

AO-NAGA
PHONETIC READER

K. S. GURUBASAVE GOWDA

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सत्यमेव जयते

CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF INDIAN LANGUAGES
MYSORE-6

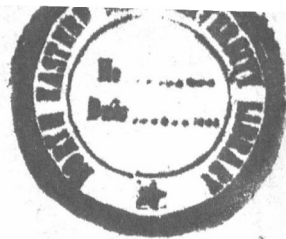
CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF INDIAN LANGUAGES
PHONETIC READER SERIES-7

Editors

H. S. BILIGIRI

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CIIL Phonetic Reader Series - 7



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Foreword

The Central Institute of Indian Languages was set up on the 17th July, 1969 with a view to assisting and co-ordinating the development of Indian Languages. The Institute was charged with the responsibility of serving as a nucleus to bring together all the research and literary out-put from the various linguistic streams to a common head and narrowing the gap between basic research and developmental research in the fields of languages and linguistics in India.

The Institute and its four regional centres are thus engaged in research and teaching which lead to the publication of a wide-ranging variety of materials. Preparation of materials designed for teaching learning at different levels and suited to specific needs is one of the major areas of interest of the Institute. Basic research relating to the acquisition of language and study of language in its manifold psycho-social relations constitute another broad range of its interest. The publications will include materials produced by the members of the staff of the Central Institute of Indian Languages and its Regional Language Centres and associated scholars from Universities and Institutions, both Indian and foreign.

The Central Institute of Indian Languages has initiated the Phonetic Reader Series in Indian languages with a view to presenting the range of phonetic variation obtaining in this sub-continent and demonstrating the closeness of languages on the basis of phonetic patterning. These Readers are biased towards learning the sound systems of languages. Thus it is hoped that this series will be of interest to both scholars who are interested in Phonetic studies and practical learners of languages who wish to make a beginning in their language study.

If these materials help solving the problems in the State and help in understanding the people speaking the language, then our efforts will have been amply rewarded.

Central Institute of Indian Languages
Manasagangotri, Mysore-6
6th December 1972

D. P. PATTANAYAK
Director

Preface

About six percent of the population of India is tribal. There have been three views about how best they can be drawn into the mainstream of our national life. One obvious way is not to draw them at all and leave them alone and preserve their culture and traditions intact as museum pieces. The other extreme view has been to sort of drown them in the mainstream and completely assimilate them. The third view is to see that the best in their traditions and cultures that is consistent with modern life is preserved and they are integrated so that they maintain their individuality and at the same time participate in and benefit by the modern developments.

It is also the considered view of all the people that matter that these tribals should be integrated with the regional population amidst whom they live. This can be done only when they are approached through their own mother-tongues. It is also obvious that it is impracticable to use their mother-tongues throughout their education. Their mother-tongues are to be used so that they can effectively be integrated into the regional population. This does not mean that they should forsake their mother-tongues, but only means that they should gain native like fluency in their respective regional languages as early as possible. It is for this purpose that their languages have to be scientifically studied and grammatical sketches and vocabularies have to be prepared. The scripts of the regional languages have to be adopted for writing their languages. Primers and textbooks have to be prepared.

To do all this the expertise of the linguists of the country should be placed at the disposal of persons interested in the

education of tribals. Administrators who come in frequent contact with the tribals have to learn to speak fluently the tribal language in question. Learning a language implies an acquisition of a good pronunciation. Firstly, the learner must acquire the capacity to recognise readily without any error the various speech sounds occurring in the language he is learning. Secondly, he must acquire the capacity to produce them with the help of his own vocal organs. Thirdly, he must acquire the capacity to produce the individual speech sounds he has learnt in sequences. In addition to these three skills, which may be sufficient to gain a reasonable pronunciation, the learner, depending on his needs, has to get a mastery over the orthography of the language he is learning. This involves developing automatic associations between written forms and speech sounds.

The Phonetic Readers in this series have been designed with the above points in view. They are mainly intended to meet the needs of administrators who have to learn the language in question.

Each Reader consists of a brief exposition about the organs of speech and their functions. It also introduces some technical terms. Then each speech sound is described in detail giving the movements of the vocal organs. Each description is rounded off by the technical term for that sound. A brief phonemic statement which meaningfully groups the sounds described in the preceding sections is also appended. A statement about the correspondences between the phonemes of the language and the letters used to write them comes at the end. In this section suggestions for improvements in the existing orthography are made. In the case of languages which have not yet been written, suggestions for adopting the script of the regional language are made.

It may be too much to claim that these Readers are perfect. There are lacunae still to be filled up. The most conspicuous of these is the lack of information on intonation. Suggestions for

improvement are welcome and will be incorporated in the subsequent edition. Of the two editors, the first checked the data, provided the format and read the manuscript in the early stages and the second read it at the later stages.

Though it is true that certain features of pronunciation can only be learnt with the aid of a teacher, the utility of such Readers cannot be underestimated. It is hoped that these Readers will be useful to even persons other than those for whom they are intended.

