VERB STEM ALTERNATION IN SIZANG CHIN
NARRATIVE DISCOURSE

TYLER D. DAVIS

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Dedicated to the memory of Pu Ngo Dal (Tongseal suanh, Kim Pau bawng)  
(20 February, 1963– 4 July, 2016), 
and to his wife Nu Cing Pum Neam (Tongseal suanh, Sanh Seal bawng).  
My first Sizang teachers.
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“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place” (2 Corinthians 2:14, KJV).

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ABSTRACT

Sizang Chin (Northern Kuki-Chin, Tibeto-Burman) is spoken in Northern Chin State, Burma/Myanmar. It exhibits a form of ablaut commonly referred to as “verb stem alternation” within the Kuki-Chin literature. In verb stem alternation, one form of a verb (Stem I) occurs in certain environments and a secondary form (Stem II) occurs in other environments. Recently, this alternation has been classified as a correlation of agentivity, with Stem I denoting agentive voice and Stem II denoting nonagentive voice. However, the methodology used in that classification depended heavily upon elicited data and the categorization did not make a clear distinction between clausal-level phenomena and argument-level phenomena.

In order to observe verb stem alternation in a more natural environment, this study examines the correlation of verb stem alternation with foreground and background information in Sizang third-person narrative discourse. Foreground information refers to the clauses within a narrative that contain main events which advance the timeline. Background information refers to clauses that are not mainline events, but nonetheless add supporting information to the mainline events. The hypothesis for this study was that foreground information clauses would correlate with Stem I and background information clauses would correlate with Stem II. However, contrary to the hypothesis, the results demonstrate that the majority of background information
clauses contain a Stem I verb and foreground information clauses sometimes contain Stem II verbs. This is because Stem II in Sizang Chin to indicates nominalization. Therefore, in both foreground and background information, Stem II is present in nominalized clauses, including adverbial clauses, complement clauses and applicative constructions.
บทคัดย่อ

ภาษาซี่จาง อัน (ภาษาในกลุ่มกูกี-ซี สาขาวิชาภาษาศาสตร์) เป็นภาษาที่พูดในรัฐฉิ่นเหนือ ประเทศเมียนมาร์ ภาษาซี่จาง มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงเสียงสระของชุดคำ ซึ่งรู้จักในงานวรรณกรรมของกูกี-ซีในฐาน "การสับเปลี่ยนฐานคจากริยา" ซึ่งรูปแบบหนึ่งของคจากริยา (ฐาน 1) ปรากฏในบริบทที่ชัดเจน และอีกรูปแบบหนึ่ง (ฐาน 2) ปรากฏในอีกบริบทหนึ่ง เมื่อไม่นานมานี้ การสับเปลี่ยนคำกล่าวได้ถูกจัดกลุ่มให้เป็น "การสับเปลี่ยนฐานคจากริยา" ซึ่งฐานกริยาฐาน 1 ปรากฏในกลุ่มอันของผู้กระทจา และคจากริยาฐาน 2 ปรากฏในกลุ่มอันที่ไม่ใช่ผู้กระทจา อย่างไรก็ตาม วิธีการที่ใช้ในการจัดกลุ่มนี้ไม่ได้เป็นไปตามความแตกต่างของชุดคำ ซึ่งปรากฏในปรากฏการณ์ในระดับอนุประโยค และปรากฏการณ์ระดับคำ

เพื่อเป็นการสังเกตการสับเปลี่ยนฐานคจากริยาในสภาพแวดล้อมที่เป็นธรรมชาติยิ่งขึ้น งานวิจัยนี้จึงตรวจ สอบความสัมพันธ์ของการสับเปลี่ยนฐานคจากริยาที่ข้อมูลเบื้องหน้าและเบื้องหลังในเรื่องเล่าที่ส่วนมากจากชุดคำ ข้อมูลเบื้องหลังกล่าวถึงอนุประโยคที่ไม่ใช่เหตุการณ์หลัก แต่เป็นการเพิ่มข้อมูลสนับสนุนให้กับเหตุการณ์หลัก สมมติฐานสำหรับการศึกษาครั้งนี้คือ อนุประโยคข้อมูลเบื้องหน้าจะสัมพันธ์กับคจากริยาฐาน 1 และอนุประโยคข้อมูลเบื้องหลังจะสัมพันธ์กับคจากริยาฐาน 2 อย่างไรก็ตาม ผลการศึกษานี้แสดงให้เห็นว่า อนุประโยคข้อมูลเบื้องหลังประกอบไปด้วยคจากริยาฐาน 1 และอนุประโยคข้อมูลเบื้องหน้าประกอบไปด้วยคจากริยาฐาน 2

คจากริยาฐาน 2 ที่ปรากฏในอนุประโยคของภาษาซี่จาง อัน ไม่เหมือนกับภาษาจากกูกี-ซี อันอื่น ๆ เนื่องจากใช้เพื่อประกอบการท้าให้เห็นอนุประโยคเป็นแบบที่มีการท้าให้เห็น ประเทศเมียนมาร์ จากนั้นจะแต่งคายาการท้า 2 แบบในภาษาซี่จาง-โฟเลอร์ เนื่องจากมีความสัมพันธ์ที่ท้าให้เห็น อนุประโยคที่มีการท้าให้เห็นคจากริยาฐาน 2 หลังจากที่ผ่านการท้าที่ทำลงไป การท้าให้เห็นอนุประโยคเป็นแบบที่มีการท้าให้เห็นคจากริยาฐาน 2 บ่อยกว่าอนุประโยคที่มีการท้าให้เห็น อนุประโยคที่มีการท้าให้เห็นคจากริยาฐาน 2 บ่อยกว่าอนุประโยคที่มีการท้าให้เห็น Authorized person:
ประโยคที่ให้ข้อมูล และอนุประโยคที่ให้ข้อมูลสำคัญของกลมอย่างมีจุดมุ่งหมาย ในด้านความหมายแล้ว อนุประโยคที่เป็นนามจะทำให้เหตุการณ์ย้ายออกจากส่วนตัวไปเชิงเรียง ทั้งนี้ เบนเซ็นที่เพิ่มขึ้นมาใช้ประโยชน์จากคำกริยาฐาน 2 โดยการเพิ่มคำสั่งท้ายที่เป็นกรรมได้ก่อให้เกิดการให้กับส่วนที่เป็นกรรมต่อไป จึงเป็นการเพิ่มเบนเซ็นของอนุประโยคและนำตัวละครที่ไม่ใช่ตัวละครหลักเข้าสู่จุดสนใจ ดังนั้นแล้ว ภาษาซีจาง มีการใช้การสับเปลี่ยนฐานคำกริยาเพื่อเพิ่มจำนวนเหตุการณ์ให้กับเบื้องหลังผ่านการทำให้อนุประโยคเป็นนามและนำตัวละครเพิ่มขึ้นจากส่วนกรรมมาอยู่ส่วนหลักของอนุประโยคเจ้าเบนเซ็นที่เพิ่มขึ้น
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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</tr>
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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 The issue

Sizang Chin (Northern Kuki-Chin, Tibeto Burman) exhibits a form of ablaut commonly referred to as “verb stem alternation”, within Kuki-Chin literature. In verb stem alternation one form of a verb (Stem I) occurs in certain environments and a secondary form (Stem II) occurs in other environments. Recently, this phenomenon has been described as “fundamentally the morphosyntactic manifestation of the agentive voice [Stem I] and its logical counterpart, the nonagentive voice [Stem II]” (King, 2009, p. 142). In the context of K’Cho (Southern Kuki-Chin), the verb stem alternation was accounted for by factors such as valency, clause subordination, and deontic modality (Kee Shein Mang, 2006, pp. 107–108). While these studies offer either morphophonemic or semantic arguments based on elicited data, no previous study has examined verb stem alternation in the context of narrative discourse, which could reveal more reasons as to why verb stems alternate.

Firstly, this study of verb stem alternation in Sizang Chin seeks to test how Stems I and II correlate with foreground information and background information in third person narrative discourse. However, as this study demonstrates in Chapter 3 that foreground information and background information do not directly correlate, Chapter 4 provides an overview of how verb stem alternation is an extension of nominalization.
1.2 Introduction to the Sizang people and language

Sizang (csy), sometimes called “Siyin” in English from the Burmese /sí.jí/, refers to a people and a language native to the Chin State of Burma (Myanmar). The area where the language is spoken is shown on the map in Figure 1.

