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Style:

1. Title of the text: Times New Roman, Bold face, Heading 14 size font, Central alignment, single spacing.
2. Author's info: Soon after the title (Times New Roman, Normal 10 size font, central alignment).
3. Abstract (in less than 150 words) of the article and keywords to be provided at the beginning of the text (after Title and author's info) in italics. For articles in written in Russian, Hindi and Malayalam, title, abstract and keywords to be provided in English as well.
4. The text: Times New Roman, Normal 12 size font, justified alignment, single spacing, with 6 point space between paragraphs. Words, phrases, citations from other languages (than English and Russian) to be transcribed/ translated into English/ Russian. Text size not to be less than 1500 words, and more than 5000 words.
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Submissions not following the prescribed style and received after the deadline shall be summarily rejected.

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From the Editors

On the occasion of the golden jubilee year of the University of Calicut, the Department of Russian and Comparative Literature humbly present before you the 18th issue of our departmental research journal *Assonance – A Journal of Russian and Comparative Literary Studies*. We are extremely glad that our journal has received tremendous support from different universities of India and abroad. We are immensely enthused to share that our journal has been included in the UGC list of approved journals and has become a household name in the fields of Russian studies and comparative literary studies in India. We are grateful to each and every contributor for contributing their valuable research articles for this issue.

The current issue has thirty articles contributed by scholars of eminence as well as emerging scholars on various issues of comparative study, genre study, thematic study of different authors and their texts, translation studies, linguistics, culture studies, travelogue, folklore, children literature et al. It has articles dealing with comparative study of Chekhov's *Vanka* and Premchand's *Eidgah*, poems of Pushkin and Mickiewicz, Shikshin's *Chudik* and Batohi's *Shahar*, Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and Sorokin's *Day of the Oprichnik*, *Metamorphosis* and *I-Not I*. We have as well included various thematic studies on Shukshin's stories, Khvoshinskaya's *Pansionerka*, *Life and Times of Michael K.*, Pakistani American fiction, Laszlo Krasznahorkai's *Stantango*, 17th and 18th century French plays, Seamus Heaney's *Death of a Naturalist*, Zamyatin's *We*, Caucasian texts in Russian, Anastasia Verbitskia's *Key to Happiness*, Vera Panova's *Seryozha*, Pratibha Ray's *Yajnaseni* et al. There are articles examining translation tradition in India, Chekhov's reception in Marathi, graphemes-phonemes in Khasi, feudalism in Russia, Indo-Russian diplomatic relations, Rajasthani folk songs, Raveendran's travelogue *Akalangalile Manushyar*, animal stories, and children stories of soviet and post-soviet era.

We express our deepest sense of gratitude towards the administration of the University of Calicut for their continual financial support and patronage in our endeavour of publishing this journal. We as well appreciate the timely input provided by the Board of Referees with respect to quality of the articles and publication of the journal. Last but not the least, we are thankful to all those who rendered their support towards bringing out this issue successfully.

The Editors

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GRAPHEMES-PHONEMES CORRESPONDENCES IN STANDARD KHASI

Curiously Bareh

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Abstract: *It is a well-known fact that orthographies do not always depend on the relationship between phonemes and graphemes or very few languages (if at all) make a one-to-one correspondence between graphemes (letters) and phonemes (speech sounds). English for that matter, whose literature has been in existence for centuries, shows one of the most irregular correspondences between letters and sounds. This paper attempts to highlight the correspondences between the graphemes and phonemes of Standard Khasi and the influence of Welsh literature on Khasi.*

Keywords: Grapheme, phoneme, Standard Khasi

“Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks.”
Bloomfield (1933:21)

Introduction

It is almost always impossible to talk about the development of Khasi literature without mentioning the contribution of Christian missions and the Welsh literature. The emergence of Khasi writing literature can be traced back to 1841 along with the coming of Christian missionaries to then Khasi land. Thomas Jones and his wife arrived at Sohra (Cherrapunjee) in 1841 and immediately started linguistic field work and contributed to the development of the Khasi writing system by translating scriptures and religious literature books into Khasi.

It is to be noted that this was not the first attempt to put Khasi language into writing. There were many attempts made to materialise the writing system in Khasi but somehow the ideas failed. The first attempt can be traced back to 1824 when Alexander Burgh Lish translated the Bible called *Khasee New Testament* in Shella dialect. This attempt proved to be a failure since not all Khasi speakers understood this variety. William Carey, the then British missionary and one of the co-founders of Serampore College, was so enthused to translate the New Testament into Khasi, that he sent Alexander Burgh Lish to Sohra/Cherrapunjee (the then Headquarter of the British government) to work for the Mission. Lish arrived at Sohra in 1832 and started the mission work and this time made an attempt to translate the New Testament into Khasi in Bengali script. Again this was also not successful. Nevertheless, Lish was the first

person to make an attempt to write in Khasi and also the first person to write about the structure of Khasi language (Lish 1838: 142-143).