H. S. BILIGIRI

E. ANNAMALAI

Note : In the absence of the correct symbol, l^h is used in this Reader for Retroflex Lateral Fricative.

Acknowledgement

During my field work in Nagaland from October, 1970 to January, 1971 and from February, 1972 to April, 1972, a number of persons rendered their fullest co-operation in collecting the data on Ao-Naga language.

I express my sincere thanks to Mr. YAJEN AIER, Director of Education, Nagaland, Kohima; Mr. KIREMWATI Ao, Principal, Science College, Kohima; Mr. R. K. SHARMA, Special Officer, Text-Book production Branch, Kohima and Mr. W. NOKDEN AO, Ao language officer, Kohima who took personal interest in furnishing necessary information about Ao language.

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I am greatly indebted to my *guru* Dr. H. S. BILIGIRI, whose constant encouragement and guidance was a source of inspiration for me during the preparation of this Reader.

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My grateful thanks are also due to Mr. W. CHUBANUNGBA Ao, Deputy Inspector of Schools and Dr. LONGKUMAR of Mokokchung, to Mr. LAKATO and Mr. ALIBA of Tuli, all of whom made my stay at Mokokchung and Tuli homely.

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I sincerely acknowledge the co-operation extended to me by my colleague Mr. H. L. N. BHARATI who supervised the production of this Reader.

K. S. GURUBASAVE GOWDA

Contents

Foreword	...	v
Preface	...	vii
Acknowledgement	...	xi
Introduction	...	1
1. Organs of Speech	...	5
2. The Speech Sounds of Ao	...	11
3. Phonetic Drills	...	35
4. The Phonemic Inventory of Ao	...	49
5. Ao Orthography	...	53

Introduction

Ao is one of the Naga group of languages spoken in the state of Nagaland in the North-East frontier of India. The Naga languages belong to the Tibeto-Burman language family. The name Ao denotes the language as well as the community.

The Nagas fall into more than a dozen major linguistic groups. Aos are one of the largest groups of the Nagas. According to the 1971 census report the population of Aos is 64,462. They are mainly concentrated in Mokokchung district of Nagaland and form the dominant linguistic group in the district.

Sharing the boundary with Lotha Nagas and Sema Nagas in the South, the Ao speaking area has the State of Assam in the North-West and Dikhu river in the North-East as geographical boundaries.

The Ao-Naga language has several regional dialects. Three of them, *viz.*, Chungli, Mongsen and Chanki are prominent. Of these the Chungli dialect is accepted as the standard Ao language for printing purposes. Though folk songs and a few religious songs are written in the Mongsen dialect at present, efforts are being made to reproduce them in the standard Chungli dialect. The Chanki dialect is spoken mainly in the Chanki village. The accepted standard Chungli dialect is spoken in the villages of Melongimsen and Longpa. Moreover in many villages both Chungli and Mongsen dialects are spoken. This study is based on the standard Chungli dialect.

Previous works on the Ao language include GRIERSON'S *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. III, part II, Mrs. E. W. CLARK'S *Ao Naga Grammar* and Dr. E. W. CLARK'S *Ao Naga Dictionary*. In their anthropological studies of the Nagas the

authors W. C. SMITH (*The Ao Naga Tribe of Assam*, London 1925) and J. H. HUTTON (*The Angami Nagas*, London, 1921) have given some scanty information on the Ao language also. Apart from these works done by foreign authors there are a few works on Ao by some native speakers of the language. *A Junior Ao-English Dictionary* (1972) by Renthly KEITZAR, *Ao Grammar* (1961) by W. CHUNBANUNGBA AO, are some of them. Most of these works suffer from lack of linguistic sophistication and scientific rigour.

The Ao language is taught in schools as mothertongue upto matric level. The Textbook production branch of the Directorate of Education, Nagaland, produces textbooks in the language. There is an Ao Literature Committee which works for the development of literature in the language. The existing literary works are mostly religious in content. Original and creative literature is yet to develop in this language.

The main objective of this Phonetic Reader is to describe in detail all the sounds of the Ao language. This Phonetic study of Ao is expected to help to teach the pronunciation of Ao speech sounds to the non-native learner of Ao. Since the users of this Reader will be language teachers and students and may not have linguistic training, the description of the sounds has been given in a non-technical way as far as possible.

There are many factors involved in learning a second language. Acquiring the skill to recognise and produce the various speech sounds of the second language is a very necessary one. This can be achieved only by constant practice. The student who learns Ao as a second language must acquire the ability to produce the various speech sounds and tones of it. Difficulties may exist in the beginning in perceiving and producing the various sounds and tones of the language. However, by constant practice this can be overcome.

This Phonetic Reader is arranged in the following form : First, speech organs are illustrated and described; then a general description of speech sounds and tones is given; the third chapter

consists of the individual description of various speech sounds and tones of Ao; the fourth chapter gives phonetic drills for practice; a brief phonemic analysis is given in the fifth chapter; and the last chapter contains a note on the present writing system of Ao grapheme, some suggestions for improving the same and a phoneme-grapheme chart of Ao and Nagari.