The “Sizang Valley”, is located North of Falam, South of Tedim, and West of Kalaymyo (gray area in Figure 1, not to scale).

This section first identifies who the Sizang people are, then offers a short typological description of the Sizang language.

1.2.1 The Sizang people

The origin myth of the Sizang is provided in a text within Naylor (1925, pp. 41–45). The contents are summarized here:

Long ago, when only the Shans were living in the Kalaymyo Valley, the area was attacked by the Manipuri. The inhabitants of Kalaymyo subsequently killed the
Manipuri chief “Khang Ko”, which prompted another attack by the Manipuri. The Manipuri won, but they did not attempt to conquer the land.

A Burmese prince later came up and forced the people of Kalaymyo to work under hard conditions. It was dreadful, so they migrated. One group, which are now known as the Mizo, went into the Chin Hills by way of Yasagyo [the Punglung country], crossing the Manipur River. A second group went up from Kalaymyo, camping on Kennedy Peak [Tuam Vum Mual], and subsequently left to look for a good place to settle.

From that group, some people went through Nawmkai to Ciimnuai and lived there. Another group followed the Thung spur and founded the village of Zangpitam. These two groups later reunited, with the Zangpitam group telling the Ciimnuai group how rich the land was at Zangpitam. After some people from the Ciimnuai group attested that the land was indeed good, they all decided to move there.

The five sons of Pu Thuantak, progenitor of the Sizang people, founded Thuantak village and established the practice of a yearly “tual” sacrifice there, to bring peace and prosperity to all of the villages. Their lineage is shown in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Son</th>
<th>Descendants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ngengu</td>
<td>Khuasak and Lophei villagers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanglok</td>
<td>Thuuklai, Buanman, and Limkhai villagers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daitawng</td>
<td>None left.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinnung</td>
<td>Hualnam people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunzong</td>
<td>Taukon people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Today, Sizang people live not only in Chin State, but in other areas of Burma/Myanmar, such as Yangon (Rangoon). Beginning in the 1990’s, many Chin fled Burma/Myanmar as refugees to Western countries or other Asian countries, such as Malaysia or Japan. There are many communities of Sizang in places such as Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Tokyo, Japan; Hamburg, Germany; Frederick and Laurel, Maryland, U.S.A.; and Perth, Australia.

In his foreword to Naylor (1925, p. v), Rev. Dr. J. H. Cope of the American Baptist Mission remarks that “Siyin is the official dialect of the [Tedim] Subdivision”,

3
because the Sizang were the most “progressive” Chin at the time, thus making Sizang a trade language. Therefore, "the officer, who masters Siyin, will find little difficulty in becoming proficient in allied dialects". Nowadays, Tedim has become the lingua franca of Northern Chin State. Assuming that Rev. Dr. Cope’s assessment was accurate, there are several possible reasons for this transition. The Tedim are more numerous than the Sizang and have a full translation of the Christian Bible into Tedim as of June 12, 1977 (Khup Za Go, 1996, p. 77). The Sizang Bible was translated three decades later. Therefore, nowadays in places like Kalaymyo, Sagaing Division, Myanmar/Burma and in the diaspora communities in the United States, it is common to see Sizang interacting with Tedim people using Tedim as the common language. An overview of the Sizang language’s relation to other Kuki-Chin languages is given in §1.2.2.

1.2.2 Language affiliation

The Sizang language is classified by VanBik (2009, p. 24) as a member of the “Northern (Zo)” subgroup of the Kuki-Chin languages. His classification is reproduced in Figure 2.

![Figure 2 VanBik (2009, p. 23) classification of Proto-Kuki-Chin.](image)

VanBik lists Sizang alongside Thadou, because Thadou is geographically the northernmost language and Sizang is the southernmost language of the languages included in VanBik’s “North” subgroup (Tedim is not included in the original figure, but it should also be in the North subgroup). The North subgroup is listed with the South subgroup under the Peripheral label, which was originally proposed by Peterson (2000, p. 81).
The phonological innovations which differentiate the languages in the “Peripheral” group from those in the “Central” group are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Classification of “Central” and “Peripheral languages”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central (r-)</th>
<th>Peripheral (g-)</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Falam</td>
<td>Sizang (ŋ-)</td>
<td>Tedim (g-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʰiy⁴⁴.tʰej⁴⁴.raʔ²¹</td>
<td>tʰiy.ŋà:</td>
<td>sig³⁴.gàʔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruul²³</td>
<td>ējul</td>
<td>gu³³.tuai³³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ril²³</td>
<td>ējil</td>
<td>gii³³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruu⁵²</td>
<td>ējùː</td>
<td>gu.³⁴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Falam data from Khar Thuan (2008) and Tedim data from Khoi Lam Thang (2001)

The Peripheral group, including “North” languages like Tedim and Sizang and “South” languages like Khumi and Asho, is established based upon the shared innovation of Proto-Kuki-Chin *r which is realized as /g/ or /ŋ/ initially and /k/ finally. In contrast, the “Central” languages maintain *r as /ɾ/ both initially and finally. As demonstrated by the lexemes in Table 2, all lexemes with a *r onset are realized as /ɾ-/ in Falam, /ŋ-/ in Sizang, and /g-/ in Tedim. This seems to indicate that the /g/ and /ŋ/ phonemes merged into /ŋ/ in Sizang, as Tedim still distinguishes between the two sounds.

While the Sizang phonemic inventory and lexicon is similar to Tedim, many Tedim speakers do not understand spoken Sizang, due to differences in lexical items, subject-verb agreement, the grammaticalization of words, and sound changes. However, the written and narrative registers of Sizang mimic many features of Tedim. The phonological inventory, along with an explanation of the transcription method used in this thesis, are considered next.
1.3 Phonological inventory and transcription

Stern (1963, pp. 226-227) lists 16 consonants for Sizang. They are reproduced in Table 3 with his classifications. Note that all Sizang words are cited slightly modified from Stern (1963, 1984).

Table 3 Sizang consonants phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Labio-Dental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plosives</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pʰ</td>
<td>tʰ</td>
<td>kʰ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasals</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>η</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirants</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All consonants occur both initially and finally, except for the aspirated plosives, /h/, and /b/. It should be noted that there is no /g/ phoneme in Sizang. This is because, as discussed above, *r is realized as /ŋ/ initially in Sizang.

There are 12 monophthongs, 9 diphthongs and one triphthong in Sizang. They are listed in Table 4.

Table 4 Sizang vowel phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Back</th>
<th>Diphthongs</th>
<th>Triphthongs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>i:i</td>
<td>u:u:</td>
<td></td>
<td>ia:i:</td>
<td>uai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>ε:ε:</td>
<td>o:o:</td>
<td></td>
<td>o:i</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vowels in Table 4 follow Stern’s classification of short vowels vs. long vowels. This classification becomes more apparent in closed syllables, such as tɛǐl ‘understand’ and tɛːl ‘choose’. Button (2011, p. 15) interprets the difference as a

1Phonetically, this should be [ʊ], but throughout the thesis, the phoneme is transcribed as /a/.
matter of tense/lax distinction based upon syllable weight. For example, he interprets the two words /λǐm/ ‘image’ and /λǐːm/ ‘ball of string’ as [lɪm] (lax vowel) and [lɪːm] (tense vowel), respectively. However, this thesis continues to use the length distinction, based upon native speaker testimony and the clearly distinct realization within closed syllables.

Sizang only has three tones. Mid-Level (33) /aː/, Rising (34) /aːː/, and Falling (42) /aː/. Stern (1963, pp. 229–230) maintained there was a high-level tone /aːː/ as well, so his original transcriptions are unmodified when presented in this thesis, as the environments in which this high tone surfaces are not yet clearly defined. A minimal set of tonal contrasts is given in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level (33)</td>
<td>saː ‘hot’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising (34)</td>
<td>sǎː ‘meat’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falling (42)</td>
<td>sǎː ‘think’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having introduced the language and transcription method used in this thesis, a review of the literature is given in §1.4, to provide the background of where this thesis fits within the study of Kuki-Chin verb stem alternation.

1.4 Literature review

It is commonly believed that there are several interacting factors which determine the stem of the verb within Kuki-Chin, as summarized by VanBik (2009, p. 10):

This alternation is arguably not linked in any straightforward way to a single parameter of variation such as tense, aspect, or transitivity. Instead the alternation appears to be conditioned by a number of lexical and constructional distinctions which may interact with each other.

