**Initial**

/ʃə/ 'vote'

/ʃé.hé/ 'generation'

/ʃè/ 'vote'

**Medial**

/zó.ʃə/ 'tell'

/ʒà.ʃə/ 'pour'

/kâ.ʃò.ĩō.və/ 'broom'

/ʒ/

**Initial**

/ʒá.dʒé/ 'straight'

/ʒê.ʃá/ 'pot'

/ʒê/ 'sleep'

**Medial**

/kə.ʒõ.və/ 'hammer'

/t<sup>h</sup>è.ʒẽ/ 'deer'

/ʒà.tẽ.ʒà.ĩẽ/ 'stiff weeds'

**Glottal fricative:** /h/ is voiceless glottal fricative which occurs in initial and medial position.

/h/

**Initial**

/hí/ 'this'

/há/ 'what'

/hó.í.ʃà/ 'mango'

**Medial**

/tə.hí/ 'dog'

/tə.rí.hō/ 'thirsty'

/k<sup>h</sup>ĩ.hó/ 'traditional mattress'



## Affricate

/t͡s/ is a voiceless alveolar affricate and it occurs in initial and medial position.

### Initial

/t͡sə.kĩ/ 'there'  
/ t͡sə.ɲé/ 'ten'  
/t͡sɛ/ 'drink'

### Medial

/kə.t͡sô/ 'hoeing'  
/jə.t͡sí/ 'full knot'  
/thá.t͡sí.kə.t͡sə/ 'sampling'

**Post-alveolar affricate:** /t͡ʃ/ is voiceless post-alveolar affricate sound which occurs in initial and medial position.

/t͡ʃ/

### Initial

/t͡ʃé/ 'eat'  
/t͡ʃɛ.mé/ 'one year'  
/t͡ʃɛ/ 'spoon'

### Medial

/d͡ʒò.t͡ʃə/ 'blessing'  
/hà.t͡ʃò/ 'sand'  
/ sò.t͡ʃə/ 'curse'

**Post-alveolar affricate:** /d͡ʒ/ is voiced post-alveolar affricate which occurs in initial and medial positions.

/d͡ʒ/

### Initial

/d͡ʒà.bə.ʒà.jə/ 'thick weeds in the field'  
/d͡ʒò.bí/ 'topic'  
/d͡ʒo.ke.ɲa/ 'firstly'

### Medial

/fʷi.kàn.d͡ʒə/ 'grace'  
/ʒə.d͡ʒé/ 'straight'  
/kà.d͡ʒá/ 'process of shifting'

## Lateral approximants

/l/ is a palatalized voiced alveolar lateral approximant which occurs in initial and medial position.

/l/

### Initial

/lâ.kʰí/ 'jar'  
/lesə/ 'book'  
/lo.kʰu/ 'basket'

### Medial

/mə.ʃə.lā/ 'jacket'  
/sə.ló/ 'youth'  
/zə.lu/ 'bath'

/w/ is a voiced bilabial approximant and occurs in medial and final position.

**/w/**

**Initial**

**Medial**

/wá/ 'love affair'

/á.jé.ká.wá/ 'skillfull'

/wè / 'asking'

-

/ɹ/ is an alveolar approximant. It occurs in the initial and medial position.

**/ɹ/**

**Initial**

**Medial**

/ɹó.jé/ 'ornament'

/áɹá/ 'tip'

/ɹè.jí/ 'village'

/ʈʰä.ɹü/ 'rod'

/ɹâ.hõ/ 'encircle'

/tè.ɹo.kâ/ 'hen coop'

Palatal semi-vowel affricate or approximant: /j/ is voiced which occurs in initial and medial position.

**/j/**

**Initial**

**Medial**

/jə/ 'knot'

/a.ji/ 'my tongue'

/jə.ʈí/ 'full knot'

/á.jé.g<sup>w</sup>á.sá/ 'skillfully'

/jə.bé/ 'half knot'

/ʒè.jí/ 'machete's blade'

<b>Consonants</b>	<b>Initial</b>	<b>Medial</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>p</b>	+	+	—
<b>p<sup>h</sup></b>	+	+	—
<b>b</b>	+	+	—
<b>t</b>	+	+	—
<b>t<sup>h</sup></b>	+	+	—
<b>d</b>	+	+	—
<b>k</b>	+	+	—
<b>k<sup>h</sup></b>	+	+	—
<b>g</b>	+	+	—
<b>m</b>	+	+	—
<b>n</b>	+	+	—
<b>ɲ</b>	+	+	—
<b>ŋ</b>	+	+	+
<b>r</b>	+	+	—
<b>f</b>	+	+	—
<b>v</b>	+	+	—
<b>s</b>	+	+	—
<b>z</b>	+	+	+
<b>ʃ</b>	+	+	—
<b>ʒ</b>	+	+	—
<b>h</b>	+	+	—
<b>ts</b>	+	+	—
<b>tʃ</b>	+	+	—
<b>dʒ</b>	+	+	—
<b>l</b>	+	+	—
<b>w</b>	+	+	—
<b>ɹ</b>	+	+	—
<b>j</b>	+	+	—

Table no.2.2. Distribution of consonants

### 2.1.3. Consonant cluster

Consonant cluster are group of two or more consonants. A consonant cluster can appear at the initial, medial and final positions of the word. In Rengma-Nzonkhwe the consonant cluster are found in onomatopoeia. The examples are shown below.

pɪa.pɪa	‘thunder sound’
pɪo.pɪo	‘rain sound’
p <sup>h</sup> ɪ.p <sup>h</sup> ɪ	‘sound of a flying bird’
bɪ.bɪ	‘sound made by hasty action’
tɪ.tɪ / kɪ.kɪ	‘calling of chicken’
dɪoŋ.dɪoŋ	‘noise made by a rolling object’
kɪiŋ.kɪiŋ	‘falling of utensils’
k <sup>h</sup> ɪaŋ.k <sup>h</sup> ɪaŋ	‘noise from neighbor’s house’
zɪ.zɪ	‘sound made by a spinning object’
tsɪ.tsɪ	‘noise made by leaking water in a tight container’ / ‘sound made by a cricket’

Consonants	
p	ɪ
p <sup>h</sup>	ɪ
b	ɪ
t	ɪ
d	ɪ
k	ɪ
k <sup>h</sup>	ɪ
z	ɪ
ts	ɪ

Table no.2.3. Consonants cluster in Rengma-Nzonkhwe

#### 2.1.4. Consonant sequence

Consonant sequence is the occurrence of more than one consonant beyond the syllable without any vowel intervention. In Rengma-Nzonkhwe, it is found that the consonant sequence occurs in medial positions. The examples are given below.

##### Nasal + Stop

/kèn.dà/	‘famine’
/kàn.dō/	‘measure’
/tsân.kəĩ/	‘rain’
/kòn.k <sup>l</sup> è/	‘cucumber’
/kén.tè.ɬò/	‘spider’
/k <sup>h</sup> ón.t <sup>h</sup> ón/	‘bench’
/gən.dā/	‘rhinoceres’
/sən.p <sup>h</sup> õ/	‘bat’
/kəm.bû/	‘wind’
/kən.tõ/	‘race’

##### Nasal + Fricative

/zèn.sĩlõ/	‘birth of another child’
/kēn.ʃ <sup>w</sup> é.ʃà/	‘brinjal’
/ʒôn.ʃən/	‘Thursday’
/hén.zí/	‘forty’
/bén.ʒē/	‘hand glove’
/k <sup>h</sup> in.sú/	‘hornbill’
/k <sup>h</sup> in.ʃé./	‘open’
/ʒen.ʃen/	‘knife’
/tsûŋ.ʃà/	‘bottle gourd’
/hên.zə/	‘soup’
/pèn.ʒ <sup>w</sup> í/	‘lukewarm’

**Nasal + Affricate**

/kən.tʃ <sup>w</sup> ɪ/	‘high jump’
/t <sup>h</sup> ɪ.kən.tʃ <sup>w</sup> ā/	‘coward’

**Nasal + Lateral**

/k <sup>h</sup> ín.lā/	‘shut’
/k <sup>h</sup> ún.lô/	‘terrace field’
/tsên.lú/	‘mid night’

**Nasal + Approximant**

/kan..ɯŋ/	‘empty’
/sên..ɪõ/	‘stick’
/ʒen.jí/	‘machete’s blade’

Consonants	
k	d
k	k
k	b
k	t
k	k
k <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup>
ts	k
g	d
s	p <sup>h</sup>
z	s
k	ʃ <sup>w</sup>
ʒ	ʃ
h	z
s	n
ɲ	ʒ <sup>w</sup>
k	ɟ <sup>w</sup>
k	ɟ <sup>w</sup>
k <sup>h</sup>	l
ts	l
k	ɾ
s	ɾ
ʒ	j

Table no.2.4. Consonant sequence in Rengma-Nzonkhwe

### 2.1.5. Vowels

Vowels can be distinguished in terms of quality (the precise combination of sound frequencies which make it up, determined by the position of tongue, lips and other articulators) and quantity (how long the sound last) as noted by Spencer (1996). This is largely because there is no noticeable obstruction in the vocal tract during their production. The Rengma-Nzonkhwe has six vowel sounds, namely /i, e, ə, a, o, u/ of which /i/ and /e/ are front unrounded vowels; /ə/ and /a/ are central unrounded vowels; and /o/ and /u/ are back rounded vowels. The vowel /i/ and /u/ are high vowels; the vowels /e, ə, o/ are mid vowel; and the vowel /a/ is the only low vowel in Rengma. The vowels has their way of contrast according to the tongue height, tongue position and lip rounding and also description and distinction according to front, central and back. All vowel sounds are voiced in Rengma-Nzonkhwe. The vowel /a/ occurs in initial, medial and final position whereas the vowels /i,e,ə,o,u/ occurs only in the medial and final position. Vowels in Rengma-Nzonkhwe are phonemes and not allophones. Rengma- Nzonkhwe has no possible diphthongs.

Vowels in Rengma-Nzonkhwe are shown below

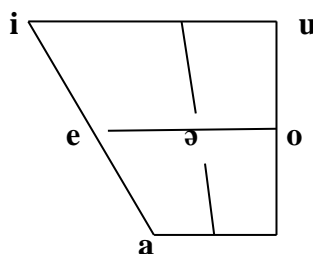


Fig.no 2.1. Vowels of Rengma-Nzonkhwe

The phonemic contrasts of vowels are realized based on the three criteria used for classifying vowels as mentioned below.