The concept of orthography and grapheme: an overview

In the earlier literature, the terms orthography, script, and writing system are often used interchangeably. The term *orthography* derived from Greek, via the classical Latin *orthographia* means “correct spelling” (Quintilian). Orthography refers to a set of conventions and rules that describes how to write a language. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines orthography as the way in which the words of a language are spelled. Decker (2014) specifically defines these three terms as follows:

A *writing system* is a set of scripts, which share common features. It does not refer to a system used for a specific language.

A *script* is a set of orthographies, which share common features. It does not refer to a system used for a specific language.

An *orthography* is a specific set of symbols and the rules used to combine those symbols into words and sentences for a specific language.

Coulmas (1996) points out that ‘orthography includes a limited set of graphemes specific to only one language (Coulmas 1996: 379) and can be used for *pleremic* and *cenemic* writing systems. An alphabet is a language specific inventory of symbols chosen from a segmental script of a cenemic writing system. Haas (1976:152–153) describes two types of writing systems: cenemic, systems with symbols that represent sounds, and pleremic, systems with symbols that “are semantically informed, denoting both sounds and meanings” Frost et. al (1987) propose *The Orthographic Depth Hypothesis*, which introduces the idea that languages differ in the depths of their orthographies. In an opaque or deep orthography, there is a relatively weak grapheme-phoneme correspondence. The graphemes do not consistently map to phonemes, or vice versa. English is a good example of an opaque orthography.

Grapheme on the other hand, refers to the smallest, single unit of a written language. Gimson (1962) describes a grapheme as the ‘smallest contrastive linguistic unit which may bring about a change of meaning’. In this sense, a grapheme is not restricted only to alphabetic letters, but includes numeric digits, typographic ligatures, Chinese characters, punctuation marks, and other

individual symbols of any of the world's writing systems. There are others who see graphemes as the written representation of phonemes (e.g. Berndt, Reggia & Mitchum, 1987; Berndt, Lynne D'Autrechy & Reggia, 1994; Coltheart, 1978; etc.). Linguistic and psycholinguistic theories introduced the notion of grapheme in an attempt to reduce the mismatch between the number of letters and the number of phonemes (e.g. Venezky, 1970; Coltheart, 1978). Many hold the view that Alphabetic orthographies mainly postulate the relationship between phonemes and graphemes. However cross-linguistic study shows that a grapheme may or may not carry meaning by itself, and may or may not correspond to a single phoneme.

An overview of Khasi language, its phonemes and its writing system

(a) Khasi language

Khasi is one of the languages belonging to the Monkhmer branch of the Austro-Asiatic language group spoken in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya in North-East India. There are also a sizable number of speakers in the neighbouring state of Assam and across the border in Bangladesh. According to the Census of India 2001, it recorded that there are 1,128,575 speakers of Khasi in India (this includes others - Pnar, War, Lyngngam etc.). Many of the earlier literature hold the view that Khasi language has four dialects; Khasi, War, Pnar and Lyngngam (Grierson, 1904; Rabel, 1961; Census of India, 2001; etc.). Others, like Acharya (1971) and Barih (1977) opine a different view on the issue of dialects of Khasi; which in any case has several dialects. Khasi itself has a number of regional varieties, including the standard variety. Diffloth (2005) coins the term *Khasianto* and clears the confusion of the concept of language/dialect. He uses the term *Khasianas*, a cover term for those four languages under it and also to specify its position under the Khasi-Khmuic branch of the Austro-asiatic language family. According to him, there are four languages under this term *Khasian*. In his earlier classification (1974) he groups the Khasi language and its dialects directly under Mon-Khmer along with Palaungic, Monic, Khmuic, Vietmuong, Katuic, Bahnaric, Pearic, Khmer, Semang, Sakai and Semelaic. And in the latter edition (1982), he regroups Khasi language along with Palaungic-Khmuic and Vietmuong under the North branch of the Mon-Khmer. Sidwell (2009, 2011), on the other hand, classifies Khasian along with Palaungic within Austro-Asiatic. Both these classifications of Austro-Asiatic only specify the position of the Khasian group but not the subgroups under this branch. However, Khasi can be classified along with the other languages, viz, War and Pnar and Lyngngam under the Khasian group. The variety of Khasi selected for analysis of this paper is the Standard variety, the variety selected for all writing and literature purposes spoken at Sohra (Cherrapunji). However, if we compare the Standard variety and the Sohra variety in the present day, there are a number of variables.