This quote demonstrates why verb stem alternation within Kuki-Chin narratives should be examined, specifically regarding VanBik’s concern for the interactions of “constructional distinctions”. Since the majority of the studies (with the exception of Chhangte, 1993; Henderson, 1965; and to some extent Stern, 1964) focused on
elicited sentences, examining verb stems within discourse may point to additional factors and constructions that act as parameters for the alternation.

One of the first generalizations regarding verb stem alternation in Kuki-Chin was made by Henderson (1965, p. 84), in which she stated that

\[\text{the indicative mood is realized by Form I of the verb, the subjunctive by Form II.} \]
\[\text{In the narrative style, all conclusive sentences are characterized by the indicative mood [thus containing a verb in Stem I] ... [and] all inconclusive sentences are characterized by the subjunctive mood [thus containing a verb in Stem II].}\]

Thus, in the context of Tedim Chin, a closely-related language to Sizang, Henderson postulates that verb stem alternation expresses the distinction between indicative and subjunctive mood. This hypothesis is significant, because unlike other authors, Henderson does not attribute verb stem alternation to a morphosyntactic cause, but rather to modality. Henderson examines structures from the sentence level, phrase level, and “figure”—that is a verb contained either in an adverbial phrase, a verb phrase, or a noun phrase (Henderson, 1965, pp. 86–89). Regarding narrative, she states that Stem II verbs will only be found “in the final predicative phrase of an inconclusive sentence” and that Stem I verbs “are greatly in the majority [within a narrative]” (Henderson, 1965, p. 86).

Kee Shein Mang (2006, pp. 107–108) looked at verb stem alternation in his native language K’Choò (Southern Kuki-Chin) by examining factors such as valency, clause subordination, clause dependency, and deontic modality, through the perspective of information structure. He concluded that, “[s]tem I is the default form, while Stem II is the marked form which is used in grammatically or pragmatically marked constructions in K’Choò” (Kee Shein Mang, 2006, p. 108, emphasis mine). Specifically, in K’Choò, Stem I is used in subject-nominalization, in subject-relativization, in valence decreasing operations, in complement clauses containing the subordinator ah, in switch-reference clauses, in sentence focus (no topic), in predicate focus, in unmarked narrow focus constructions, and in deontic possibility (permission or command) expressions. Stem II, however, is used in non-subject-nominalization, in non-subject-relativization, in valence increasing operations, in complement clauses containing no subordinator, in adverbial clauses, in marked narrow focus, in contrastive focus, and deontic necessity. Kee Shein Mang’s suggestion of “grammatically or pragmatically marked constructions” as the basis of Stem II introduces a wide range of possible functions for verb stem alternation, in comparison to Henderson’s initial suggestion of the realization of the indicative and
subjunctive moods. His study was also the first to examine a Kuki-Chin language in terms of information structure and deontic modality.

Philip Thangliènmang Túngdim (henceforth: Tungdim) (2011), a native Zo (Northern Kuki-Chin) speaker, also examined his native language from a syntactically and semantically-driven perspective. Regarding syntax and mood, his conclusion is that in Zo, verbs appear in Stem II within a noun phrase in realis mood, and verbs appear in Stem I within a verb phrase in irrealis mood. Regarding nominalization, he states that pre-verbal possessive clitics necessitate a Stem II verb, but a pre-verbal agreement clitic before the verb requires Stem I.

Deborah King’s typological analysis of verb stem alternation across several Kuki-Chin languages concludes that the alternation is “fundamentally the morphosyntactic manifestation of the agentive voice [Stem I] and its logical counterpart, the nonagentive voice [Stem II]” (King, 2009, p. 142). This conclusion, based upon evidence from languages classified in the Northern, Southern, and Central Kuki-Chin subgroups, differs from Henderson’s original conclusions about the alternations in Tedim, as King concludes that agentivity is the defining factor, rather than mood. However, King’s typology confuses clausal-level phenomena with argument-level phenomena, although she correctly notes that verb stem alternation derives from two sources: a nominalizing morpheme and a causativizing morpheme. However, rather than looking at nominalization and causativization separately on both argument and clausal levels, her argument attempts to justify verb stem alternation as always an issue regarding voice. As King’s data mostly comes from text, examining verb stem alternation in narratives provides further context, and thus more possible reasons for the alternation.

Peterson (1998, p. 87) argues that in Hakha Lai there is a set of “productive postverbal particles which add an argument to the valence of the verb they occur in conjunction with”. Peterson calls these postverbal particles “applicatives”. To understand Peterson’s argumentation, it is necessary to review Peterson’s classification of applicative constructions. Peterson provides three characteristics:

- In terms of their morphosyntax, applicable constructions are constructions, or sentential structures, which involve a participant that normally would not be instantiated in a core object relation, but rather as an oblique of one or another sort, in a core (usually direct object) instantiation.
• There **must be overt marking** of the construction in the verbal complex, although the marking may simply be homophonous, or nearly so, with the element that would have served as the oblique marker.

• **The construction should also be highly productive** across a significant portion of the verbal lexicon (all verbs, all transitive verbs, etc.) (Peterson, 2007, p. 39 emphasis mine).

Applicative constructions are significant, because they are a type of valence-raising operation that operates differently from causation. Mainly, it brings a participant from an oblique argument into the core argument. In Sizang, all clauses containing applicatives contain a Stem II verb. This is typical of applicative constructions across different languages, as the predicate commonly expresses a derived morphology (Pacchiarotti, 2017, p. 115).

Regarding narratives, Labov and Waletzky (1967) make a distinction between clauses which demonstrate “something that the speaker [or narrator] presents as having happened, or that a particular participant did” occurring in “temporally successive events” (Payne, 1992, pp. 376, 379), making the “skeleton” of the narrative; and clauses which support those events. Hopper (1979, p. 213) terms the first type of clause “foreground information” and all other types of clauses “background information”.

The foreground information within narrative discourse parallels Grimes’ idea of events in narratives, and the background information likewise parallels Grimes’ idea of “non-events”. Grimes (1975, p. 51) defines six types of non-events: Setting provides the locational, temporal, and adverbial information about an event in the discourse. Explanation is information through which the narrator (or the speaker in a conversation) clarifies what is happening in the narrative. Participant identification introduces, reintroduces, or describes a participant/character in a narrative (Dooley & Levinsohn, 2001, p. 82). Collateral information relates what did not happen as background to what did happen in a narrative. Collateral information is realized as negatives, clauses with irrealis and deontic modality, interrogatives, and conditionals. Evaluations are instances in the narrative in which the narrative or a character voices their personal feelings or perspective about the present situation (1975, p. 61). Performative information usually contains statements from the narrator addressed to the audience, specifically about the narrative (e.g. morals and conclusions) (Dooley & Levinsohn, 2001, p. 83).
1.5 Data Sources

The data for this thesis comes from two sources. The first is three texts gathered by Theodore Stern in 1954, as part of an expedition alongside Gordon Luce and Eugenié Henderson (see Luce, 1959). These folktales were collected from Pa Lian Kham, a native Sizang of Buanman village, who was then working as the official interpreter of Tedim. The second source is six folktales, collected by the author in March of 2017 in Kalaymyo, Burma. Pa Thawng Khan Khup, a native of Khuasak and member of the Tongseal clan, volunteered to dictate narratives that he had memorized from his youth. Thus, there are a total of nine texts in the corpus.

1.6 Contributions, limitations, and outline

This thesis is produced with two contributions in mind. The first contribution is a more-complete classification of verb stem alternation in Sizang Chin, primarily by examining it in narrative discourse. The second contribution is an up-to-date grammatical sketch of the Sizang Chin language.

The focus of this thesis is limited to narrative discourse. Depending on the genre of the text, the distinction between foreground and background information may not be so clear (see conclusions of Tomlin, 1985, pp. 120–121). Therefore, examining third person narrative discourse provides a stable environment for examining foreground and background information.

In the rest of the thesis, Chapter 2 presents a morphosyntactic overview of the language. Chapter 3 provides two things: a description of the methodology used in this thesis and the results of the study of the correlation of verb stem alternation with foreground and background information. Chapter 4 looks at the issues within the study that are not covered by examining foreground and background information. Finally, Chapter 5 provides an overview of the conclusions found in this thesis.
Chapter 2
Morphosyntactic Overview of Sizang Chin

2.1 Introduction
This chapter provides a morphosyntactic overview of Sizang Chin as background to the clausal and argument-level phenomena this thesis investigates.