1. The part of the tongue are;
  - a. Front vowels
  - b. Back vowels
  - c. Central vowels



2. The height of the tongue;
  - a. Close vowels (High vowels)
  - b. Half -close vowels (High- mid vowels)
  - c. Half –open vowels ( Low- mid vowels)
  - d. Open vowels (Low vowels)
  
3. Lip rounding
  - a. Rounded
  - b. Unrounded

### 2.1.6. Vowel Minimal Pairs

#### /i/versus /u/

/mí/	‘spear’	/mú/	‘sin’
/zì/	‘pond’	/ zù/	‘alcohol’
/pê.bĩ/	‘large paddy pounding table’	/pê.bũ/	‘single hole pounding table’

#### /i/ versus /o/

/dĩ/	‘slap’	/dõ/	‘weaving’
/sí/	‘to die’	/sô/	‘to stand’
/sê.tĩ/	‘use’	/sê.tó/	‘stick’
/tsã.kĩ/	‘there’	/tsã.kò/	‘that one’

#### /u/ versus /o/

/k <sup>h</sup> ê.dũ/	‘slope’	/k <sup>h</sup> ê.dõ/	‘upright folding of legs’
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#### /ə/ versus /o/

/hê.tsə.ĩõ/	‘sixty’	/hê.tsə.ĩã/	‘leaf’
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#### /i/ versus /e/

/pĩ/	‘deaf’	/pê/	‘mushroom’
/sí/	‘to add more’	/sé/	‘to transplant’
/gĩ/	‘clay’	/gê/	‘abroad’

**/i/ vs /a/**

/gĩ/	‘skin’	/gà/	‘kill’
/hĩ/	‘this’	/há/	‘what’
/kə.sĩ/	‘death’	/kə.sà/	‘lie’
/té.kĩ/	‘that side’	/té.kā/	‘nearby’
/hà.dà/	‘plain’	/hà.hì/	‘claim of ownership’

**/e/ vs /a/**

/tjẽ/	‘spoon’	/tjã/	‘make’
/kẽ/	‘kick’	/kâ/	‘house’

**/e/ vs /o/**

/á.sẽ/	‘side’	/á.sõ/	‘above’
/á.lẽ/	‘a girl’	/á.lõ/	‘a boy’
/k <sup>h</sup> ẽ/	‘leave’	/k <sup>h</sup> õ/	‘open’
/tsẽ/	‘broken’	/tsõ/	‘stone’

**/a/ vs /o/**

/lõ.lã/	‘taken’	/lõ.lõ/	‘take’
/kẽ.ká/	‘bite’	/kẽ.kó/	‘strong’
/kə.ní.lã/	‘deny’	/kə.ní.lõ/	‘save’
/kə.lã/	‘shifting through marriage’	/kə.lõ/	‘relationship’
/à.tsá/	‘elders’	/à.tsó/	‘scratch’
/á.rá/	‘tips’	/á.rõ/	‘branches’

**/a/versus /u/**

/lâ/	‘pot’	/lù/	‘lick’
/kə.lâ/	‘over flow’	/kâ.lù/	‘marry’

**/i/ versus /ə/**

/zí/	‘blood’	/zê/	‘water’
/kə.dì/	‘an act of beating’	/kə.dõ/	‘to trample over’

/hě.zí/	‘forty’	/hě.zě/	‘soup’
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**/u/ vs /ə/**

/dù/	‘to chop’	/də/	‘act of displaying’
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**/a/ vs /ə/**

/mâ/	‘fire’	/má/	‘people’
/rà/	‘serve’	/rə/	‘cut’
/sā/	‘to cheat somebody’	/sə/	‘pain’

**2.1.7. Distribution of vowels**

The vowels in Rengma-Nzonkhwe are /i, e, ə, a, o, u/ occurring in initial, medial and final positions. The examples are given below;

/a/ is a back open unrounded vowel. It occurs in initial, medial and final positions.

<b>Initial</b>		<b>Medial</b>		<b>Final</b>	
/à.kā/	‘my house’	/mari/	‘pickle’	/lá/	‘pot’
/á.rō/	‘branches’	/dà.pé/	‘very fat’	/kə.bī.kā/	‘dwell’
/à.tsó/	‘scratch’	/mā.zě/	‘fuel’	/hì.ká/	‘here’

/ə/ is a central unrounded vowel. It occurs in medial and final positions.

<b>Medial</b>		<b>Final</b>	
/zə.dá/	‘see’	/kə.zə/	‘brief’
/zə.rí/	‘river’	/fə/	‘vote’
/dʒ.ə/	‘share’	/mə/	‘people’

/e/ is a front unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open, occurring only in medial and final positions.

<b>Medial</b>		<b>Final</b>	
/kē.tě/	‘ant’	/tə.tsě/	‘eight’
/kə.jē.lā/	‘stylish’	/tjě/	‘eat’
/tsě/	‘year’	/zě/	‘leak’

/i/ is a front close unrounded vowel. It occurs in medial and final positions.

Medial		Final	
/tí.la/	‘reach	/à.tí/	‘to reach’
/gî/	‘clay’	/tê.mî/	‘human’
/tî.lā/	‘reach’	/tá.rí/	‘war’

/o/ is a back open rounded vowel. It occurs only in medial and final positions.

Medial		Final	
/tsò.p <sup>h</sup> ā/	‘tell’	/t <sup>h</sup> ò/	‘arrow’
/t <sup>h</sup> ō.lā/	‘big pot’	/dì.k <sup>h</sup> ò/	‘rate’

/u/ is a back rounded vowel between which occurs in the medial and final position.

Medial		Final	
/gû/	‘to go away’	/mú/	‘sin’
/gûŋ/	‘return’	/p <sup>h</sup> à.lu/	‘ladder’
/ku/	‘cold’	/lù/	‘lick’

Vowels	Initial	Medial	Final
/i/	—	+	+
/e/	—	+	+
/ə/	—	+	+
/a/	+	+	+
/o/	—	+	+
/u/	—	+	+

Table no.2.5. Distribution of vowels

### 2.1.8. Diphthongs

Diphthongs are the sound which refers to two adjacent vowels occurring within the same syllable without any consonant intervention. If the vowels are occur beyond the syllable then it refers to vowel sequence not a diphthong. Diphthongs in Rengma is very rare and there are three diphthongs in Rengma-Nzonkhwe. They are /ai/, /au/, /oi/, and /ei/. Out of four diphthongs three diphthongs glides towards /i/ and one diphthong glides towards /u/. Out of the four diphthongs, three diphthong /ai/, /au/ and /ei/ occurs only in the initial position and /oi/ occurs only in the final position.

**/ai/**

/t<sup>h</sup>aí.ʃã/      ‘banana’

/ʃãì/      ‘pasture’

**/oi/**

/kəntóì/      ‘drinks’

**/ei/**

/èisò/      ‘may be’

**/au/**

/ãú/      ‘them’

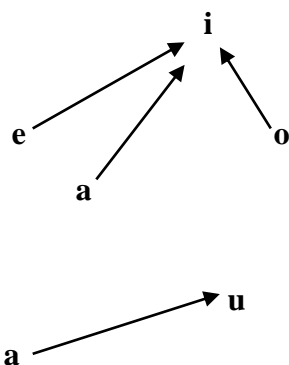


Figure no.2.2. Diphthongs in Rengma-Nzonkhwe

## **Chapter 3**

### **Suprasegmental Phonology**

#### **3.0. Introduction**

There are number of important aspects to the phonological organization of a language which go beyond simply the list of phonemes and their allophonic variants. They include stress, length, and tone and intonation. (Spencer:1996). According to the Oxford concise dictionary of Linguistics (2014) A unit, feature, etc whose domain extends over more than one successive minimal element. According to (Roach 1983) many significant sound contrast are not the result of differences between phonemes for instance, stress is important: when the word ‘import’ is pronounced with the first syllable sounding stronger than the second, some speakers perceive it as a noun, where as when the second syllable is stronger the word is heard as verb. Intonation is also important if the word if the word ‘right’ is said with the pitch of the voice rising , it is likely to be heard as a question or as an invitation to a speaker to continue , while falling pitch is more likely to be heard as confirmation or agreement. These examples show sound contrasts that extend over several segments (phonemes) and such contrast are called suprasegmental.

#### **3.1. Syllable**

A phonological unit consisting of a vowel or other unit that can be produced in isolation, either alone or accompanied by one or more less sonorous units. E.g.[bʌn], shows other terms used for other proposed divisions (The Oxford concise dictionary of Linguistics: 2014).

#### **3.2. Structure of a syllable**

“The syllable has two constituents, namely the onset which comes at the beginning and the rhyme which follows it. A syllable structure is made up of three elements : the onset, which is the consonant that precedes the vowels, the nucleus or peak is the vowel and the coda is the position for consonants that follow the vowel sound. The coda and the nucleus together is called rhyme). The syllable is represented with the Greek letter sigma ‘σ’.

Traditionally the major distinction drawn between syllable types found in languages has been between open syllable and closed syllable. An open syllable ends in a vowel while a closed syllable ends in consonants. In some languages syllables typically end in a vowel that is open. That is the situation in Languages like Luganda and Japanese as noted by Katamba (1989:175). Further, he explains that in other languages like French and English, syllables can end in a consonant.

The first type of syllable is the short vowel and no coda. This kind of syllable has CV structure and are called light syllable. The second type consists of onset, vowel or the nucleus, or there is coda (or both). Here, the syllables forms are CV, CVC, CV.CVC, etc are the heavy syllable. For instance CV *la* 'pot' and complex onset CVC /weŋ/ 'asking'. These properties (light or heavy syllable) are referred as a syllable weight. In Nzonkhwe, open syllable comprises of an obligatory onset and nucleus and there is one instances of just a vowel nucleus being a well-formed monosyllabic word which is found in many of the TB languages.

Consonants	Vowels	Tone
p p <sup>h</sup>	i u	
t t <sup>h</sup>	e ə o	ˊ
k k <sup>h</sup>	a	ˉ
b		ˋ
d g		ˆ
ʈ ʈʰ ɖ ɖʱ		
m n ŋ		
r		
f v s z		
ʃ ʒ h		
l		
w ɹ j		

Table no.3.1. Distribution of syllable constituents in Rengma-Nzonkhwe

The syllables in Rengma-Nzonkhwe are illustrated using the Onset Rhyme  
They are shown below.