(b) Khasi phonology

There are a number of works that has been done on the sound system of Standard Khasi (Rabel, 1961; Henderson, 1967 & 1991; Nagaraja, 1987; Shabong, 2012, Khyriem, 2013; etc.), and yet we have different opinions on the number and kind of phonemes. This paper follows the phonemic inventory proposed by Rabel and Khyriem. Rabel’s analysis is one of the finest phonetic works done for the sound system of Khasi. Henderson (1991) made a very impressive comment on the work of Rabel where she states that ‘Rabel’s phonetic observations are beyond reproach’. Khyriem’s (2013) is the latest work done in the field of Khasi phonology. She discusses the consonants and vowels of Khasi in detail highlighting both articulatory and acoustic aspects with notes of justification and explanation. The following is the list of consonants in Khasi elicited from the work of Rabel (op cit).

Table 1: Consonant Chart of Khasi (Rabel, 1961)

Stops	p	b	t	d	ʃ	k
ʔ						
Aspirated Stops	p ^h		t ^h			k ^h
Nasals	m		n		ɲ	ŋ
Spirants		s		ʂ		h
Trill				r		
Lateral				l		
Semivowels	w				ɟ	

Like Rabel, Henderson and Khyriem do not include the series of voiced aspirated stops. However others (Shabong, 2012) have the series of voiced aspirated stops. Although Henderson (1967, 1976 & 1989-1990) doesn’t make any formal statement on the phonemic inventory of Khasi yet, it is possible to deduce information concerning the consonants and vowels. In many instances, she agrees with the list of phonemes Rabel proposed. Rabel rightly points out that the series of the voiced aspirated stops are not found in any of the Monkhmer languages. These sounds occur only in borrowed words from Indo-Aryan languages. The aspect in which Rabel, Henderson and Khyriem differ from others is in their treatment of palatal stop in the final position; words such as <said> ‘to wash’, <iaid> ‘to walk’ etc.

Vowels

There are a number of works that have been done on the inventory of vowels in Khasi. Though there is minor disagreement among experts in providing the exact number of vowel phonemes, yet their phonemic inventories will provide

a clear picture of vowels at least for the analysis in this paper. Roberts' (1891) perhaps is one of the oldest works that attempts to provide the description of sounds' pattern in Khasi. He did not provide the description of vowels phonetically but in his attempt to relate the letters and the sounds, he does mention the number of vowels (He did not use IPA symbols to present the sound but used his own convention for example, using an acute accent to represent a long vowel) and was also aware of the difference in vowel length. He states that 'these six vowels represent twelve simple sounds, five long and seven short; two are semi-vowels, when combined'. According to his analysis, the following are the vowels and diphthongs;

Vowels:	<i>a, á, e, é, i, í, o, ó, u, ú, y, and ý.</i>
Semivowels:	<i>i and w</i>
Diphthongs:	<i>ai, ái, aw, áw, ei, ew, iw, íw, ie, oi, ói, ui, andúí.</i>

Roberts realises the difference in these two vowels; the pure vowels *i, í* and the one which he refers to as semivowel and represents by the same *i*. The environment where this vowel *i* (where he classes as semivowel) occurs clearly shows that it is the palatal approximant /j/ which is represented in the orthography as <í> in the modern day writings.

Rabel's (1961) analysis is one of the finest and classic phonetic works that has been done in Khasi. She gives a detailed analysis of vowels and their phonetic variants. According to her analysis, there are 10 monophthongs (/i/, /ii/, /e/, /ee/, /u/, /uu/, /o/, /oo/, /a/, and /aa/) and 12 diphthongs (/ia/, /ie/, /uo/, /iw/, /ew/, /aw/, /aaw/, /ey/, /uy/, /oy/, ay/ and /aay/.

Nagaraja (1985) provides a description of the Khasi language and gives a brief note on the vowels. According to his analysis, there are 11 vowels: /i, i:,í, u, u:, e, e:, o, o:, a, and a:/. Rabel (1961) and Nagaraja (1985) show almost the same number of vowels with the exception that Nagaraja treats the high central vowel /i/ as a separate phoneme whereas Rabel chooses not to include it as a phoneme since its occurrence is predictable: it always precedes the liquids and nasals. A recent work on the sound system of Khasi (Shabong 2012) holds the view that /i/ and /í/ are two different phonemes but does not show a contrast for the long and short /i/ in her analysis. According to her, there are 11 vowels in Khasi, they are; /i/, /í/, /e/, /e:/, /a/, /a:/, /u/, /u:/, /o/, /o:/ and /ɔ/. Both Henderson (1989-1990 & 1991) and Khyriem (2013) seconded Rabel's view and treated the unrounded central high vowel [i] as an allophonic variation. For some vowels, length is phonemic. Jones while preparing the spelling system of Khasi, was very well aware of the differences in these contrastive pairs, examples, *dap* vs. *dab*, *kat* vs. *kad* etc. though phonetically, the difference here is with the length of the vowel rather than the voicing of consonants.