The first known written grammar of Sizang was authored by Captain Frank Montague Rundall (1891), of the Gurkha Rifles, shortly after the annexation of Upper Burma. Rundall (1891, p. 1) claimed that the purpose of his manual was entirely instructive, for those who had to learn “the Siyin dialect”. The second written grammar of Sizang is Naylor (1925). Like Rundall’s grammar, this grammar was intended for teaching British soldiers. But Naylor (1925, p. vii) also states that the grammar was written to make a “pioneer attempt” at providing a standardized writing system for the Chins, especially for those within the Chin Battalion. Both Rundall’s and Naylor’s grammars approach Sizang grammar from an Indo-European perspective. In addition, they provide some sample texts written in their respective English-based writing systems and vocabulary sections. The third written grammar of Sizang is Stern (1963). Stern’s grammar is the first Sizang grammar that marks tone and addresses phenomena in the grammar that do not fit a “Latin” framework. During a tour of Burma, documented in Luce (1959), Stern collected five Sizang texts from a speaker who was working in the city of Tedim.

Sing Za Nang (2010) is the first known description of Sizang authored by a native speaker. It is written primarily in English, but serves as a trilingual phrasebook between Sizang, English, and Burmese. Other recent publications regarding Sizang grammar are Sarangthem (2010, 2010, 2012, and Sarangthem & Madhubala, 2011, 2014). Sarangthem worked with a native speaker residing in India, Michael Suantak originally from Thuklai village in Burma. In contrast to those modern works, this grammatical overview is written using examples from texts and elicited examples given by a native speaker (marked by “(Elicited)”).
In the rest of this chapter, §2.2 discusses the formation of simple argument constructions, with specific reference to the construction of noun phrases, the use of pronouns, and postpositional phrases. §2.3 discusses simple clause constructions, demonstrating basic intransitive and transitive clauses, the verb agreement system, and an overview of verb stem alternation in Sizang. §2.6 discusses the formation of existence and copula constructions. §2.7 discusses simple sentence constructions, focusing on basic declarative and interrogative sentences. §2.8 discusses complex sentence constructions, with a focus on subordinate, coordinate and quotative constructions. §2.9 discusses the conclusions described in the overview.

2.2 Argument constructions

In this section, the basic elements of the Sizang noun phrase are described in §2.2.1 and pronouns are described separately in §2.2.2. Postpositional phrases are described in §2.2.3.

2.2.1 Noun phrases

The Sizang noun phrase is diagrammed in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1 Sizang noun phrase

(Possessor)+Head+(Stative Verb)+((= Gender)+{Quantifier}+{[Case, Dem]})

In Diagram 1, the head of the noun phrase is the noun, which is the only obligatory element. It can be optionally preceded by a possessor, which can be either a possessive determiner or another noun phrase. The noun head may also be optionally followed by a modifier, in the form of a stative verb, a gender-marking enclitic, a quantifier, or a case marker or demonstrative. A basic noun phrase is illustrated in (1).

1. [mi: zɔːŋ = pǎː]_NP_ lʊŋ kɪm ŋɔâl a:
   person be.poor = MASC heart content NEG NF
   ‘The poor man was not pleased, and...’ Stern (1984, pg. 46)

The noun phrase, in (1), consists of the head noun, _mi_: ‘person’, followed by the stative verb modifier, _zɔːŋ_ ‘be.poor’, and finally the gender-marking suffix _pǎː_ ‘man’.
In the remainder of this section, possessors are reviewed first in §2.2.1.1, followed by a discussion of gender marking in §2.2.1.2, a description of quantifiers in §2.2.1.3, an overview of demonstratives in §2.2.1.4, a brief description of case marking in §2.2.1.5, and finally a summary of the noun phrase in §2.2.1.6.

### 2.2.1.1 Possessors

Within the noun phrase, possessors precede the head, as illustrated in (2).

\[
\text{(2) } [\text{tuːa } \text{suːŋ}]_{\text{NP}} = \text{sâa } [kʰ\text{uaː:sâk} = tɛː = šiːa kʰ\text{uaː:siam}]_{\text{NP}} \text{ hiː } \\
\text{that stone} = \text{ABS } \text{Khuasak} = \text{PL} = \text{POSS } 3.\text{POSS} = \text{village.talisman be }
\]

‘That stone was the village talisman of the people of Khuasak [village].’

In (2), the possessive noun phrase, \(kʰ\text{uaː:sâk} = tɛː = šiːa kʰ\text{uaː:siam}\) ‘Khuasak’s village talisman’, consists of the head (possessee) noun phrase, \(\text{á} = kʰ\text{uaː:siam}\) ‘their village talisman’ which consists of the noun head \(kʰ\text{uaː:siam}\) ‘village talisman’ preceded by the third person possessive determiner \(\text{á} =\), which is co-referential with the possessor noun phrase. This phrase, \(kʰ\text{uaː:sâk} = tɛː = šiːa\) ‘people of Khuasak village’, consists of the noun phrase \(kʰ\text{uaː:sâk} = tɛː\) ‘people of Khuasak village’, which is marked by the possessor argument marker \(=\).

### 2.2.1.2 Gender

Gender in Sizang was first classified by Rundall (1891, p. 4), but a more-detailed classification is given by Naylor (1925). His table is reproduced as Table 6, with tones marked when known.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humans</td>
<td>(=pəː)</td>
<td>(=nəː)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large wild animals</td>
<td>(=təj)</td>
<td>(=pəː)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic/</td>
<td>(=təl)</td>
<td>(=pəː)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small wild animals</td>
<td>(=bəl)</td>
<td>(=pəː)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds</td>
<td>(=pəː)</td>
<td>(=pəː)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>No distinction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Classification of gender in Sizang (Naylor, 1925, pp. 5–6)
In (3)-(8), these gender enclitics immediately follow the head noun.

(3) $maŋ = pə$  
    chief = MASC  
    ‘male chief’

(4) $lm = pə$  
    friend = MASC  
    ‘boyfriend’

(5) $na'u = nǔ$  
    sibling, Y = FEM  
    ‘younger sister’

(6) $in = tɛak = nǔ$  
    house = establish.II = FEM  
    ‘mistress’

(7) $sial = puũ$  
    mithun = FEM  
    ‘female mithun’ (Naylor 1925)

(8) $sákʰi = la$  
    barking.deer = FEM  
    ‘female barking deer’ (Naylor 1925)

While the system shown in Table 6 suggests an intricate gender system, the majority of Sizang speakers simply use $= nǔ$ ‘FEM’ and $= pə$ ‘MASC’ to make a binary gender distinction.

2.2.1.3 Quantifiers

Sizang expresses quantity using either numerals or quantifying words. These elements follow the head noun, as shown in (9) and (10).

(9) $in$  
    $pɔl.kʰaît$  
    house  
    some  
    ‘Some houses’  
    (Elicited)

(10) $in$  
    $tʰum$  
    house  
    three  
    ‘Three houses’  
    (Elicited)

In (9) the noun $pɔl$ ‘group’ and the numeral $kʰaît$ ‘one’ together mean ‘some’. Within the noun phrase $pɔl.kʰaît$ occurs in the same position as the numeral $tʰum$ ‘three’, which is displayed in (10).

Stative verbs are also used as quantifiers, as demonstrated in (11).

(11) $tʰâu$  
    $təm$  
    $mₚmₚ$  
    $k⁹p$  
    $a$  
    gun  
    be.many  
    INTENSE  
    shoot.I  
    NF  
    ‘[They] shot a lot of guns and...’

As in (9) and (10), the quantifier $təm$ ‘be.many’ in (11) occurs post-nominally, indicating the quantity of the head noun $tʰâu$ ‘gun’.
2.2.1.4 Demonstratives

Demonstratives are defined as “a class of items whose function is to point to an entity in the situation or elsewhere in a sentence” (Crystal, 2008, p. 135). Demonstratives are “generally considered to be definite” (Lyons, 1999, p. 17). This statement is true in the case of Sizang, as all the demonstratives listed in Table 7 can be considered definite articles. Rundall (1891, p. 7) provides an impressive list of 16 possible demonstratives in his original grammatical sketch of Sizang (1891, p. 7). However, after examining data from elicited sentences and the corpus, only two basic demonstratives could be identified, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Demonstratives Sizang

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colloquial</th>
<th>Elicited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximal</td>
<td>Distal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\text{hiâː}$ ‘this’</td>
<td>$\text{tuː}$ ‘now’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the elicited paradigms, the demonstrative always follows the head noun, as shown in (12).