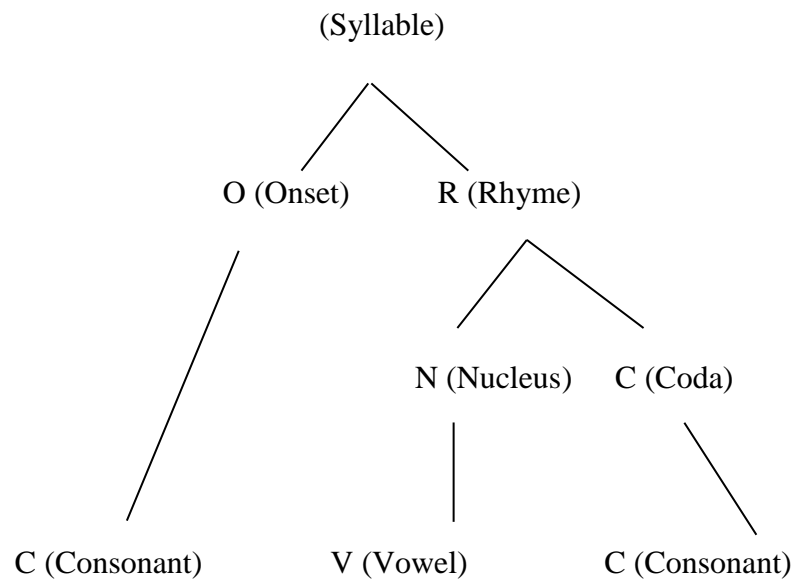


Figure no. 3.1. Structure of syllable

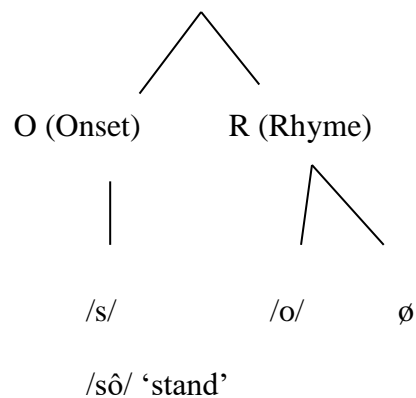


Figure no. 3.2. Light syllable in Rengma-Nzonkhwe



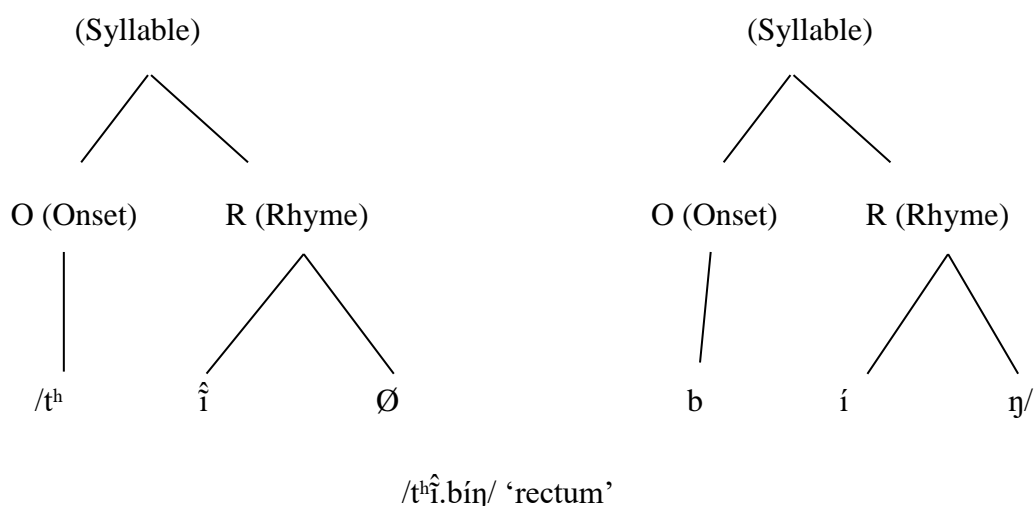


Figure no.3.3. Heavy syllable in Rengma Nzonkhwe

### 3.3 Distribution of syllables in Rengma-Nzonkhwe

The canonical syllable Rengma-Nzonkhwe consists of five types of syllables; monosyllabic words, disyllabic word, tri syllabic words, tetra syllable words and penta syllable. In Rengma-Nzonkhwe, the closed syllable are found in monosyllabic, disyllabic and trisyllabic word and it is limited. However, tetra, penta and hexa syllables occurrence are found abundantly only in open syllable. The types of syllable are shown with suitable examples.

1. Monosyllable: Monosyllable word consist of one syllable. In Rengma-Nzonkhwe there is one instance of just a vowel nuclei being a monosyllable. Examples are shown below.

Syllable	Rengma Nzonkhwe	Gloss
V	/â /	‘I’
CV	/sô/	‘stand’
-	/bè/	‘bright’
CVC	/tʰîŋ /	‘filter’
-	/zəŋ/	‘blow’

Table no. 3.2. Monosyllable in Rengma-Nzonkhwe

2. Disyllable: A syllable which consist more than one or more syllable is known as disyllabic. In Rengma-Nzonkhwe the disyllabic word occurs more in common than the mono syllabic words.

Syllable	Rengma-Nzonkhwe	Gloss
VCV	/à.sé/	‘side’
-	/á.só/	‘above’
C.CV	/n.ǰè/	‘brain’
-	/n.íí/	‘axe’
CVC.CV	/sên.ɪō /	‘stick’
-	/tín.lá/	‘depart’
CV.CV	/sè.tʰə/	‘youth’
-	/ʃō.nè/	‘wooden store’
CV.CVC	/tʰí.bín/	‘rectum’
-	ɖɔ̌.dón/	‘words’

Table no.3.3. Disyllable in Rengma-Nzonkhwe

3. Tri syllable: A word comprising three syllables is called a tri syllabic word:

Syllable	Rengma-Nzonkhwe	Gloss
CV.CV.CV	/tə.rò.tsə/	‘hen’
-	/gà.kə.lā/	‘killing’
CVC.CV.CV	/hé.tə.tsə/	‘eighty’
-	/ʃên.pé.íí/	‘fooling’
CV.CVC.CV	/má.sín.nə/	‘guest’
-	/tʰá.zəŋ.sún/	‘symbol’
CV.CV.CVC	/kə.ɖɔ̌.zəŋ/	‘making agreement’
-	/və.kə.tuŋ/	‘beating sound’

Table no.3.4. Tri syllable Rengma-Nzonkhwe

4. Tetra syllable: A syllable containing four or fourth syllable in a word.

Syllable	Rengma-Nzonkhwe	Gloss
CV.CV.CV.CV	/kâ.sā.kə.t <sup>h</sup> ə/	‘partition’
	/phí.kə.íí.ŋə/	‘tailor’
CV.CVC.CVC.CV	/bó.kəm.hén.lā/	‘destroy’
	/mā.kən.bén.k <sup>h</sup> í/	‘lamp’
CV.CV.CVC.CV	/zê.kə.pén.k <sup>h</sup> í/	‘bucket’
-	/tha.kə.pen.k <sup>h</sup> u/	‘tray’
CVC.CVC.CVC.CV	/kən.t <sup>h</sup> ún.kən.rú/	‘bumpy’
-	/kən.t <sup>h</sup> ən.kən.d <sup>h</sup> è/	‘torture’

Table no.3.5. Tetra syllable Rengma-Nzonkhwe

5. Penta syllable: It’s a kind of word that comprises of five syllable.

Syllable	Rengma-Nzonkhwe	Gloss
CV.CVC.CV.CV.CV	/kə.bón.kə.ní.kâ/	‘kitchen’
CV.CV.CV.CVC.CV	/Kə.ŋâ.kə.tsən.gí/	‘treasurer’
CV.CV.CVC.CV.CV	/kə.t <sup>h</sup> ò.kən.íí.bì/	‘history’
CVC.CVC.CV.CV.CV	/ sən.tsún.pè.k <sup>h</sup> è.fā/	‘grape’
CV.CV.CV.CV.CV	/thá.rə.lá.lé.sə/	‘Newspaper’

Table no.3.6. Penta syllable in Rengma-Nzonkhwe

6. Hexa syllable: A syllable containing six syllable in a word.

Syllable	Rengma-Nzonkhwe	Gloss
CV.CVC.CV.CV.CV.CV	/má.hén.sí.jē.kə.lā/	‘surrender’
CV.CV.CV.CV.CVC.CV	kə.ŋé.ní. kə.tón.k <sup>h</sup> í/	‘radar’

Table no.3.7. Hexa syllable in Rengma-Nzonkhwe

### 3.4. Tone

Many of the world's languages are tone languages. They have morphemes which are at least in part realized by pitch modulation: pitch differences can be used to make phonemic contrasts. Pitch depends on the rate of vibration of vocal cords. (Katamba 1989:186). Linguists usually use diacritics in tonal languages to mark tones. Rengma-Nzonkhwe has three registered tones and one contour tone. The tones along with the diacritic markers are shown below:

The diacritics along with examples are given in Rengma-Nzonkhwe:

` high one e.g	/ʒə́/	‘sleep’
˘ low tone e.g	/kà/	‘bind’
ˉ mid tone e.g	/ʒə̄/	‘slap’
^ falling rising tone e.g	/kâ/	‘house’

#### 3.4.1. Minimal pairs

The Examples given below are minimal pairs of tones in Rengma-Nzonkhwe:

##### 1. High versus Mid tone

/pé/	‘to’	/pē/	‘hole’
/ʒə́/	‘sleep’	/ʒə̄/	‘slap’
/ʃʷé̃/	‘throw’	/ʃʷē̄/	‘to peep’
/seŋ́/	‘firewood’	/seŋ̄/	‘use’
/kʰí́/	‘to respond’	/kʰī̄/	‘to close’
/pé́/	‘mushroom’	/pē̄/	‘to hold’
/kʰé̃́/	‘to wait’	/kʰē̄̃/	‘to pile up wood or stone’
/bé/	‘tender’	/bē/	‘hand’

## 2. High versus Low tone

/ká/	‘house’	/kâ/	‘tie’
/ǰǎ/	‘pile of clothes’	/ǰǎ/	‘to put’
/má/	‘fire’	/mâ/	‘to charm another person’
/k <sup>h</sup> ě/	‘feed’	/k <sup>h</sup> ě/	‘guess’
/dě/	‘hilt of a machete’	/dê/	‘hoist’