(c) *Khasi alphabet*

The present Khasi alphabet was introduced by Thomas Jones (1841) based on Latin alphabet. The alphabet consists of 23 letters altogether. The following are the letters having both an uppercase and a lowercase;

Capital letters

A	B	K	D	E	G	NG
H	I	Ī	J	L	M	N
Ñ	O	P	R	S	T	
		U	W	Y		

Small letters

a	b	k	d	e	g	ng
h	i	ī	j	l	m	n
ñ	o	p	r	s	t	
		u	w	y		

Jones initially introduced only 21 letters in his first Khasi reader entitled as *Ca CitapNyangkong ban Hicai pule cactin Cassi* (where no consistency of writing is observed; *c* appears in place of *k*). Later in 1896, two letters; *ī* and *ñ* were added. *ī* is pronounced as [ji:] and equivalent to the IPA symbol [j]; and *ñ* is pronounced [e: ɲ] and has the equivalent to the IPA symbol /ɲ/. This can be clearly ascertained from the work of Roberts (1891) where he does not use the graphemes <ī> and <ñ>. According to his analysis, the Khasi alphabet consists of 21 letters without *ī* and *ñ*”.

Correspondences between graphemes and phonemes

The grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences in the Khasi writing system are somewhat consistent (as compared to English which is considered a relatively opaque orthographic system) yet there are cases where one letter corresponds to two phonemes (eg. <h> ~ /h/ and /ʔ/). The letters of the alphabet in Khasi is similar to the IPA symbols. Most of the 23 letters at least corresponds to two phones depending on the environment they appear in.

(a) <a> corresponds to [a] and [a:].

The grapheme <a> corresponds to two phonemes; [a] and [a:]. It corresponds to [a:] in several environments;

- whenever it is occurring in the final position of the word, for example;

<khla>	~	[k ^h la:]	‘tiger’, <ka> ~ [ka:] ‘she’ etc.
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- whenever it precedes the grapheme < - d># and < -b>#. For examples;
<bad> ~ [ba:tɪ] 'conjunction'
<tab> ~ [ta:pʻ] 'to cheat, to deceive'

It corresponds to [a] elsewhere:

- <sat> ~ [satɪ] 'hot (taste of chilly)'
- <bat> ~ [batɪ] 'conjunction'
- <tap> ~ [tapʻ] 'to cover'

Apart from the above correspondence, there are certain words where the orthography does not provide any clue whether the grapheme corresponds to which phoneme, but pronunciation does. For example; <kam> corresponds to [kam] 'work (N)' and [ka:m] 'to step over, to walk', <sam> corresponds to [sa:m] 'to distribute' and [sam] 'to pierce', etc. It is to be noted that /a/ and /a:/ are in contrast hence they are two different phonemes in Khasi. For the sake of analysing in this paper, the two sounds are presented in square bracket [a] and [a:].

(b) corresponds to [b] and [pʻ]

 corresponds to two phones; [b] and [pʻ]. It corresponds to [pʻ] in those words where the letter *b* appears in the final position of the word. In the orthographic system of Khasi, the grapheme-to-phoneme rules do not always correspond in all the positions. The series of stops mark a one-to-one correspondence of phoneme and grapheme in the initial position. However, in the final position it is ambiguous. In the writing system, there is a clear distinction between; versus <p> and <d> versus <t> in the final position of the words, examples; <bat> 'to hold' versus <bad> 'and', <dab> 'ox' versus <dap> 'full'. In the phonological system of Khasi, there are no voiced stops occurring in the final position. Thus the graphic occurrence of <-b>, <-d>, <-j> and <-g> does not correlate with their phonic appearance (It is to be noted that <g> occurs only in one borrowed word and nowhere else; <deg> 'large cooking vessel'). In some of the earlier linguistic analysis, fail to differentiate between the vowel length and voice quality of the stops. In the writing system if any word ends with the following graphemes; <-b>, <-d>, <-j> and <-g> then we can safely predict that the consonant sound is a voiceless stop preceded by a long vowel. Elsewhere, always corresponds to /b/.
Examples;

	corresponds to /b/		
<bam>	~	[bam]	‘to eat’
<kba:>	~	[kba:]	‘husked rice’
<tab>	~	[ta:p’]	‘to cheat, to deceive’

(c) <k> corresponds to [k] and [kʰ].