(12) $\text{in}$ $\text{hêśkɔa}$
    house this
    ‘This house’ (Elicited)

However, in the corpus, the demonstrative always precedes the head noun, as shown in (13).

(13) $\text{tuɔ} [\text{ni}]_{\text{NP}} \text{a-kê-pâ}_n$
that day 3-MID-begin.I
    $\text{amâː}=tɛː \ tʰum \ lɔam \ a=kê-kâ}_i \ a$
    3=PL three friend 3=MID-unite.I NF
    Lit. ‘That day begin, they three friends unite and’
    ‘from that day, the three friends got together and [said]...’ (Stern 1984: 50)

In (13), the narrator is speaking about a day which happened in the past within the narrative. In Sizang, the current day is usually expressed using the word $\text{tu}ɔ$ ‘now’, as in $\text{tu}ɔ \text{ ni}^i$ ‘today’. However, $\text{tu}ɔ$ is only used as a proximal demonstrative in conjunction with nouns referring to time, such as $\text{kùm}$ ‘year’ or $tʰaː$ ‘month’.
2.2.1.5 Case marking

Sizang uses ergative-absolutive argument marking, as demonstrated in Figure 3.

Two markers are classified as ergative: \( =i\) and \( =n\), while \( =s\) is classified as an absolutive marker.

An illustration of the distinction between ergative and absolutive case marking is given in (14).

(14) \[ \begin{align*}
\text{á} & = \text{sai} \\
\text{lu} & = \text{s} \text{a} \\
\text{mhi} & = \text{in} \\
\text{z} & = \text{a} \\
\text{POS} & = \text{elephant} \\
\text{head} & = \text{ABS} \\
\text{human} & = \text{four} \\
\text{carry} & = \text{I} \\
\text{NF} & = \text{Four people carried the head of his elephant on a pole and...'} \quad \text{(Stern, 1984, p. 44)}
\end{align*} \]

In (14), all participants are clearly marked for case. The object argument \( \text{á} = \text{sai} \text{lu} \) ‘his elephant’s head’ is marked by the absolutive marker \( =s\) and the subject argument \( \text{mhi} = \text{in} \) ‘four people’ is marked by the ergative marker \( =i\). Note that the object argument precedes that subject argument in this example.

While ergative-absolutive case marking is commonly found in Sizang narrative and colloquial speech, constituent ordering is also used to distinguish between the subject and the object, as in (15).

(15) \[ \begin{align*}
\text{á} & = \text{lm} \text{s} \text{a} \\
\text{b} & = \text{tsi} \\
\text{li} & = \text{at} \\
\text{hol} & = \text{a} \\
\text{POS} & = \text{friend} \\
\text{MASC} & = \text{buffalo} \\
\text{eight} & = \text{drive} \quad \text{I} \\
\text{NF} & = \text{Her boyfriend drove eight buffalo...'}
\end{align*} \]

In (15), the first argument \( \text{á} = \text{lm}s\) ‘her boyfriend’, a human, is assumed to be the subject and the second argument \( \text{b} \text{ai} \text{li} \text{at} \) ‘eight buffalo’ is assumed to be the object.
Note that in colloquial speech =nāː is used as the ergative case marker instead of =in, as shown in (16).

(16) á.māː =nāː vōk =sāa nam tɔː tʰâːt hê
     3SG =ERG pig =ABS knife with kill.I be
     Lit. ‘He pig knife with kill be’
     ‘He killed the pig with a knife.’ (Elicitd)

In (16), there are two core arguments. The subject argument is the third person singular pronoun á.māː ‘he’ marked by the ergative enclitic =nāː and the object argument is the noun vōk ‘pig’ marked by the absolutive enclitic =sāa. In addition, there is one oblique argument containing the head noun nam ‘knife’ and the postposition tɔː ‘with’. The predicate is tʰâːt ‘kill’. The clause ends with the verb hê ‘be’, which marks the clause as being in the realis mood.

The ergative enclitic can also be used to mark a coordinate noun phrase subject, as shown in (17).

(17) [sazûk lɛː zɔŋ]_{NP} =in hûhe =∅ tʰû-ŋai hê
     sambhur and monkey =ERG cuckoo =ABS obey.I be
     ‘The sambhur and the monkey obeyed the cuckoo.’

In (17), there are two nominals in the subject argument: sazûk ‘sambhur’ and zɔŋ ‘monkey’. These two nominals are coordinated by the nominal coordinator lɛː, making them a single NP. The entire noun phrase is then marked by the ergative enclitic =in. The direct object of the clause is hûhe ‘cuckoo’, with zero absolutive marking.

2.2.1.6 Noun phrase summary
A noun phrase consists of a head noun with an optional possessor, gender, quantifier, demonstrative, and/or case marking. As the Sizang noun phrase has been reviewed, pronouns and determiners are covered in §2.2.2.

2.2.2 Pronouns and possessive determiners
While pronouns may replace an entire noun phrase, possessive determiners must co-occur with a head noun. Pronouns are reviewed first in §2.2.2.1, followed by possessive determiners in §2.2.2.2.
2.2.2.1 Pronouns

In Sizang Chin, personal pronouns can be divided into first person, second person, and third person pronouns, with singular and plural distinctions, as given in Table 8.

Table 8 Personal pronouns in Sizang

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>kɛǐːi (=maː)</td>
<td>INCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ċiː( =tɛː)</td>
<td>EXCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kɔː( =tɛː)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>nɔːj( =maː)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nɔː( =tɛː)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>aː=maː = tɛː</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the pronominal root, =maː, an intensifier, is obligatorily suffixed to the third person form, but is only suffixed to the first and second person forms when denoting emphasis (e.g. When stating “I am drinking the water [not him]” in English). The pluralizer =tɛː is suffixed to third person plural pronouns but may also be optionally suffixed to any other plural pronoun, for emphasis.

A typical marked noun phrase subject is illustrated in (18).

(18) paːtaj = pɑː = nɑː: nũmɛːi = səa lɑːibu kʰɔː tʃa hɛ:
boy = MASC = ERG woman = ABS book one give.I be
‘The boy gave the woman a book.’ (Elicited)

In (18), there is clear case marking for the semantic roles of both the subject paːtaj = pɑː: ‘boy’ and the direct object nũmɛːi ‘woman’, while the indirect object argument, lɑːibu kʰɔː ‘one book’, is unmarked.

A subject personal pronoun is illustrated in (19).

(19) amɑː = nɑː: nũmɛːi = səa bə. lyp ʃəm hɛ:
3SG = ERG woman = ABS ball throw.I be
‘He threw the ball to the woman.’ (Elicited)

While the predicate and direct object are not identical, the subject and indirect object of (19) are identically marked and ordered the same as the constituents of (18). The personal pronoun a = ma: ‘3s’ replaces every element of the subject noun phrase in (18), except for the form of the ergative case marking.
Besides the personal pronouns listed in Table 8, Sizang has a cislocative marker \(hoŋ\), as illustrated in (20).

\[
(20) \quad nāː=daːk-\text{bū} \quad tɔː \quad hoŋ \quad kē.tān \quad tān
\]

\[\text{2.Poss = gong.set with CIS surrender IMP}\]

Lit. your gong.set with to.me surrender

‘Hand your gong set over to me!’

Sizang utilizes the cislocative \(hoŋ\) specifically for marking action toward or away from the first or second person subject or object argument. In (20), the speaker (Pu Tongseal, a chief) wants a rival chief’s gong-set. Within the construction, there is only an oblique object, but the indirect object referent is encoded by the cislocative. The indirect object is understood, as this is an imperative (signaled by \(tān\)).

The cislocative \(hoŋ\) has an allomorph (\(oŋ\)), which may be prefixed by an agreement marker, as shown in (21).

\[
(21) \quad naŋ=maː \quad k= \quad oŋ \quad nɛː \quad tuː \quad hɛː
\]

\[\text{2SG = INTENSE 1 = CIS eat.I  IRR be}\]

Lit. you I to.you eat IRR

‘I will eat you!’

