

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the available literature from where the references can be made for the study. There are no available linguistic researches on Syriem from where some references on the language can be drawn. However, there is quite a number of other related Kuki-Chin languages from which some amount of studies have been done. The following are some of the notable works done on Kuki-Chin languages for which references can be made.

2.1 Previous works in Kuki-Chin languages

Various missionaries produced early grammatical descriptions and dictionaries for Chin languages. Lorrain, James Herbert (1940) compiled a “Dictionary of the Lushai Language”. Lorrain, Reginald Arthur (1951) wrote a “Grammar and Dictionary of the Lakher or Mara Language”. Shafer’s (1944) “Khami Grammar and Vocabulary”, seems to be based only on the translation of St. Matthew into Khumi by E.W. Francis and is rather sketchy. He mentions in his Bibliography as previous sources on Khami grammatical sketches done by Latter, Rev. Stilson and Rev. Lyman (1846). Theodore Stern (1954) wrote “A Provisional Sketch of Sizang (Siyin) Chin”. Eugénie Henderson (1965a) wrote “Tiddim Chin: a descriptive analysis of two texts” and gives a very interesting and clear account of

the phonology and grammar of Tiddim Chin. Jordan (1969) wrote a “Grammar of the Chin Language” as an appendix to his dictionary. He describes Cho, (also called Ngmüün or Ng’ Men). Jordan’s grammar is traditional and in a classical Latin style and though he sometimes attempts comparisons with English, his work shows a deep insight and thorough knowledge of the language.

2.2 Ongoing research in Kuki-Chin languages

Kris Lehman has and is still working on Lai (Hakha) Chin and is engaged in a long term project on the syntax of Lai. Some of his research papers are published in ‘Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area’. Lorenz Löffler has been working for many years on Bawm, a Chin language spoken in Bangladesh and is still producing research papers on Chin languages.

George Bedell has also been working on Lai and more recently on Cho and Mara and has written several research papers which were presented at conferences and most of them are to appear in the ‘Proceedings of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society’. Also Stephen Nolan has done some research on Cho and presented conference papers.

Lai seems to be the Chin language on which most research work has been done in recent years. A lot of papers have been forthcoming from the graduate students of the University of California, Berkeley. The Volumes 20.2 and 21.1, Fall 1997 and Spring 1998, of the ‘Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area’, issues dedicated to Paul K. Benedict, have been entirely (with one exception of a paper on Tiddim

Chin) devoted to papers on Lai. David A. Peterson has done recent field research on Hyow and Bangladesh Khumi, two Chin languages that are spoken in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of south eastern Bangladesh. Justin Watkins is working with a Yangon based Khumi Literacy Committee on the compilation of a Khumi-Burmese-English dictionary. Lalnunthangi Chhangte has been working on Mizo and wrote 'A preliminary grammar of the Mizo language' (1986) for her MA thesis and 'Mizo Syntax' (1993) for her Ph.D. thesis, which is to my knowledge the latest grammar done in any Kuki-Chin language. Khoi Lam Thang (2001) wrote 'A Phonological Reconstruction of Proto Chin' as his MA thesis for the PYU in Chiangmai, Thailand. Kee SheinMang (2006) wrote a 'Syntactic and Pragmatic Description of the Verb Stem Alternation in K'Cho' as his MA thesis for the PYU in Chiangmai. Kenneth VanBik (2006) wrote 'Proto-Kuki-Chin' as his Ph.D. thesis for the University of California, Berkeley. Jonathan Wright is working on a Grammar Sketch of Anu-Khaungsho for his MA dissertation.