In the alphabetic order of the language, the letter <k> occurs after and before <d> in the list. It always corresponds to /k/. The phoneme /k/ has two allophones; [k] and [kʰ]. [kʰ] occurs only in the final position of word or syllable whereas [k] occurs elsewhere. Examples;

<kylli>	~	[killi:]	‘to ask’
<kyllut>	~	[killut]	‘deaf’
<dak>	~	[dak’]	‘letter’

Bareh (2015) mentions that in the prosaic phonology of Khasi /k/ never occurs in the final position of the syllable or word of the native vocabulary, but it occurs with many borrowed words and expressive words. The example given <dak> also is a borrowed word from Indo Aryan.

In the orthography, whenever the grapheme <k> follows the grapheme <h>, then they form a digraph <kh> and correspond to the aspirated voiceless velar stop [kʰ]. It appears in the initial and medial position of the word.

<khlam>	~	[kʰlam]	‘plague’
<khlaw>	~	[kʰlaw]	‘forest’
<skhem>	~	[skʰɛm]	‘firmly/securely’

(d) <d> corresponds to [d], [-tʰ]# and [-cʰ]#.

Just like the grapheme , <d> also corresponds to both the voiced and voiceless alveolar stops; [d] and [tʰ]. It corresponds to [tʰ] in the final position and [d] elsewhere. By the same phonological rule of Khasi, that no voiced stop occurs in the final position but in all cases where the <-d> appears in the final position of the word it corresponds to [tʰ]; the different representation in the writing system between <-d> and <-t> do not necessarily mark the difference of voice but actually the length of the vowels. Whenever <-d> corresponds to [tʰ], it is predictable that it is preceded by a long vowel whereas <-t> corresponds to [tʰ] preceded by a short vowel. Examples;

<sad>	~	[sa:t’]	‘to comb’
<bad>	~	[ba:t’]	‘and’

<d> also corresponds to [cʰ] along with long vowel whenever it is preceded by the diagraph <ai->, <ui->etc as in the examples below;

<said>	~	[sa:cʰ]	‘to plead, to argue’
<taid>	~	[ta:cʰ]	‘to keep on talking’
askrenlyntertaid			
<tuid>	~	[tu:cʰ]	‘to flow’

In position other than these; <d> corresponds to [d]. It occurs in the initial and medial position of the word as in the following examples;

<dur>	~	[dur]	‘picture’
<dieng>	~	[de:ŋ]	‘tree’
<sdang>	~	[sdaŋ]	‘to begin’

(e) <e> corresponds to [e] and [ɛ]

The grapheme <e> corresponds to [e] and [ɛ]. In most cases, it corresponds to [ɛ] when it precedes the nasals, alveolar trill and the glottal stop; whereas, it corresponds to [e] whenever it appears in an open syllable. This can be illustrated by the following examples;

<mane>	~	[mane]	‘to worship’
<de>	~	[de]	‘also/too’
<her>	~	[hɛr]	‘to fly’
<sem>	~	[sem]	‘hut’
<kem>	~	[kɛm]	‘to catch’

It is also to be noted that the diagraph <ie-> or the combination of <i> and <e> always corresponds to [e:]. It occurs in following words;

<shriew>	~	[ʃre:w]	‘taro’
<briew>	~	[bre:w]	‘human/people’

(f) <g> corresponds to [g] or [∅]

Apparently this letter does not correspond to any of the phonemes nor does it appear in any of the Khasi vocabularies. In the earlier writing, it occurs only in one instance, in the word <deg> ‘big cooking vessel’. Phonetically, the sound represented by the letter in this word is the voiceless velar *k*. As stated earlier, Khasi does not have a *voiced velar stop* in its list of phonemes. In the present day’s writing, many (see Kharkongngor; 2002, & Bars; 1973) have replaced <g> with <k> in this particular word <deg>. It is to be noted that almost all the Khasian languages are without the *voiced velar /g/*. Nagaraja (1996) mentions the presence of /g/ in Lyngngam in his paper ‘The status of Lyngngam’ appears in Mon-Khmer Studies, 26:37-50.

(g) <ng> corresponds to [ŋ]

The digraph <ng> in Khasi consistently corresponds to the velar nasal [ŋ]. It occurs in all the three position of the words;

<ngab>	~	[ŋa:p]	‘cheek’
<tnga>	~	[tŋa:]	‘spouse’
<phlang>	~	[p ^h lan]	‘grass’

(h) <h> corresponds to [h], [ʔ] and [ʰ]

<h> corresponds basically to two phonemes /h/ and /ʔ/. It corresponds to [h] whenever it appears in the initial position of the word and to [ʔ] whenever it appears in the final position. Whenever it is preceded by <p>, <t> and <k> it corresponds to the aspirated stops. Thus, the diagraphs <ph> corresponds to [p^h], <th> to [t^h], and <kh> to [k^h].