There are only two participants in (21): the king of the lions and the king of the rabbits. The king of the lions is threatening to eat the king of the rabbits. The second person object argument is coded overtly by the pronoun \(naŋ\) and is referred to again by the cislocative \(oŋ\). The first person argument is likewise given by the first person pre-verbal agreement enclitic \(k=\).

Konnerth (2015, p. 25) describes the two functions of the cislocative in Karbi: “[1.] it cross-references speech act participants in non-subject roles, and [2.] it indicates cislocative orientation of motion events”, typically marking O arguments of transitive clauses. (20) fits the definition of function [2.], as the gong set is to be surrendered to (in the direction of) the speaker. (21) fits the definition of [1.], as \(hoŋ\) is cross-referencing the non-subject participant in the situation.
2.2.2.2 Possessive determiners

Apart from noun phrases, that are marked by the possessive marker ʰé = (§2.2.1.1), Sizang also has possessive determiners, which precede the head noun in a noun phrase. These determiners cannot function as pronouns, as they require the head noun to be present. Their forms are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9 Possessive determiners in Sizang**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ʰé = (INCL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ʰà =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ʰà =</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of the first person inclusive plural possessive determiner, each determiner in the plural form is identical in syllable structure to its singular counterpart, but the vowel is changed from ʰà: to ʰô:. However, there is no distinction between third person singular and plural possessive determiners in Sizang. The use of these determiners in a sentence is demonstrated in (22).

(22) \[ ḳâː= lm mjo. mjiy = ṣa\]_{NP1} [sǎŋ- sə. jaː kʰat \]_{NP2} ʰé

1.POSS = friend Myo. Myint = ABS school-teacher one be

‘My friend, Myo Myint, is a school teacher.’ (Elicited)

Within the first noun phrase, in (22), the first person singular possessive determiner ʰâː = precedes the head noun ʰm ‘friend’. It is the copula subject in a simple copula construction that equates ʰâː = ʰm mjo. mjiy = ʰsā ‘my friend Myo Myint’ with the copula complement noun phrase sǎŋ-sə. jaː kʰat ‘school teacher’.

As demonstrated in (23) and (24), there is no number distinction for the third person possessive determiner.

(23) \[ tua suŋ\]_{NP} = ʰsā [kʰua. sāk = tə : = ʰé ] = kʰua. sium \]_{NP} ʰé

that stone = ABS Khuasak = PL = POSS 3.POSS = village. talisman be

‘That stone was the village talisman of the people of Khuasak [village].’

(24) top. seal = in ʰā = nau kùn. toŋ ʰtə ... 

Tongseal = ERG 3.POSS = younger. sibling Kuntong with ... 

‘Tongseal, [together] with his younger brother, Kuntong...’
In (23), kʰuaː-siam ‘village talisman’ is the possessee of the plural possessor
kʰuaː.sâːk = têː ‘people of Khuasak village’, which is prefixed by the same possessive
determiner á = as the possessee naːu kûn.ton ‘his younger brother Kuntong’ of the
singular possessor ton.teal ‘Tongseal’ in (24). This correspondence suggests that
Sizang does not mark a distinction between singular and plural third person
possessive determiners.

2.2.2.3 Summary
Sizang has first, second and third person pronouns with singular and plural
distinctions. Personal pronouns can function as subject and object arguments and
may take either ergative or absolutive case marking. There is also a cislocative
marker hoŋ/øy, which indicates motion towards or away from a first person subject
or object argument.

In addition, first, second and third person possessive determiners are used to express
possession. They must occur with a head noun and cannot function as pronouns.
Postpositional phrases are described next.

2.2.3 Postpositional phrases
This section aims to describe postpositional phrases in Sizang Chin. The basic
structure of postpositional phrases is shown in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2 Postpositional phrases

Noun phrase + Postposition

A postpositional phrase contains a noun phrase followed by a postposition. This
structure is demonstrated in (25).

(25)  ton.teal = in  [á = naːu  kûn.ton]NP  tôː   ...

Tongseal = ERG  3.POSS = younger.sibling  Kuntong  with   ...

‘Tongseal, [together] with his younger brother, Kuntong...’

The postposition tôː ‘with’ follows the object noun phrase á = naːu kûn.ton ‘his
younger brother, Kuntong’, forming an oblique argument.
The postposition of a locational postpositional phrase is the locative enclitic = a: ‘at’. The object of a locative postpositional phrase consists of two noun phrases.

**Diagram 3 Locational postpositional phrases**

Reference Object+(Relator Noun)+(Postposition)

A simple locative postpositional phrase is shown in (26).

(26) kʰuaː mual = aː  d= laːm  pʰõt  hẽ
    village shrine = at  3 = dance.I  first  be
    ‘He danced first at the village shrine’ (Stern, 1984, p. 44)

(26) shows a typical example of a postpositional phrase. The noun phrase kʰuaː mual ‘village shrine’ together with the locative enclitic postposition = a: ‘at’ conveys the meaning ‘at the village shrine’.

It is apparent from the data, however, that the postposition = a: is not always necessary, as shown in (27).

(27) bɪlpɨː mɐŋ = pɐː  kʰuaː hɑusâː-pəː  kũŋ tʰɛŋ  pʰɛːŋ  hẽ
    rabbit chief = MASC village leader-MASC place arrive.I just be
    ‘The rabbit chief had just arrived at the village head’s place’ (Stern, 1984, p. 46)

Other locational postpositions that occur in the data include pʰan ‘to’ and dɒŋ ‘from’, as illustrated in (28).

(28) d= kʰuaː mual pʰan = in  ìn dɒŋ pǔaː aː
    3.POSS = village shrine from = PP house until carry.I NF
    ‘carrying [it] ashoulder from the village shrine to [the celebrant's] house and...’ (Stern, 1984, p. 44)

In (28), both the origin and destination are marked with pʰan(in) ‘from’ and dɒŋ ‘until’, respectively. This is because, both the postpositions pʰan(in) ‘from’ and dɒŋ ‘until’ derive from “relator nouns” (cf. DeLancey, 1997).
A temporal postpositional phrase is demonstrated in (29).

(29)  

\[
\text{ziŋ} \quad \text{tiaŋ} \quad \text{exam} \quad \text{nei} \quad \text{tûː.naː} \quad \text{tûː} \quad \text{niː} \quad \text{saŋ} \quad \text{kàː} \quad \text{ŋɔl}
\]

morning when exam have.I because now day school attend.I neg

Lit. ‘Morning at exam have because, now day school attend not’

‘Because [I] have an exam tomorrow/*this morning, [I] didn’t go to school today’ (Facebook chat notes, 12 October 2017).

The temporal postposition \( \text{tiaŋ} \) is preceded by its object \( \text{ziŋ} \) ‘morning’. This postpositional phrase means ‘tomorrow’.

Finally, a list of postpositions is given in Table 10, with their lexical source.

**Table 10 Sizang postpositions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Lexical Source</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \text{dûŋ} )</td>
<td>‘until’</td>
<td>( \text{dûŋ} )</td>
<td>‘until’ (to the point of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{tûː} )</td>
<td>‘with’</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{aː} )</td>
<td>‘at’</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{kûːŋ} = aː )</td>
<td>‘towards’</td>
<td>( \text{kûːŋ} )</td>
<td>‘place’ (Stern)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{kûːŋ} = \text{pûn} )</td>
<td>‘from’</td>
<td>( \text{kûːŋ} )</td>
<td>‘place’ (Stern)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{tiaŋ} )</td>
<td>‘when’</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{lai} )</td>
<td>‘while’</td>
<td>( \text{lai} )</td>
<td>‘middle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{nûaːi} )</td>
<td>‘under’</td>
<td>( \text{nûaːi} )</td>
<td>‘underside’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{pûn(in)} )</td>
<td>‘from’</td>
<td>( \text{pûn} )</td>
<td>‘begin’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{sàŋ} )</td>
<td>‘beside’</td>
<td>( \text{sàŋ} )</td>
<td>‘side’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{sûŋ} )</td>
<td>‘inside’</td>
<td>( \text{sûŋ} )</td>
<td>‘inside’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{tûŋ} )</td>
<td>‘on top’</td>
<td>( \text{tûŋ} )</td>
<td>‘surface’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Postpositional phrases can occur as pre-clausal information and as an oblique argument. Postpositional phrases may express adverbial information within the clause.