## 3. Low versus Mid tone

/ǰǎ/	‘to separate’	/ǰǎ/	‘to pour’
/sê/	‘to announce in a loud manner’	/sê/	‘oath’
/ǰǎ/	‘to separate’	/ǰǎ/	‘to pour’
/sê/	‘to announce in a loud manner’	/sê/	‘oath’
/ǰǎ/	‘word’	/ǰǎ/	‘fishing net’

## 4. High tone versus Rising falling tone

/thá/	‘things’	/thâ/	‘to chop with dao’
/hé/	‘nerve’	/hê/	‘vegetables’
/hún/	‘go around’	/hún/	‘to heat’
/sá/	‘liver’	/sâ/	‘wool’
/sé/	‘plant’	/sê/	‘waist’

## 5. Mid tone versus falling Rising tone

/ha.sũ/	‘demon’	/há.sũ/	‘cost or price’
/ǰǎ/	‘slap’	/ǰǎ/	‘sleep’
/dō/	‘slight cutting of wood in step’	/dô/	‘prisoner’
/tǎ/	‘locking by bamboo’	/tǎ/	‘repair/make’

## 6. Low tone versus Rising falling tone

/kà/	‘bind’	/kâ/	‘house’
/tjô/	‘plenty’	/tjỗ/	‘white’
/gì/	‘large’	/gî/	‘clay’

7.	High		Mid		Low
/tjỗ/	‘spoon’	/tjỗ/	‘damp’	/tjỗ/	‘year’
/tʰó/	‘flour’	/tʰò/	‘repay’	/tʰō/	‘work’
/há/	‘what’	/hā/	‘business’	/hà/	‘handful’
/kâ.ně̃/	‘sharing things’	/kâ.ně̃/	‘map’	/kâ.ně̃/	‘feasting in new house’

8.	High		Mid		Rising falling
/kʰw̃é/	‘wait’	/kʰw̃é/	‘banana leaf’	/kʰw̃é/	‘build’
/kə.ʒə̃/	‘straight’	/kə.ʒə̃/	‘choose’	kə.ʒə̃/	‘sleeping’
/tsó/	‘stone’	/tsō/	‘scratch’	/tsô/	‘dig’

9.	High		Low		Rising falling
/hě/	‘nerve’	/hě/	‘cover’	/hě/	‘leaves’
/Kʲé /	‘hole’	/kʲě/	‘one inch’	/kʲě/	‘climb’
/sé/	‘plant’	/sě/	‘yell’	/sě/	‘waist’

## Male

### 1. High tone ( ' )

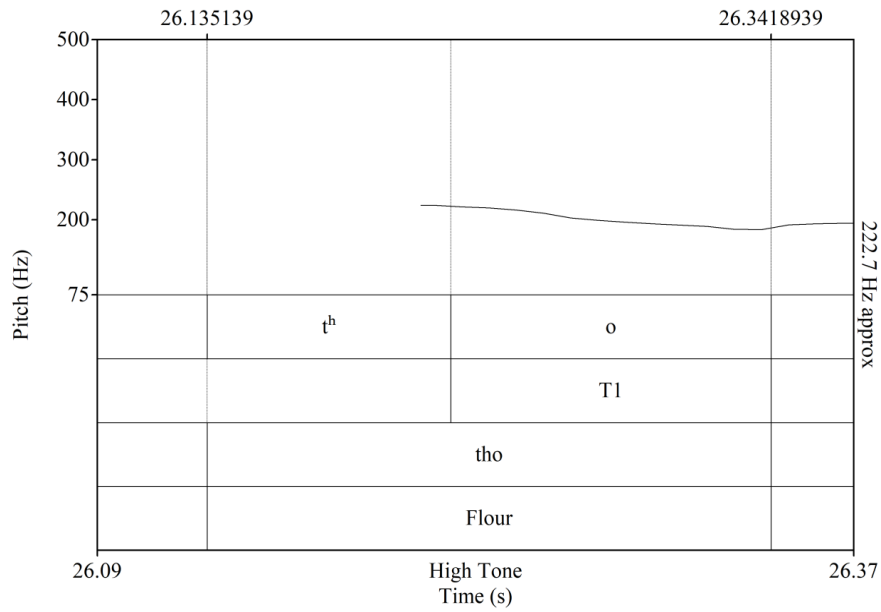


Figure no. 3.4. Tone representation of monosyllabic word tho 'flour' in high tone

### 2. Mid tone ( - )

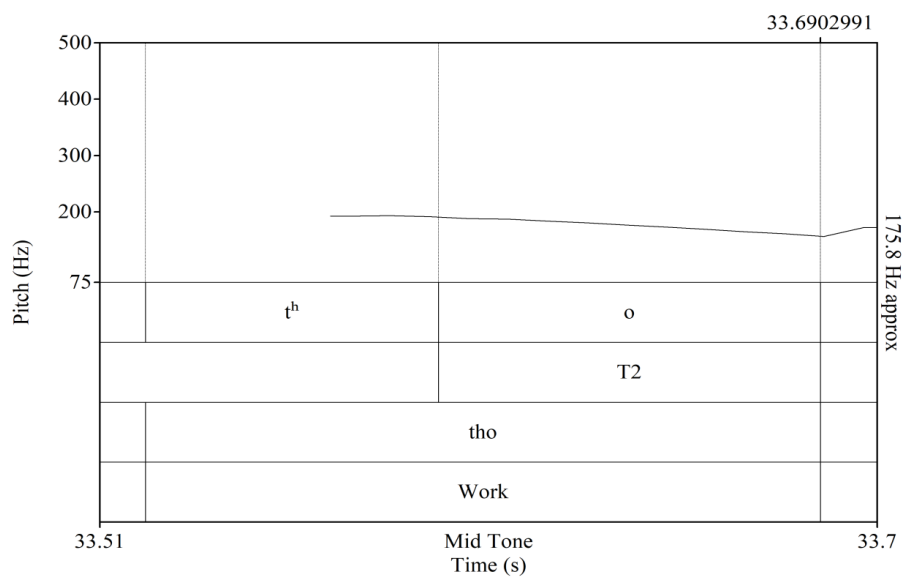


Figure no. 3.5. Tone representation of monosyllable word tho 'work' in mid tone

### 3. Low tone ( ` )

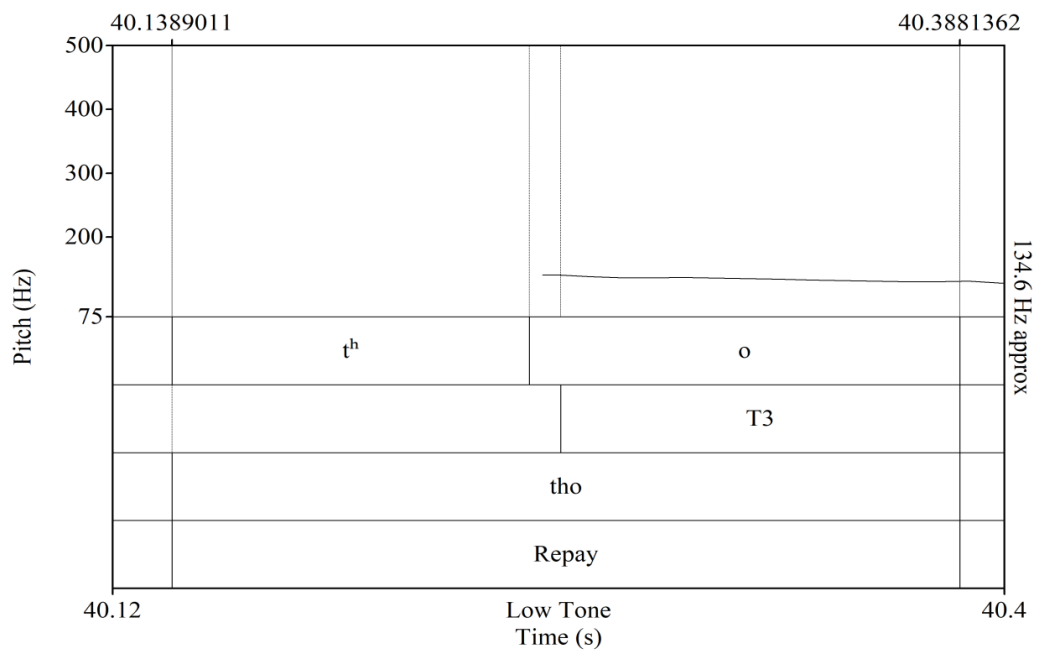


Figure no. 3.6 Tone representation of monosyllabic word 'tho' 'repay' in low tone

### 4. Contour tone ( ^ )

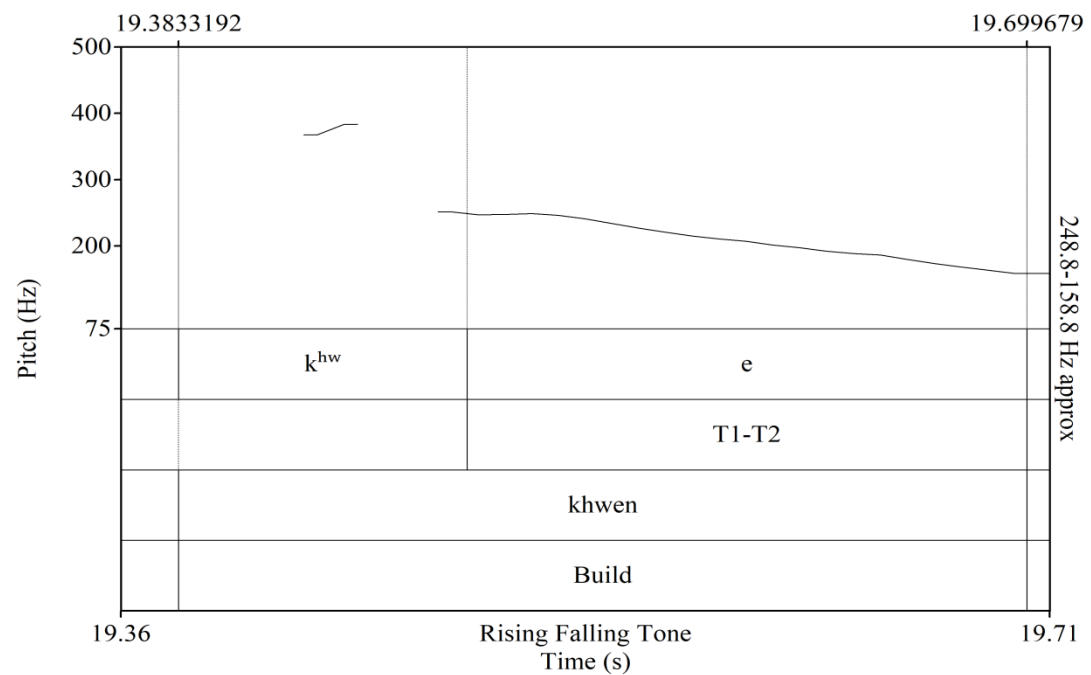


Figure no. 3.7. Tone representation of monosyllabic word 'khwen' 'build' in contour tone