<ha>	~	[ha:]	‘preposition’
<rah>	~	[raʔ]	‘to carry’
<phlang>	~	[p ^h lan]	‘grass’

(i) <i> corresponds to [i] and [i:]

Depending on the position it appears in, <i> corresponds to two sounds; [i:] when it appears in the final position of word and to [i] when it appears in the initial and medial position of the words.

<kylli>	~	[killi:]	‘to ask’
<khi>	~	[k ^h i:]	‘to shave’
<im>	~	[im]	‘to live’
<dih>	~	[diʔ]	‘to drink’

But whenever <i> appears in the final position, preceded by a vowel, it always corresponds to [j] as in <mai> ~ [maj] ‘to scold’, [dei] ~ [dej] ‘right’ etc. So the diagraphs <-ei#> correspond to [-ej], <-ai#> to [-aj], <-oi#> to [-ɔj], <-ui#> to [-uj] etc.

<mei>	~	[mej]	‘mother’
<mai>	~	[maj]	‘to scold’
<phoi>	~	[p ^h ɔj]	‘to be offended’
<puipei>	~	[pujpuj]	‘dust’

(j) <i> corresponds to [j]

The grapheme <ï> along with <ñ> were included in 1896 to the list of alphabets and it always corresponds to the palatal approximant [j]. It occurs only in the beginning of the word. In many of the present day’s writing, the <ï> is usually replaced by <i>, as in <ioh> ‘to get’ which is supposed to be <ïoh>, <ia> instead of <ïa> ‘accusative marker’ etc. This probably could be due to the

lack of the symbol in the then typewriter. Examples of <ɔ> and [j] correspondences are given below;

<iɔŋ>	~	[jɔŋ]	‘black’
<iŋ>	~	[jeŋ]	‘house’
<iɔh>	~	[jɔʔ]	‘to get’

(k) <j> corresponds to [ɟ] and [c]

The grapheme <j> corresponds to the palatal stops [ɟ] and [c]. It corresponds to [c] whenever it appears in the final position and corresponds to [ɟ] when it appears elsewhere.

<siej>	~	[se:c]	‘bamboo’
<biej>	~	[be:c]	‘foolish’
<jurib>	~	[ɟuri:p]	‘to survey’
<juh>	~	[ɟuʔ]	‘use to’
<kjit>	~	[kɟit]	‘to suck’

(l) <l> corresponds to [l]

<l> corresponds only to [l] and appears only in the initial and medial position of the syllables.

<leit>	~	[lec]	‘to go’
<blang>	~	[blaŋ]	‘goat’

(m) <m> corresponds to /m/

<m> corresponds to [m] in all environments.

<mih>	~	[miʔ]	‘to come out/to appear’
<kmen>	~	[kmen]	‘happy’
<kem>	~	[kɛm]	‘to catch’

(n) <n> corresponds to /n/

<n> corresponds to [n] in all environments.

<na>	~	[na:]	‘from’
<knieh>	~	[kne:ɟ]	‘to snatch away’
<pan>	~	[pan]	‘to ask’

(o) <ñ> corresponds to [ɲ]

The grapheme <ñ> in Khasi consistently corresponds to the palatal nasal [ɲ]. It occurs in all the three position of the word;

<ñia>	~	[ɲa:]	‘maternal aunt’
<kñia>	~	[kɲa:]	‘to sacrifice’
<khaiñ>	~	[k ^h a:ɲ]	‘coarse’

(p) <o> corresponds to [o:] and [ɔ]

The grapheme <o> corresponds to two sounds; [o:] and [ɔ]. Henderson (1991) in her analysis of the Khasi orthography mentions that the spelling *o* represents a very close [o] in some words, [ɔ] in others. She further states that there are variations in usage of these sounds between speakers for some words. According to her, in closed syllables, the phonetic value is always [ɔ]. So the grapheme <o> corresponds to [ɔ] whenever it occurs in closed syllables and [o:] in open syllables.

<paro>	~	[paro:]	‘dove’
<kumno>	~	[kumno:]	‘how’
<pom>	~	[pɔm]	‘to cut’

Henderson (op cit) also rightly points out that the mid low back vowel [o:] also represents the <u> wherever it precedes the glottal stop as in these words <ruh> [ro:ʔ] ‘cage’, <sñiuh> [sno:ʔ] etc.