\( ^2 \)Compare with Tedim \( \text{kiŋ} \) ‘nearby’
2.2.4 Summary of basic argument constructions

Simple arguments may fill either the subject or object role in a clause and are constructed with either a noun phrase or a personal pronoun. A noun phrase contains demonstratives, possessive determiners, gender, quantity, and case marking. Possessive determiners also express possession but they must occur with a head noun. As argument constructions have been reviewed, simple clause constructions are explained next.

2.3 Simple clause constructions

Having already discussed argument structures in §2.2, this section aims to briefly describe simple clause constructions. This section reviews three basic types of clauses: intransitive verb clause constructions are reviewed in §2.3.1 followed by transitive and ditransitive clause constructions in §2.3.2. Verb agreement, a key feature of the Kuki-Chin verbal complex, is reviewed in §2.3.3. Negation is reviewed in §2.3.4. Lastly, a brief introduction to verb stem alternation is given in §2.3.5.

2.3.1 Intransitive verb clause construction

The intransitive verb clause in Sizang contains a subject and an intransitive predicate as the only two obligatory elements, as shown in Diagram 4.

Diagram 4 Forming intransitive verb clauses

Subject + Predicate

An example of an intransitive verb clause is illustrated in (30).

(30) ți = ści a ṭʰiː ʰe
      dog =ABS  die.I  be
      ‘The dog died’ (Elicited)

In (30) the subject ți ‘dog’ has overt absolutive marking and is the only argument with the dynamic intransitive verb ṭʰiː ‘die’.
The structure is the same for stative verbs, as shown in (31).

(31)  \( \text{bɛːal} = \text{siǐːa} \quad \text{kiâː} = \text{tam} \quad \text{hiâː} \)
    \( \text{dog} = \text{ABS} \quad \text{MID} = \text{break.I} \quad \text{be} \)
    ‘The pot is broken.’ (Elicited)

The structure of (31) is identical to that of (30). The subject is \( \text{bɛːal} \) ‘pot’ and the predicate consists of the verb \( \text{tam} \) ‘break’ which is modified by the middle marker \( \text{kiâː} = \), turning it into a passive construction (see §2.4.2) and giving the verb the stative sense of ‘broken’. There is also no overt tense marking on either (30) or (31), yet (30) describes an event that has already taken place (the dog’s death) and (31) describes a stative characteristic. The structure of transitive verb clauses is similar to that of intransitive clauses, so transitive verb clauses are examined next.

### 2.3.2 Transitive verb clause construction

The transitive verb clause in Sizang has only three requirements: a subject argument, a direct object argument, and a predicate. Its structure is shown in Diagram 5.

**Diagram 5 Sizang transitive verb clause construction**

Subject + Object + Predicate

The main difference between the structure of a transitive clause and that of an intransitive clause, is the necessity of an object argument in the transitive clause, as shown in (32).

(32)  \( \text{ha:usa:pâː} = \text{nâː} \quad \text{ũǐ} = \emptyset \quad \text{sâːt} \quad \text{hiâː} \)
    \( \text{headman} = \text{ERG} \quad \text{dog} = \text{ABS} \quad \text{hit.I} \quad \text{be} \)
    ‘The headman hit the dog.’ (Elicited)

Although there is no overtly marked object in (32), \( \text{ũǐ} \) ‘dog’ is the second constituent in the clause, which indicates that it is the object of the transitive verb clause. Also, the ergative enclitic \( = \text{nâː} \) helps to identify the subject, which then removes the need for overt marking on the object.
Ditransitive verbs are classified as verbs which take two object arguments. The primary or direct object is the object which is acted upon. The second or indirect object is the recipient of the action. A ditransitive clause is shown in (33).

(33)  
\[
\text{ âmːə = nāː \; nūmːəi = sīa \; bɔ.\text{-}lůŋ \; lən \; hē;}
\]
\[
3\text{SG = ERG \; female = ABS \; ball \; throw.I \; be}
\]
Lit. ‘He female ball throw’
‘He threw the ball to the girl.’ (Elicited)

In (33), the direct object bɔ.\text{-}lůŋ ‘ball’ is unmarked. The indirect object nūmːəi ‘female’ takes absolutive marking and is positioned immediately after the subject âmːə ‘boy’.

An oblique argument, coded as a postpositional phrase, may also be used to demonstrate the location or direction of an action, as in (34).

(34)  
\[
\text{ pātəŋ = pā = nāː \; bɔ.\text{-}lůŋ = ∅ \; kʰət \; nūmːəi \; kūŋ = aː \; lən \; hē;}
\]
\[
\text{boy = MASC = ERG \; ball \; one \; female \; place = at \; throw.I \; be}
\]
Lit. ‘boy ball one female place at throw’
‘The boy threw a ball to the girl.’ (Elicited)

In (34), the noun phrase nūmːəi kūŋ ‘at the girl’ indicates the direction in which the boy is throwing the ball. The intended meaning, however, is that the girl is the recipient of the ball. To further explain the interaction between arguments and predicates, verb agreement is discussed next.
2.3.3 Verb agreement

Sizang Chin has both pre-verbal and post-verbal subject-verb agreement but no object agreement apart from agreement marking on the cislocative hoŋ (see §2.2.2). Sarangthem (2012, p. 455) has suggested that this pre-verbal agreement is used in “polite speech” and that post-verbal agreement is used in “colloquial speech”. The pre-verbal agreement clitics are shown in Table 11.

Table 11 Pre-verbal agreement clitics in Sizang

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th></th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$k\ddot{a}: = \Sigma$</td>
<td>$\ddot{u} = \Sigma$ (INCL)</td>
<td>$k\ddot{a}: = \ddot{u}$ (EXCL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$n\ddot{a} = \Sigma$</td>
<td>$n\ddot{a} = \Sigma$ (á)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$\ddot{a} = \Sigma$</td>
<td>$\ddot{a} = \Sigma$ (á)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pre-verbal agreement clitics are identical to the possessive determiner clitics (discussed in §2.2.1.1 above). An example of their use is demonstrated in (35).

(35) $\ddot{a} = sa\ddot{i}$  $\ddot{a} = \ddot{a}\ddot{i}$  $h\ddot{u}$
   3.POSS = elephant  3 = celebrate.I  be
   Lit. ‘His elephant he celebrate be’
   ‘He celebrated [regarding] his elephant.’ (Stern, 1984, p. 44)

The pre-verbal third person agreement clitic, $\ddot{a} = $, preceding the verb $\ddot{a}\ddot{i}$ refers to the subject of the clause and the head noun $sa\ddot{i}$ refers to the object of the clause.

Pluralization occurs by attaching the pluralizing enclitic $\ddot{u}$: to the verb head, as demonstrated in (36).

(36) $n\ddot{a} = d\ddot{e}\ddot{i} = \ddot{u}$:  $l\ddot{e}$
   2 = like.I = PL  Q
   ‘Do you all like it?’ (Sing Za Nang, 2010, p. 7)
To mark the second person plural argument in (36), the second person enclitic attaches to the beginning of the verb dɛː ‘like’, but the pluralizing enclitic = ūː attaches to the end of the verb before the question marker lc.

While (35) and (36) illustrate verb agreement in a main clause, pre-verbal agreement appears mostly in subordinate clauses in the corpus, as in (37).

(37) tuŋ.hum ₃ = tʰɛ̄ːt   tiaŋ = in   zāː. dox = sīːa   á = sāhɛŋ = nāː  nūː. sīːa  aː

Lit. ‘Tunghum they arrive when, ZaDo his tiger leave and’

‘When [they] arrived at Tunghum, ZaDo’s tiger left him and...’

There are two clauses in (37). The first clause is a subordinate clause (bolded), which is marked by the subordinating enclitic postposition = in. In the subordinate clause, the pre-verbal third person agreement clitic precedes the verb tʰɛŋ in its Stem II form tʰɛːt. The second clause is a non-final co-ordinate clause, which is marked by the co-ordinating marker aː. In this clause, no agreement marker is affixed to the main verb nūː. sīːa ‘leave’.

Colloquial post-verbal agreement enclitics are displayed in Table 12.

**Table 12 Post-verbal agreement clitics in Sizang (colloquial)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>∑ = kʰɛ́</td>
<td>∑ = kʰūː (EXCL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>∑ = nūː</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>∑ (= hɛ́)</td>
<td>∑ (= ūː = hɛ́)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The agreement clitics in this set occur post-verbally and are all mandatory, except for the third person agreement enclitic.

In colloquial speech, post-verbal agreement occurs frequently in interrogatives (see §2.7.2), as shown in (38).