## Female

### 1. High tone (´)

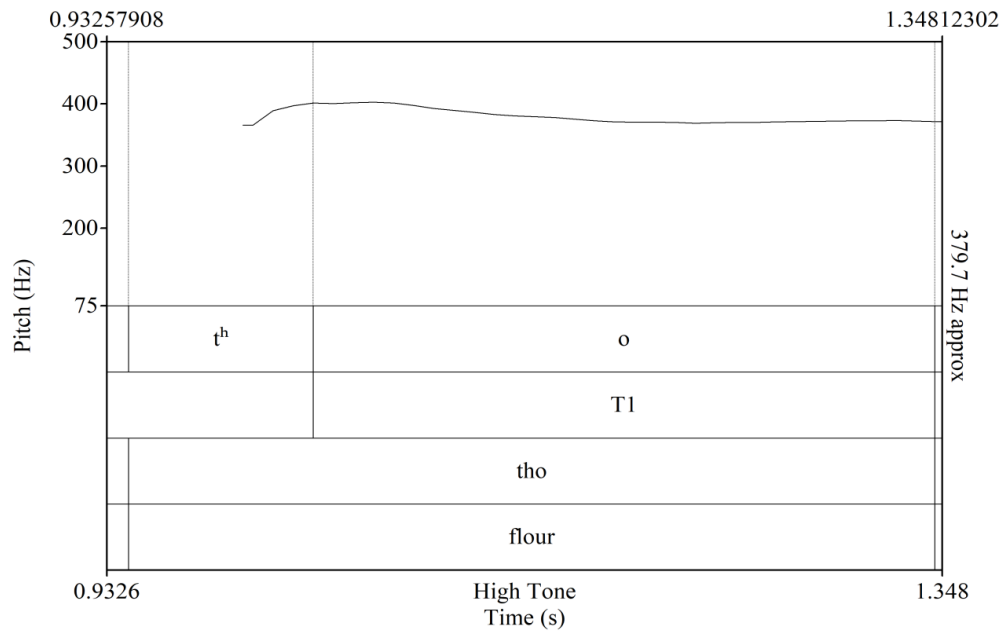


Figure no. 3.8. Tone representation of monosyllabic word 'tho' 'flour' in high tone

### 2. Mid tone (–)

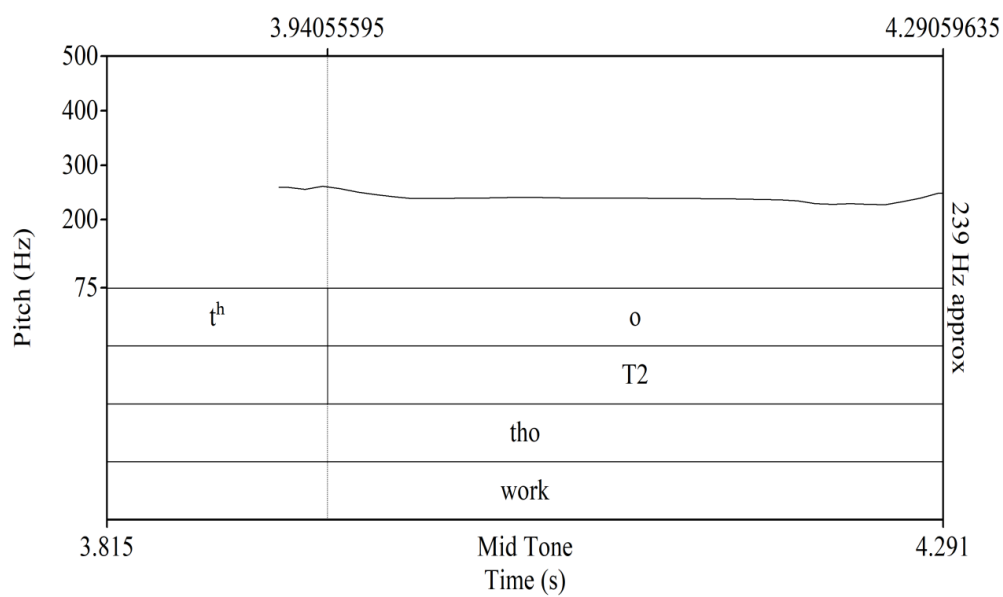


Figure no. 3.9. Tone representation of monosyllabic word 'tho' 'work' in mid tone

### 3. Low tone ( ` )

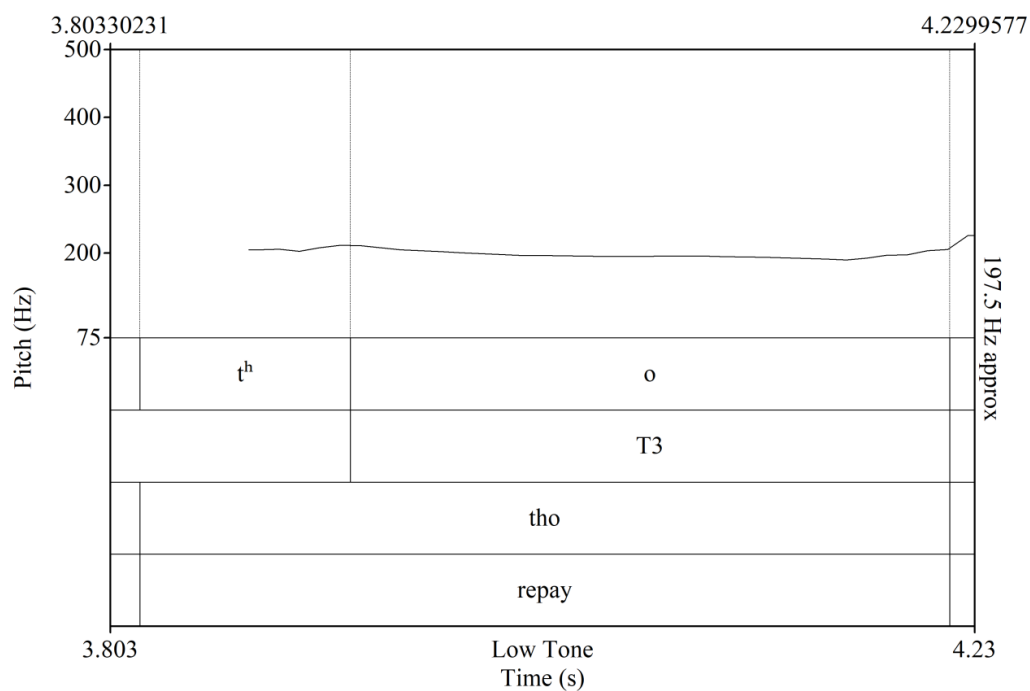


Figure no.3.10. Tone representation of monosyllabic word 'tho' 'repay' in low tone

### 4. Contour tone ( ^ )

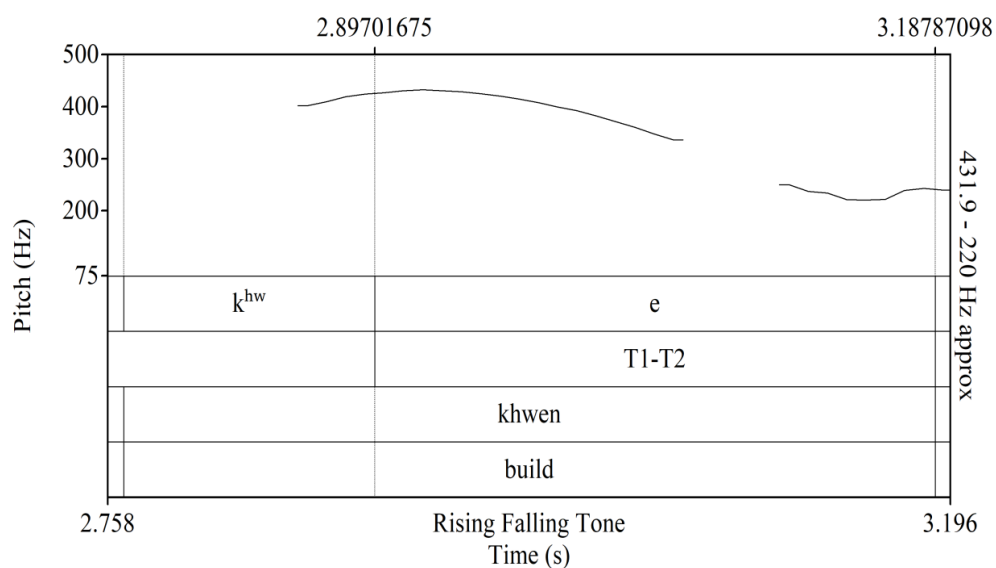


Figure no. 3.11. Tone representation of monosyllabic word 'khwen' 'build' in contour tone

The above figures show the pitch contrast of one male and one female native speakers of Rengma-Nzonkhwe. At the right side of the figures the pitch of the speakers are measured in hertz approximately. For the male speaker the high tone measures around 180 hz and above, mid tone 140–180 hz, low tone 139 hz and below, and rising falling tone 248 hz -158 hz. (Note that the hertz explained here are only for one speaker and can vary from one to another speaker). For the female speaker the high tone measures around 240 hertz and above, mid tone 215 hz-240 hz, low tone 210 hz and below, and rising falling tone 432 hz-220 hz. The above measurements show that female speakers have higher pitch than males. Additionally, the figures show clear tone markers for high, mid, low and contour tones. This is further supported by the findings of minimal pairs. This study only shows the basic representation of the tones and can be worked on in future research.

### **3.5. Phonological Process**

Phonological process is the cover term for the mechanisms involving changes in feature and segments of sounds. Phonological processes involves changes in the place of articulation and in the manner of articulation. According to Gold smith (1995) phonological process is defined “as mapping between two different levels of sound representation as in the abstract underlying level and the surface level, resulting that the phonological rules describes how a speaker goes from the abstract representation stored in their brain, to the actual sound of their articulation (speaks). Phonological systems of different languages are different. Every language has the same inventory of phonemes which are realized by the same phonological rules regulating the deployment of their sounds. The structure of phonological process is shown below.