(q) <p> corresponds to [p] and [pʰ]

<p> always corresponds to /p/. The phoneme /p/ has two allophones; [p] and [pʰ]. [pʰ] occurs only in the final position of word or syllable whereas [p] occurs elsewhere. It is also to be noted that whenever the grapheme <p> precedes the grapheme <h> then both <ph> represents for the aspirated voiceless bilabial stop /pʰ/ and it occurs only in the initial position.

<pom>	~	[pɔm]	‘to cut’
<kper>	~	[kper]	‘garden’
<tap>	~	[tapʰ]	‘to cover’
<phong>	~	[pʰɔŋ]	‘to wear’

(r) <r> corresponds to [r]

<r> corresponds to [r] in all the contexts. It occurs in the following words;

<rep>	~	[rɛp]	‘to cultivate’
<prie>	~	[pre:]	‘to vomit’
<per>	~	[pɛr]	‘to float’

(s) <s> corresponds to [s] and [ʃ]

<s> corresponds to [s] and appears in the initial and media position of a word. It is also to be noted that whenever, the grapheme <s> precedes the grapheme <h> both merge and correspond to [ʃ]. The post alveolar fricative [ʃ] also occurs in the initial and medial position of a word. It is to be noted that <s>/[s]/[ʃ] never appears/occurs in the final position of a word

<sah>	~	[saʃ]	‘to live’
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<ksew>	~	[ksew]	‘dog’
<shong>	~	[ʃoŋ]	‘to sit’
<kshong>	~	[kʃoŋ]	‘fat (N)’

(t) <t> corresponds to [t] and [tʰ]

<t> always corresponds to /t/. The phoneme /t/ has two allophones; [t] and [tʰ]. As shown with the other stops, all stops are unreleased in the final position. So the unreleased alveolar stop [tʰ] occurs only in the final position of the word or syllable whereas [t] occurs elsewhere. In the orthography, whenever the grapheme <t> precedes the grapheme <h>, then they form a diagraph <th> and corresponds to the aspirated voiceless alveolar stop [tʰ]. <th>/[tʰ] appears in the initial and medial position of the word.

<tah>	~	[taʔ]	‘to stick’
<stang>	~	[staŋ]	‘thin’
<blad>	~	[bla:tʰ]	‘tasteless’
<thang>	~	[tʰaŋ]	‘to burn’
<btath>	~	[btʰat]	‘tasteless’

(u) <u> corresponds to [u], [u:] [ʊ]

<u> corresponds to [u], [u:] and [ʊ:]. It corresponds to [ʊ] when it precedes the glottal stop, corresponds to [u:] when it is preceded by [i] as in *sñiuh* or when it precedes [r] as in some words like *khlur*. <u> corresponds to [u] elsewhere.

<suh>	~	[soʔ]	‘to stitch’
<khlur>	~	[kʰlu:r]	‘star’
<khyllung>	~	[kʰɪllʊŋ]	‘baby’

(v) <w> corresponds to [w]

<w> always corresponds to [w] in initial, medial and final position.

<wan>	~	[wan]	‘to come’
<kwah>	~	[kwaʔ]	‘want’
<khlaw>	~	[kʰlaw]	‘forest’

(w) <y> corresponds to [ɨ], [ʉ] and [j].

<y> corresponds to three sounds; [i] [ʔ] and [j]. It corresponds to the high central vowel [i] when it occurs in light syllables (light syllable always precedes the heavy one). In this position, usually the <y> can precede only the liquids and nasals. It corresponds to the glottal stop [ʔ] when it follows the <u> in few words like *pyut*, and corresponds to [j] whenever it follows the grapheme <i> as in *kyiuh*. It is also to be noted that <y> corresponds to [ə] in some context when the clusters are broken by means of epenthesis, for example; <bneng> ↔ <byneng> ~ [bneŋ] ↔ [bəneŋ] ‘heaven/ sky’.

<pyrthei>	~	[pirtʰej]	‘earth/world’
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<pyut>	~	[pʔut]	‘stale’
<kyiuh>	~	[kju:ʔ]	‘to treamble’

In addition to these letters, there are a number of diagraphs in the writing system of Khasi worth discussing; <ie>, <ia>, <sh> etc. The diagraph <ie> occurs regularly in many words and seen as one integral unit of Khasi writing system It corresponds to [e:]. The diagraph <ia> corresponds to the diphthong [ia] and occurs only in the initial and final position, and the diagraph <sh> always corresponds to [ʃ].

Influences of Welsh literature

Thomas Jones while preparing the writing system of Khasi, was aware of the differences in these contrastive pairs, examples, *dap* vs. *dab*, *kat* vs. *kad* etc. though phonetically, the difference here is with the length of the vowel rather than the voicing of consonants. This can be seen clearly as the influence of Welsh literature on Khasi. Henderson (1991) points out that Welsh has such conventions; where vowels before the letter *b*, *d*, and *g* are almost always long, whereas before *p*, *t* and *c*, vowels are almost always short. Acoustically, in the analysis of such pairs, all the stop consonants occurring in the final position are voiceless.

