

CHRU PHONEMES

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0. INTRODUCTION

Chru, a member of Vietnam's Austronesian family, is spoken by an estimated 10,000 people in the Don Duong district of Tuyen Duc province and in Binh Tuy province. The analysis here is of the language spoken in Diom village in the district of Don Duong, Tuyen Duc province.

1. THE PHONOLOGICAL WORD

A main syllable and one or two optional presyllables make up the Chru phonological word. The main syllable receives heavier stress, the presyllables lighter stress. When two presyllables occur the one just before the main syllable is more lightly stressed.

Using PS for presyllable and MS for main syllable the phonological word is formulated as: ((PS₂) PS₁) MS. The syllables are filled by consonants and vowels as follows:

$$PS_2: C_1 V_1 \quad PS_1: C_2 V_2 C_3 \quad MS: C_4 C_5 C_6 V_3 C_7$$

The fullest phonological word expansion discovered so far is $\text{p}^{\text{h}}\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{ɔ}^{\text{h}}\text{r}^{\text{h}}\text{b}^{\text{h}}\text{l}^{\text{h}}$ 'to turn over'. The maximum expansion of the MS is $\text{br}^{\text{h}}\text{w}^{\text{h}}$ 'work'. (Cf. sections 3 and 5 for distribution of phonemes.)

2. CONSONANTS

2.1 CONSONANT CHART

Stops		Labial	Apical	Alveo- palatal	Velar	Glottal
	v1	p	t	c	k	'
	vd	b	d	j	g	
Fricatives				s		h
	v1					
Resonants						
	liquid vd		l, r			
	nasal vd	m	n	nh	ng	
	median vd	w		y		
	Post-glottal vd	w'		y'		

2.2 Analytical problems are posed by the glottalised and post aspirated consonants.

2.2.1 Syllable initial glottalised consonants are 'b, 'd, 'w, 'y. The glottal stop and each of these other consonants function freely as independent phonemes. No preglottalised consonants have been found in presyllabic position in which only a CV and CVC patterns are well attested. These glottalised consonants are most simply analysed as sequences.

2.2.2 Post aspirated consonants are ph, th, kh. In some cases where a verb is used to form a noun through an infix -n- there is evidence that the stop plus aspiration is a sequence rather than a unit, e.g. ph^{h} 'to plane' is in the nominal form $\text{p}^{\text{h}}\text{ɔ}^{\text{h}}\text{n}-\text{h}^{\text{h}}$ 'a plane'. Stop-continuant sequences are commonly found in the main syllable. Post aspirated stops do not occur in the presyllable. The simplest analysis, therefore, is to regard post aspirated consonants as sequences of phonemes.

2.2.3 The syllable final post aspirated consonant is [yh]. The syllable pattern clearly indicates a complex unit interpretation. Occurring only word finally [yh] may be analysed as an allophone of /s/ since [s] never occurs word finally, and [yh] and [s] are phonetically fairly

close. Of the few words so far discovered having the -yh ending one, *mōnayh* 'pineapple', is reconstructed by Dempwolff as *kenas and *nanas.²

Ernest W. Lee reconstructs 'pineapple' as *m_nas for Proto-Chamic.³ This word appears to be a reflex of Dempwolff's Proto-Malayo-Polynesian reconstructions for 'pineapple' which supports [yh] as an allophone of /s/.

For a parallel example, what is reconstructed by Lee as *kapas 'cotton' for Proto-Chamic is *k pah* in Jorai and *kpah* in Rade. Here the /s/ is reflected as -ih. On the basis of the foregoing [yh] will be regarded as an allophone of /s/.

2.2.4 The syllable final post glottalised consonants are [w'] and [y']. As with [yh] these are complex units occurring in main syllable final position when the normal pattern has only a single consonant filling that position. One solution is to regard these as allophones of /b/ and /j/ respectively since these segments have phonetic features similar to [w'] and [y']. All are stops, [w'] and /b/ are labial, and [y'] and /j/ are alveopalatal. The phonemes /b/ and /j/ never occur word finally, [w'] and [y'] occur only word finally. However, an allophonic solution raises difficulties of symmetry as James Cooper has pointed out in dealing with this same problem in the analysis of Halang phonemes.⁴ There are no corresponding allophones for /d/ and /g/ which also do not occur word finally. This makes the allophonic solution seem arbitrary.

Another possible solution is to regard [w'] and [y'] as complex units occurring only in word final position. Lee has shown that Proto-Chamic *-c becomes i' in Rōglai and y' in Cham in most environments.⁵ Jorai has a similar reflex in |ai' 'to say' from Proto-Chamic *|ac⁶; for this Chru has |əy'. These reflexes add weight to considering [y'] as a unit.

Concerning [w'] Lee notes a single example in Rōglai in which *p is reflected as [u']. (Rōglai *hadu'* 'alive' from *hadip⁷. The Chru reflex is *hədu'*.) This shows a complex segment reflected from a simple unit.

On the basis of this historical data and because of the well attested canonical pattern of the main syllable final consonant slot [y'] and [w'] will be considered unit phonemes occurring in the final consonant position of the main syllable.

2.3 LABIAL PHONEMES

/p/ simple voiceless labial stop.

<i>pah</i> 'to slap'	<i>pləi</i> 'village'
<i>bah</i> 'to sweep'	<i>bləi</i> 'to buy'