#### **3.5.1. Types of Phonological Process**

##### **3.5.1.1 Palatalization**

Palatalization is a process in which the place of obstruction shifts towards the hard palate and the tongue makes contact with the roof of the mouth. This fronting is indicated by the superscript (<sup>j</sup>) in the consonant. The effect of the fronting is that the velar consonant is made partly in the palatal region. This process is called palatalization. The consonants /k/, /k<sup>h</sup>/, /g/, /t/, /t<sup>h</sup>/, /d/, /ʈ/, /l/ and /h/ undergoes

palatalization in this language to /k<sup>j</sup>/, /k<sup>hj</sup>/, /g<sup>j</sup>/, /t<sup>j</sup>/, /t<sup>hj</sup>/, /d<sup>j</sup>/, /tʃ<sup>j</sup>/, /l<sup>j</sup>/ and /h<sup>j</sup>/ when it is followed by the front vowel /e/ and central vowel /ə/. The palatalized consonants sounds /g<sup>j</sup>/ and /tʃ<sup>j</sup>/ occurs in medial position and /k<sup>j</sup>/, /k<sup>hj</sup>/, /t<sup>j</sup>/, /d<sup>j</sup>/, /l<sup>j</sup>/ and /h<sup>j</sup>/ occurs both in initial and medial position.

The examples are given below:

#### /k<sup>j</sup>/

##### Initial

/k <sup>j</sup> ê.lõ/	‘climb’
/k <sup>j</sup> e.k <sup>h</sup> ũ/	‘plate made out of bamboo’
/k <sup>j</sup> e.k <sup>h</sup> ĩ/	‘gum producing tree’

##### Medial

/tə.k <sup>j</sup> ê/	‘nine’
/thĩ.k <sup>j</sup> é/	‘anus’
/t <sup>hj</sup> é.lõ.k <sup>j</sup> ẽ/	‘fit’

#### /k<sup>hj</sup>/

##### Initial

/K <sup>hj</sup> è/	‘bitter’
/K <sup>hj</sup> è.ĩá/	‘slightly bitter’

##### Medial

/k <sup>h</sup> õn.k <sup>hj</sup> e.ʃã/	‘bitter gourd’
/k <sup>hw</sup> é.nà.k <sup>hj</sup> ẽ/	‘wild banana plant’

/k <sup>hj</sup> é.hèn/	‘covered’
/kè.k <sup>hj</sup> é.khĩ/	‘sweeping pan’

/kà.k <sup>hj</sup> é/	‘thrash’
/k <sup>hj</sup> é.tsə.nô/	‘low height’

#### /g<sup>j</sup>/

##### Medial

/lô.g <sup>j</sup> è/	‘jungle cutting’
/tə.tsẽ.g <sup>j</sup> è/	‘eight’
/kə.ĩ.g <sup>j</sup> e/	‘first’
/lô.g <sup>j</sup> è/	‘jungle cutting’

#### /t<sup>j</sup>/

##### Initial

/t <sup>j</sup> è/	‘necklace’
/t <sup>j</sup> ẽ/	‘eat’
/t <sup>j</sup> é.jĩ/	‘creeper plant’

##### Medial

/kə.t <sup>j</sup> è.tsè/	‘dining room’
/kə.t <sup>j</sup> ẽ/	‘eating’
/kẽ.t <sup>j</sup> ẽ/	‘ant’

/t<sup>h</sup>j/

**Initial**

/t<sup>h</sup>j e/ ‘flesh’  
/t<sup>h</sup>j é.kə.ʃ<sup>w</sup>i/ ‘develop’  
/t<sup>h</sup>j é.kə.gá.bĩ/ ‘slaughter house’  
/t<sup>h</sup>j é.hì.ʃə/ ‘demonstrate’

**Medial**

/sén.kə.t<sup>h</sup>j é/ ‘transplant’  
/dʒâ.t<sup>h</sup>j é/ ‘working in the field’  
/dô.kà.t<sup>h</sup>j é/ ‘captive’  
/tə.ɪ.t<sup>h</sup>j è/ ‘chicken’

/d<sup>j</sup>/

**Initial**

/d<sup>j</sup> é/ ‘spade’  
/d<sup>j</sup> ě/ ‘tie’  
/d<sup>j</sup> ě.pũŋ/ ‘weaving tool’  
/d<sup>j</sup> ě.p<sup>h</sup>ā/ ‘waist belt used in weaving’

**Medial**

/kə.d<sup>j</sup> ě.ʃũ/ ‘overtake’  
/á.d<sup>j</sup> ě/ ‘extreme’  
/kə.d<sup>j</sup> ě.ʒò/ ‘honoring one another’  
/kə.d<sup>j</sup> ě.nə/ ‘excitement’

/tʃ<sup>j</sup>/

**Medial**

/ʃõn.tʃ<sup>j</sup> è/ ‘sharpening stone’  
/kə.tʃ<sup>j</sup> e/ ‘help’  
/kə.tʃ<sup>j</sup> é.kən.dĩ/ ‘helpless’  
/kə.tʃ<sup>j</sup> é.kə.ʃə/ ‘relief’

/h<sup>j</sup>/

**Initial**

/h<sup>j</sup> è.pə.dá/ ‘toad pole’  
/h<sup>j</sup> á.kə.tsə/ ‘chasing’  
/h<sup>j</sup> á.kə.lā/ ‘chase’  
/h<sup>j</sup> é.pé.ʃ<sup>w</sup>ê.lā/ ‘banish’

**Medial**

/sən.h<sup>j</sup> è.gí/ ‘bride’  
/sən.h<sup>j</sup> è.g<sup>j</sup> ě/ ‘groom’  
/kə.h<sup>j</sup> è/ ‘race’  
/t<sup>h</sup>j è.h<sup>j</sup> é/ ‘hunting’

/l<sup>j</sup>/

**Initial**

/l<sup>j</sup> ě.hì/ ‘psalm’  
/l<sup>j</sup> é/ ‘female’  
/l<sup>j</sup> ě/ ‘song’

**Medial**

/ʃ<sup>w</sup>á.l<sup>j</sup> ě/ ‘choir’  
/á.l<sup>j</sup> ě.g<sup>j</sup> é/ ‘the main portion of stem’  
/p<sup>h</sup>ə.l<sup>j</sup> ě/ ‘partridge’

### 3.5.1.2 Labialization

“Labialization is the only vowel feature which can be acquired by consonants. Example [pool] ‘p<sup>w</sup>l’, [two] ‘t<sup>w</sup>u, shoe [ʃ<sup>w</sup>u]. In each case the word is said with some degree of secondary lip rounding. Anticipating the next segment, which is a rounded vowel, the speaker starts rounding the lips before the articulation of the consonants is completed. This assimilation process is called labialization”. Katamba (1989;87). In Rengma-Nzonkhwe six consonants sounds undergo labialization namely, /p<sup>w</sup>/, /b<sup>w</sup>/, /k<sup>hw</sup>/, /g<sup>w</sup>/, /ʃ<sup>w</sup>i/, /ʒ<sup>w</sup>/, /dʒ<sup>w</sup>/ and /tʃ<sup>w</sup>/. Among these /k<sup>hw</sup>/ occurs only in the initial position whereas /p<sup>w</sup>/, /b<sup>w</sup>/, /g<sup>w</sup>/, /ʃ<sup>w</sup>i/, /ʒ<sup>w</sup>/, /dʒ<sup>w</sup>/ and /tʃ<sup>w</sup>/ occurs both in the initial and medial position. Labialization in the final position is absent in Rengma-Nzonkhwe. The examples are shown below:

**/p<sup>w</sup>/**

#### **Medial**

/tsí.p<sup>w</sup>ẽ/ ‘tribe’  
/dʒò.p<sup>w</sup>ẽ/ ‘mumps’

**/b<sup>w</sup>/**

#### **Initial**

/b<sup>w</sup>ẽ/ ‘peaceful’  
/b<sup>w</sup>ẽ.tsə.jô/ ‘modest’  
/b<sup>w</sup>ẽ.jé/ ‘tender’

#### **Medial**

/á.b<sup>w</sup>ẽn/ ‘gravy’  
/kə.b<sup>w</sup>ẽ.bĩ/ ‘paradise’  
/l̥é.b<sup>w</sup>é/ ‘maiden’

**/k<sup>hw</sup>/**

#### **Initial**

/k<sup>hw</sup>ẽ / ‘language’  
/k<sup>hw</sup>èn.bô / ‘wild banana plant’  
/k<sup>hw</sup>én.tsô/ ‘tip of the banana plant’  
/k<sup>hw</sup>én.tèn.lô/ ‘record’  
/k<sup>hw</sup>ò/ ‘support’  
/k<sup>hw</sup>ò.fə/ ‘enclosure’  
/k<sup>hw</sup>én.ʃ<sup>w</sup>ĩ / ‘yell’  
/k<sup>hw</sup>én.tə.tsó / ‘loud’

**/g<sup>w</sup>/**

**Initial**

/g<sup>w</sup>à/ ‘good’

/g<sup>w</sup>əŋ / ‘destroy’

/g<sup>w</sup>ə.k<sup>h</sup>ò/ ‘time’

/g<sup>w</sup>ə.kó.phè/ ‘to link’

**Medial**

/ʒèn.tì.g<sup>w</sup>à/ ‘one drop’

/t<sup>h</sup>è.g<sup>w</sup>é/ ‘bear’

/kə.g<sup>w</sup>á.tsí/ ‘best’

/kə.g<sup>w</sup>ə.ʃà/ ‘communicate’

**/ʃ<sup>w</sup>ì/**

**Initial**

/ʃ<sup>w</sup>á/ ‘group’

/ʃ<sup>w</sup>á/ ‘package’

/ʃ<sup>w</sup>è.ʃ<sup>w</sup>í/ ‘observe’

/ʃ<sup>w</sup>e / ‘praise’

**Medial**

/ʃè.ʃ<sup>w</sup>ì/ ‘mirror’

/fâ.ʃ<sup>w</sup>í/ ‘search’

/fâ.ʃ<sup>w</sup>í.kə.ʃà/ ‘discover’

/k<sup>hw</sup>é.ʃ<sup>w</sup>í / ‘yell’