Another direct influence of Welsh on Khasi language and literature is the systematic insertion of schwa in between the clusters. Khasian languages are known for their consonant clusters: the rich number of permissible combination of the consonants cluster in the initial position. Henderson (1976) makes impressive remarks on the consonant cluster of Khasi. She states that one of the most striking features of Khasi is the astonishing richness of its word-initial clustering possibilities. Rabel (1961) (As quoted from Hederson; 1967) lists around 127 of such permissible two-consonant clusters in Khasi. In most of the Christian literature like the Presbyterian hymn book, we find out that there are a number of words having consonant cluster with <y> ~[ə] insertion in between the two consonants cluster; for examples, *byneng*<*bneng* [bənɛŋ] < [bnɛŋ] ‘heaven’, *kypa*<*kpa*[kəpa] < [kpa] ‘father’ etc. One may assume that this is done in order to meet / fit the metrical rhyme, but may not be the case. A particular line in a hymn book (Khasi Hymn Book No. 601)

Ki kymiēna Salem,
Ki khunki lam sh’UJisu,
Ki synrantekim shah kin wan,

.....

The first line of this song contains 6 feet or 6 fully stressed syllables of the six syllables; a disyllabic word *kymie* derived from the monosyllabic word *kmie* ‘mother’. The insertion of [ə] in this word is seen as an influence of the Welsh tradition. It is not done with the purpose to meet the metrical rhyme. No Khasian speaker would find any difficulty in pronouncing the /km –/ consonant cluster in the initial position. The line could well be rephrased as;

Ki kmiebana Salem.

By inserting the adjective marker *ba*, the sentence still conveys the same meaning and without disturbing the metrical rhyme, the sentence still conveys the sense ‘The mothers from Salem’. Inserting the grapheme <y> in between consonants is one of the Welsh tradition practices. In Welsh the grapheme <y> corresponds to the high central unrounded vowel [i].

This vowel occurs both in closed and open syllables. However, according to the phonotactic constraints of Khasi, the high central vowel [i] occurs only in closed syllables of weak syllables; that it always precedes the nasals and liquids. It is to be noted that the concept the Welsh missionary introduced (inserting the grapheme <y> in between consonant in order to simplify consonant cluster) is not well patterned with the Khasi phonological structure, as the vowel [i] never occurs in open syllable in Khasi, hence the sound gradually changes to the central vowel [ə].

Conclusion

Though Khasi literature recently celebrated 175 years of its existence, yet there are a number of irregularities in the spelling. One of the most noticeable irregularities in Khasi spelling is the unconvincing usage of *-b* vs. *-p*, and *-t* vs. *-d*. As discussed earlier, these pairs of letters phonetically have something in common. Henderson (1991) discusses the correlation between vowel length and final consonants in detail in her paper, entitled *Problems and pitfalls in the phonetic interpretation of Khasi orthography*. She rightly points out that one of the most confusing conventions relates to the use of the letters *-p*, *-b*, *-t*, *-d*, *-c*, *-j* in the final position. She does not mention the letter *-k* because of the absence of final *-g* in Khasi. In spite of all these inadequacies, Khasi orthography is a successful one as it serves the purpose of communication and has been embraced by different speech communities. Not only does it serve the purpose of literacy but most importantly, it unifies the entire Khasian group.

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APPENDIX

Practical Orthography	IPA (primary allophone)	IPA (additional variant(s))
<i>A</i>	[a]	[a:]
<i>B</i>	[b]	[pʰ]
<i>K</i>	[k]	[kʰ]
<i>D</i>	[d]	[tʰ], [cʰ]
<i>E</i>	[e]	[e], [ɛ]
<i>G</i>	X	X
<i>Ng</i>	[ŋ]	X
<i>H</i>	[h]	[h], [ʔ] and [hʰ]
<i>I</i>	[i]	[i:]
<i>Ī</i>	[j]	X
<i>J</i>	[ʃ]	[-cʰ]
<i>L</i>	[l]	X
<i>M</i>	[m]	X
<i>N</i>	[n]	X
<i>Ñ</i>	[ɲ]	X
<i>O</i>	[o]	[o:], [ɔ]
<i>P</i>	[p]	[pʰ]
<i>R</i>	[r]	X
<i>S</i>	[s]	X
<i>T</i>	[t]	[tʰ]
<i>U</i>	[u]	[u:], []
<i>W</i>	[w]	[ʔ], [j]
<i>Y</i>	[i]	