**/ʒ<sup>w</sup>/**

**Initial**

/ʒ<sup>w</sup>í/ ‘yam’

/ʒ<sup>w</sup>í.t<sup>h</sup>ó/ ‘long yam’

/ʒ<sup>w</sup>í.tsə/ ‘mother yam’

**Medial**

/nən.ʒ<sup>w</sup>í / ‘lukewarm’

/a.ʒ<sup>w</sup>í/ ‘root’

/t<sup>h</sup>á.ʒ<sup>w</sup>é/ ‘packet’

**/dʒ<sup>w</sup>/**

**Initial**

/dʒ<sup>w</sup>é/ ‘bud’

/dʒ<sup>w</sup>é/ ‘sell’

/dʒ<sup>w</sup>é/ ‘wrap’

/dʒ<sup>w</sup>e.hé/ ‘cover completely’

**Medial**

/n.dʒ<sup>w</sup>é/ ‘boil’

-

-

-

**/tʃ<sup>w</sup>/**

**Initial**

/tʃ<sup>w</sup>ə.sá/ ‘rice’

sleeping’

/tʃ<sup>w</sup>í.dà/ ‘fort’

**Medial**

/k<sup>h</sup>ò.tʃ<sup>w</sup>é/ ‘folding of legs while

/kə.tʃ<sup>w</sup>é/ ‘flash’

/tʃ <sup>w</sup> i/	‘go out’	/kà.tʃ <sup>w</sup> i/	‘profit’
/tʃ <sup>w</sup> â/	‘trap’	/kà.tʃ <sup>w</sup> ě.kà.zò/	‘equivalent’

### 3.5.1.3 Nasalization

Nasalization is a process whereby an oral segment acquires nasality from a neighboring segment. The articulatory motivation for this is self evident. Typically some nasalization seeps through and affects an oral segment which is adjacent to a nasal. In many languages the nasalization is prominently audible. Examples of nasalized vowels (ĩ) are the sound [ẽ] and [ã] . Katamba (1989: 93). In Rengma- Nzonkhwe the six sounds namely /i/, /ə/, /e/, /a/, /o/ and /u/ undergoes nasalization in the medial and final position.

/ĩ/

#### Medial

/tesĩ.kà/	‘guest house’
/t <sup>h</sup> ĩ.t <sup>h</sup> ĩ/	‘very slow’
/sĩ.pě/	‘following’
/sĩ.zĩ/	‘behind’
/wà.bĩ/	‘dating’

#### Final

/t <sup>h</sup> ĩ/	‘thick’
/lâ.k <sup>h</sup> ĩ/	‘jar’
/jé.k <sup>h</sup> ĩ/	‘flower vase’
/bĩ/	‘drum’
/p <sup>h</sup> á.t <sup>h</sup> ĩ/	‘heel’

/ẽ/

#### Medial

/hě.tà.tsẽ /	‘eighty’
/pě.tʃá/	‘split gills mushroom’
/sé.tsũ/	‘buffalo’
/k <sup>h</sup> ě.dò/	‘slope’
/pě.k <sup>h</sup> ô/	‘to separate’

#### Final

/jě/	‘moon’
/mà.tsẽ/	‘black’
/jě.mẽ/	‘one month’
/tʃě.mẽ/	‘one year’
/p <sup>h</sup> ĩ.kà.dě/	‘flag hosting’



/ã/

**Medial**

/t<sup>h</sup>á.k<sup>h</sup>ĩ/ ‘box’  
 /ʒá.fǝ/ ‘pour’  
 /phâ..õ/ ‘rake’  
 /p<sup>h</sup>â.sĩ/ ‘support’  
 /p<sup>h</sup>â.fǝ/ ‘give side’

**Final**

/põ.há/ ‘half’  
 /dʒóŋ.lǎ/ ‘offend’  
 /k<sup>h</sup>èlà/ ‘omit’  
 /vè.kè.là/ ‘pass’  
 /tẽ.lǎ/ ‘rotten’

/ǎ/

**Medial**

/g<sup>w</sup>ǎ.ká.p<sup>h</sup>è/ ‘to link’  
 /kǎ.tʃé.kè.dĩ/ ‘helpless’  
 /kǎ.f<sup>w</sup>i.kǎ.ʒǎ/ ‘caring for one another’  
 /f<sup>w</sup>èŋ.kǎ.k<sup>h</sup>ǎ.lā/ ‘reflected’  
 spread’

**Final**

/kǎ.g<sup>w</sup>á.tʃǎ/ ‘reward’  
 /kǎ.g<sup>w</sup>ǎ/ ‘ingredient’  
 /p<sup>h</sup>ǎ.tsǎ/ ‘hoof’  
 /hǎ.kǎ.k<sup>h</sup>ǎ/ ‘widely

/õ/

**Medial**

/k<sup>h</sup>õ.tó/ ‘up to the mark’  
 /tʃõ.sú/ ‘bury’  
 /tsõ.tsì/ ‘supervise’  
 /põ.há/ ‘half’  
 /gõ.sà/ ‘greatly’

**Final**

/nó/ ‘defend’  
 /k<sup>h</sup>õ/ ‘open’  
 /ʒā.t<sup>h</sup>õ/ ‘activities’  
 /pê.k<sup>h</sup>õ/ ‘to separate’  
 /zǎ.tʃõ/ ‘canal’

/ũ/

### Medial

/k<sup>h</sup>ũ.lô/ ‘terrace field’

/kè.sũ.p<sup>h</sup>ĩ/ ‘bib’

/sũ.lā/ ‘bury’

/sũ.kà/ ‘alternative’

/sũ.t<sup>h</sup>õ/ ‘full stop’

### Final

/pẽ.tũ/ ‘big hole’

/kêŋ.hũ/ ‘two’

/n.tsũ/ ‘against’

/kêŋ.tsũ/ ‘contradict’

/kàŋ.tsũ/ ‘anti’

### 3.5.1.4 Insertion/ Epenthesis

Epenthesis is an insertion of a sound in a word. Epenthesis is from the Greek word epi ‘in addition’ + en ‘in’ + thesis ‘placing’. In Rengma –Nzonkhwe the insertion of an extra sound into a word is found in borrowed words. The borrowed words are typically found in English and Hindi language. The vowel and consonant sounds are added in medial and final position. The Examples are shown below.

### Medial

Bible /bài.bèl/

Alarm /àlà.àm/

Glass /gə.lasə/

Basket /bà.sə.kèt/

Box /bàkò.sə/

Blanket /bà.làn.kèt/

Kettle /kē.tēlē/

Drum /də.àm/

Chai pata /tʃā.hà.pà.tà/

Half pant /hà.fə.pànt/

Doctor /dà.kà.tàɪ/

## Final

Dal	/dā.lí/
Flask	/ flāk.sə/
Bulb	/ bāl.fə/
Biscuit	/bìs.cùtù/
Matchbox	/màtʃè.sə/
Torch	/tòɪ.tʃə/
Tin	/tínə/
Half	/hàfə/
Gas	/gàsə/
Telephone	/tēlē.fōnə/
Sabun	/sá.búnú/
Kamiz	/kà.mìzə/
Chamis	/tʃā.mōsə/
Bus	/bàsə/
Doctor	/dà.kà.tàɪ/

**3.5.1.5. Aphaeresis:** Aphaeresis is a deletion; as in English, the loss of initial /k/ before /n/ in English knife, knight Lass Roger( 1984;187). According to Oxford Concise dictionary (2014;22) “ aphaeresis is the loss of vowel or syllable at the beginning of a word. The usual case is that of aphesis. Also, by the extension, of the loss of an initial consonant, e.g. that of an earlier [k] in knee or knight”. In Rengma-Nzonkhwe, vowel /a/ get loss or deleted in the initial position. The examples are given;

akesin	/kesĩ/	→	‘arid’
atsungpugu	/tsúnj.pū.gú/	→	‘basic’

akepun	/kápũ/	→	‘bloom’
azə	/zə/	→	‘fluid’
a.keme	/kəmē/	→	‘like’
a.bin	/bĩ/	→	‘place’
a.kechashə	/kē.ʃā.ʃə/	→	‘unique’
a.keni	/kənĩ/	→	‘save’
a.zin	/zĩ/	→	‘filter’

### 3.1.5.6 Apocope

“The loss of a final element. Apocope of consonants is also quite common : in many languages . For instance English, final /t / deletes before a word beginning with another consonants, as in [laestham] ‘last time] ; low stress word may also lose their finals, as in and of ”. Lass Roger( 1984;187). In Rengma-Nzonkhwe, apocope are found to be present in compound word. The second word of the second syllable gets deleted; following are the examples below;

mememe	/mèmè/	‘one person’
mehuhu	/mèhù/	‘two person’
mesheshe	/mèʃè/	‘three person’
mezizi	/mēzĩ/	‘four person’
mepfufu	/mépfə/	‘five person’
metsiroro	/mé.tsi.ɪō/	‘six person’
metsuyu	/mì.tà.nə/	‘seven person’
metatsetse	/mì.tà.tse/	‘eight person’
metekuku	/m.itsè.kʲè/	‘nine person’
metsrerere	/mì.tse.ɪè/	‘ten person’

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings and Conclusion**

#### **4.0. Overview**

“Phonology of Rengma-Nzonkhwe” as the title of the dissertation implies deals with the segmental and suprasegmental aspect of phonology. To say that this language has been explored linguistically is an overestimation since so far there has been no serious/detailed work done, especially in terms of phonology except for a pilot study which was done in brief (unpublished). Hence, the need to explore and study this language scientifically was the need of the hour. In no way is the work done in this book exhaustive but it is more a stepping stone and the ground work laid for any further research if willing (first of its kind) .

#### **4.1. Review of each chapter**

Based on the data presented in the previous three chapters, this chapter is a concluding note of the thesis. This dissertation was segmented into four chapters which shall be briefly discussed under:

##### **Chapter 1**

This chapter discusses on the sociolinguistics profile of the tribe Rengma under which things like history, language and the tribe, origin, migration population and economy. The socio-cultural beliefs and practices of the community such as; marriage, birth death, feast of merit, festival, rituals, indigenous games, food, etc is discussed. After which a brief discussion on the review of literature was made. Followed by the methodologies and aim of the study.

The Genetic classifications by Burling (2003 ) and Grieson’s classification (1901) has been discussed.

##### **Chapter 2**

Chapter two deals with the segmental phonology of Rengma-Nzonkhwe. The Phonemic inventory, description of their features and the occurrences of the consonants, vowels and diphthongs has been discussed in detail. The consonant sounds of Rengma-Nzonkhwe has seven places of articulation bilabial, labio-dental, alveolar, post-alveolar, palatal, velar and glottal and seven manners of

articulation- stops, nasals, trill, fricatives, affricates, lateral and approximants. Rengma-Nzonkhwe has twenty eight consonants. Rengma-Nzonkwe has nine stops /p, p<sup>h</sup>, b, t, t<sup>h</sup>, d, k, k<sup>h</sup>, g/, three aspirated stops /p<sup>h</sup>, t<sup>h</sup>, k<sup>h</sup>/, six voiceless stops /p, p<sup>h</sup>, t, t<sup>h</sup>, k, k<sup>h</sup>/ and three voiced stops /b, d, g/. Four nasal sounds /m, n, ɲ, ŋ/, seven fricatives /f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ and h/, and three affricate sounds /tʃ, tʃ̥, dʒ/. It has one alveolar lateral approximant /l/, one trill /r/ and three approximants /w, ɹ, j/. Most of the consonant phonemes of Rengma-Nzonkhwe appears only in the initial and final positions except for the velar nasal ŋ and fricative z which occurs in all the three positions though z is limited. Consonant clusters can occur in the medial and final position of a word. Examples are shown below: pɾa.pɾa ‘thunder sound’, dɾoŋ.dɾoŋ ‘noise made by a rolling object’, tsɿ.tsɿ ‘noise made by leaking water in a tight container’ / ‘sound made by a cricket’. In this language the consonant sequence occurs in medial positions. The examples are given below.

/sə̃n.p<sup>h</sup>õ/ ‘bat’

/kə̃n.tõ/ ‘race’

/tsə̃n.kə̃ɪ/ ‘rain’

Rengma-Nzonkhwe has six vowel sounds, namely / i, e, ə, a, o, u/ of which /i/ and /e/ are front unrounded vowels; /ə/ and /a/ are central unrounded vowels; and /o/ and /u/ are back rounded vowels. The vowel /i/ and /u/ are high vowels; the vowels /e, ə, o/ are mid vowel; and the vowel /a/ is the only low vowel in Rengma. The vowels has their way of contrast according to the tongue height, tongue position and lip rounding and also description and distinction according to front, central and back. All vowel sounds are voiced. The vowel /a/ occurs in initial, medial and final position whereas the vowels /i, e, ə, o, u/ occurs only in the medial and final position. Vowels in Rengma-Nzonkhwe are phonemes and not allophones. Diphthongs in Rengma is very rare. There are three diphthongs in Rengma-Nzonkhwe. They are /ai/, /au/, /oi/, and /ei/. Out of four diphthongs three diphthongs glides towards /i/ and one diphthong glides towards /u/. Out of the four diphthongs, three diphthong /ai/, /au/ and /ei/ occurs only in the initial position and /oi/ occurs only in the final position.

## Chapter 3

The suprasegmental phonology and phonological process in Rengma-Nzonkhwe are discussed in this chapter. The syllable structure of Rengma-Nzonkhwe consists of light and heavy syllables, open and closed syllable. A light syllable is a syllable which has only one syllable, examples are V, CV, CVC structure. While a heavy syllable comprises of more than one syllable, examples CVC.CV, CV.CV, CVC.CVC, CV.CV.CV, CVC.CV.CV, etc. Rengma-Nzonkhwe consists of six types of syllables; monosyllabic, disyllabic, trisyllabic, tetra syllabic, penta syllabic and hexa syllabic. In Rengma-Nzonkhwe, the closed syllable are found in monosyllabic, disyllabic and trisyllabic word and it is limited. However, tetra, penta and hexa syllables occurrence are found abundantly only in open syllable. Rengma-Nzonkhwe is a tonal language and has three registered tones and one contour tone.

The following four levels are used to describe the tones of Rengma phonemes and these four tones are represented by their respective tonal diacritic markers as shown below.

- i) High tone ( ' )
- ii) Mid tone ( - )
- iii) Low tone ( ` )
- iv) Contour tone ( ^ )

Following are the examples of minimal pairs found in Rengma-Nzonkhwe;

- i) High tone versus Mid tone

/pé/ 'to'                      /pē/ 'hole'

- ii) High versus Low tone

/ká/ 'house'                      /kà/ 'tie'

- iii) Low versus Mid tone

/p<sup>h</sup>è/    ‘very soft’                      /p<sup>h</sup>ē/    ‘opening the flow of water’

iv) High tone versus Rising falling tone

/t<sup>h</sup>á/ ‘things’                      /t<sup>h</sup>â/ ‘to chop with dao

v) Mid tone versus Ralling rising tone

/ʒǝ/ ‘slap’                      /ʒê/ ‘sleep’

vi) Low tone versus Rising falling tone

/kà/ ‘bind’                      /kâ/ ‘house’

vii) High

Mid

Low

/ʃǝ/ ‘spoon’

/ʃǝ/ ‘damp’

/ʃǝ/ ‘year’

/há/ ‘what’

/hā/ ‘business’

/hà/ ‘handful’

viii) High

Mid

Rising falling

/k<sup>h</sup>wǝ̃/ ‘wait’

/k<sup>h</sup>wǝ̃/ ‘banana leaf’

/k<sup>h</sup>wǝ̃/ ‘build’

/tsó/ ‘stone’

/tsō/ ‘scratch’

/tsô/ ‘dig’

ix) High

low

Rising falling

/hǝ̃/ ‘nerve’

/hǝ̃/ ‘cover’

/hǝ̃/ ‘leaves’

/sǝ̃/ ‘plant’

/sǝ̃/ ‘yell’

/sǝ̃/ ‘waist’

An acoustic analysis of the tones has been analyzed using PRAAT. The analysis shows the pitch contrast of one male and one female native speakers of Rengma-Nzonkhwe. The pitch of the speakers has been measured in hertz approximately. For the male speaker the high tone measures around 180 hz and above, mid tone 140 – 180 hz, low tone 139 hz and below, and rising falling tone 248 hz -158 hz. ( the hertz explained here are only for one speaker and can vary from one to another speaker). For the female speaker the high tone measures around 240 hertz and above, mid tone 215 hz-240 hz, low tone 210 hz and below, and rising falling tone 432 hz-220 hz. The above measurements show that female speakers have higher pitch than males. The figures shows clear tone markers for high, mid, low and contour tones. Phonological systems of different languages are different. Every language has the same inventory of phonemes which are realized by the same



phonological rules regulating the deployment of their sounds. Rengma-Nzonkhwe undergoes Phonological Process such as palatalization, Labilialization, nasalization, The consonant /k/, /k<sup>h</sup>/, /g/, /t/, /t<sup>h</sup>/, /d/, /ʈ/, /l/ and /h/ undergoes palatalization in this language to /k<sup>j</sup>/, /k<sup>hj</sup>/, /g<sup>j</sup>/, /t<sup>j</sup>/, /t<sup>hj</sup>/, /d<sup>j</sup>/, /ʈ<sup>j</sup>/, /l<sup>j</sup>/ and /h<sup>j</sup>/ when it is followed by the front vowel /e/ and central vowel /ə/. The palatalized consonants sounds /g<sup>j</sup>/ and /ʈ<sup>j</sup>/ occurs in medial position and /k<sup>j</sup>/, /k<sup>hj</sup>/, /t<sup>j</sup>/, /t<sup>hj</sup>/ /d<sup>j</sup>/, /ʈ<sup>j</sup>/ and /h<sup>j</sup>/ occurs both in initial and medial position. In Rengma-Nzonkhwe six consonants sounds undergo labialization namely, /p<sup>w</sup>/, /b<sup>w</sup>/, /k<sup>hw</sup>/, /g<sup>w</sup>/, /ʃ<sup>w</sup>i/, /ʒ<sup>w</sup>/, /dʒ<sup>w</sup>/ and /tʃ<sup>w</sup>/ . Among these /k<sup>hw</sup>/ occurs only in the initial position whereas /p<sup>w</sup>/, /b<sup>w</sup>/ , /g<sup>w</sup>/, /ʃ<sup>w</sup>i/, /ʒ<sup>w</sup>/, /dʒ<sup>w</sup>/ and /tʃ<sup>w</sup>/ occurs both in the initial and medial position. Palatalization and Labilialization in the final position is absent in Rengma-Nzonkhwe. In many languages the nasalization is prominently audible. Examples of nasalized vowels (ĩ) are the sound [ẽ] and [ã]. Katamba (1989: 93). In Rengma- Nzonkhwe the six sounds namely /i/, /ə/, /e/, / a/, /o/ and /u/ undergoes nasalization. In this language the Insertion/Epenthesis is found in borrowed words. The borrowed words are typically found in English and Hindi language. The vowel and consonant sounds are added in medial and final position. Examples are shown below:

### Medial

Bible	/bài.bèl/
Alarm	/àlà.àm/
Glass	/gə.lasə/

### Final

Dal	/dā.lí/
Flask	/ flāk.sə/
Torch	/tòɪ.ʈə/

In Rengma-Nzonkhwe the apheresis is found in the deletion of initial vowel. The vowel /a/ get loss or deleted in the initial position. The examples are given;

akesin	/kesĩ/	—————>	‘arid’
atsungpugu	/tsúŋ.pũ.gú/	—————>	‘basic’
akepun	/képũ/	—————>	‘bloom’

Apocope in this language is present in compound word. The second word of the second syllable gets deleted; following are the examples below:

mememe	/mèmè/ ‘one person’
mehuhu	/mèhù/ ‘two person’
mesheshe	/mèʃè/ ‘three person’

#### **Chapter 4**

In this chapter the major findings and conclusions has been discussed where a brief note on each chapters are mentioned.

#### **Concluding note**

Given the fact that to some extent this language is still a virgin language and there are lots of linguistics aspects yet to be researched. Since this work does not cover a wide range of phonology due to the time frame I hope more in depth research can be done in the near future.

SL.NO	NAME OF THE CONSULTANT	GENGER	AGE
1	Lovibu Tep	Male	70
2	Jengwa Kent	Male	68
3	Gwasinlo	Male	50
4	Kenyulo Seb	Male	42
5	David Kent	Male	36
6	Hyuni Tep	Male	35
7	Obed Kent	Male	33
8	Abwenle Tep	Female	48
9	Kesinle Khing	Female	48
10	Kenyuni Kent	Female	28
11	Gwanile Kent	Female	20

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