(38) dɛn   nīː = nūː

rice   eat.I = 2

Lit. ‘rice eat you’

‘Are you eating?’ (Sing Za Nang, 2010, p. 6)
In (38), $\text{ân ‘rice’}$ is the object argument of the transitive verb $\text{ně ‘eat’}$. The subject argument is referenced by the second person post-verbal agreement enclitic $= \text{ně}$. Stern (1963, pp. 263–264) referred to the post-verbal agreement clitics as “personal particles” and calls them the “khi series”. Stern also mentions another set of agreement particles called the “iŋ series”, which resemble Tedim’s post-verbal agreement clitics (shown below in Table 13).

Table 13 Tedim post-verbal agreement clitics (Henderson, 1965, pp. 109–111)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 $\Sigma = \text{iŋ}$</td>
<td>$\Sigma \varnothing$ (INCL) $\Sigma = \text{uŋ}$ (EXCL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 $\Sigma = \text{teʔ}$</td>
<td>$\Sigma = \text{uʔteʔ}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 $\Sigma(=\text{iʔ})$</td>
<td>$\Sigma = \text{uʔ}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stern demonstrates that Sizang has similar enclitics in negative statements (see §2.3.4). A similar example, provided by a native speaker, is given here.

(39) $\text{dɛâi=bo}=\text{ŋ}$
  like.I=NEG=1
  ‘I don’t like it’ (Sing Za Nang, 2010, p. 14).

While there is a way to say the same statement using the agreement clitics given in Table 12, this statement utilizes the “iŋ series” post-verbal agreement clitic, which seems to occur only in negatives, conditionals (cf. Stern, 1963, p. 264), and statements in a more-colloquial setting.

As with the pre-verbal agreement clitics however, the iŋ series of post-verbal agreement clitics incorporates the pluralizing enclitic $= \text{u̱}$, as demonstrated in (40).

(40) $\text{kɔː: } \text{hɛː=bua = u}=\text{ŋ}$
  1PL.EXCL know.I = NEG = PL = 1
  ‘We don’t know’ (Sing Za Nang, 2010, p. 13).

While the verb phrase with the first person singular agreement paradigm would surface as $\text{hɛː=bo}=\text{ŋ}$, in (40), an allomorph of $\text{bo}$, $\text{bua ‘NEG’}$ precedes the pluralizing enclitic $= \text{u̱}$, which is then suffixed by the “iŋ series” first person post-verbal agreement clitic. A further review of negation is given in the following section.
2.3.4 Negation

The structure of negatives is shown in Diagram 6.

Diagram 6 Forming negatives

Clause core + Negative marker

The most basic form of a negative is illustrated in (41).

(41) miː zɔːŋ=pǎː luŋ kim ŋɔîl aː
     person be.poor =MASC heart be.content.I NEG NF
     Lit. person be.poor heart be.content not
     ‘The poor man was not pleased, and...’ (Stern, 1984, p. 46)

In (41), the stative verb, *kim* ‘be.content’, is negated by the negative marker *ŋɔîl*.

A dynamic verb is negated in (42).

(42) tɔǐː-píː=in tuːa doâŋ siâːa kaâːi nɔân ŋɔîl hiâː
     lion-AUG =ERG that until tax collect.I anymore NEG be
     Lit. ‘Lions, that until, tax collect anymore not be.’
     ‘As for lions, to this day, (they) don’t collect taxes anymore.’
     (Stern, 1984, p. 49)

The postverbal negative marker *ŋɔîl* negates the clause *kaâːi nɔân* ‘collect [taxes] anymore’.

There is another negative marker, commonly realized as *bo*, with at least two allomorphs: *bâː* and *buːː*. Sing Za Nang (Sing Za Nang, 2010, p. 13) defines *bo* as a verb, meaning ‘run out’ or ‘be.lost’, indicating that this negative marker is grammaticalized from that verb. Its use is illustrated in (43).

(43) dɛi=bo=ŋ
     like.I = NEG = 1
     ‘I don’t like it’ (Sing Za Nang, 2010, p. 14).

In (43), the “iŋ series” first person post-verbal agreement enclitic occurs with the negative marker *bo* to portray the meaning ‘I don’t’.
The *bo* negation marker and its variants may only occur with pre-verbal agreement, or post-verbal “*inj series” agreement markers, as is the case in (43). However, the *ŋɔl* negation marker can occur with post-verbal agreement markers, as shown in (44).

(44)  
\[ hɛː \text{ŋɔîl} = kʰɛː \]
\[ \text{know.I NEG = 1} \]
\[ ‘I don’t know’ (Elicited) \]

What is important to note, is that the post-verbal agreement markers always attach to the negative marker and never precede it. Besides the three different systems of subject-verb agreement marking, another important phenomenon of the Sizang verb is verb stem alternation.

2.3.5 Verb stem alternation

Sizang exhibits what is commonly referred to in the Kuki-Chin literature as “verb stem alternation”, in which one form of a verb (Stem I) occurs in certain environments and a secondary form (Stem II) occurs in other environments. This is a form of “ablaut” (Peterson, 2003b, p. 413), in which the two different forms are usually phonologically distinct from each other, making verb stem alternation “a form of fusional morphology uncharacteristic of these typically agglutinative languages” (King, 2009, p. 141). The phonological distinction, as argued by Chhangte (1993, pp. 86, 88–89), is caused by the addition of either a proto-nominalizing affix or a proto-causitivizing suffix (reconstructed as a single proto-affix *-t, which may surface as -k or -ʔ). Concerning the proto-causitivizing suffix, Matisoff (2003, p. 470) calls the root of Stem II the “subordinating *-ʔ suffix”, which is “plausibly derived from an earlier PTB suffixal *-s”. For example, to explain the change of *-ŋ in Stem I verbs to *-n in Stem II, Matisoff (2003, p. 470) proposes this pattern: *-ŋ-s > -ns > -n. The subordinating *-s is suffixed to the velar nasal -ŋ. Then, the alveolar place feature spreads to the preceding stop, making the -ŋ an -n. In a later stage of grammaticalization, the -s drops, leaving only the -n. This study demonstrates, however, that verb stem alternation in Sizang does not derive from causativization.
Regarding the morphophonemic properties of verb stem alternation in Sizang, Button’s (2011) observations provide a stable framework for determining the stem of a Sizang verb. Starting with the proto-finals of his “Proto-Northern Chin” reconstruction, Button examines the alternations between the first and second stems in Mizo, Thadou, Tedim, Sizang, and Zahau (Button, 2011, p. 31). His findings (without the proto-forms) are summarized in Table 14.

**Table 14 Sizang stem correspondences (adapted from Button 2011:31)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem I</th>
<th>Stem II</th>
<th>Stem I</th>
<th>Stem II</th>
<th>Stem I</th>
<th>Stem II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-k</td>
<td>-O³</td>
<td>-O¹</td>
<td>-t</td>
<td>-k¹</td>
<td>-k³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-k²</td>
<td>-k³/-O³</td>
<td>-O²</td>
<td>-k²/-t²</td>
<td>-k²</td>
<td>-k³/-O³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-k³</td>
<td>-O³</td>
<td>-O³</td>
<td>-k</td>
<td>-k³</td>
<td>-k³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-t</td>
<td>-O³</td>
<td>-η¹/²</td>
<td>-n³</td>
<td>-l¹/²</td>
<td>-l³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-t²</td>
<td>-t³/-O³</td>
<td>-η³</td>
<td>-k</td>
<td>-l³</td>
<td>-l³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-t³</td>
<td>-O³</td>
<td>-n¹/²</td>
<td>-n³</td>
<td>-j¹/²</td>
<td>-j³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-p</td>
<td>-O³</td>
<td>-n³</td>
<td>-t</td>
<td>-j³</td>
<td>-j³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-p²</td>
<td>-p³/-O³</td>
<td>-m¹/²</td>
<td>-m³</td>
<td>-w¹/²</td>
<td>-w³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-p³</td>
<td>-O³</td>
<td>-m³</td>
<td>-p</td>
<td>-w³</td>
<td>-w³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Button’s data show, most Stem II verbs in Sizang exhibit a falling tone (marked as Tone 3 by Button), but there are some instances where the Stem II verb contains either a level (Tone 1) or rising (Tone 2) tone. Most notably, this occurs when the primary stem has no coda, but has either a level or rising tone. Button’s data also reveal that the alternation of a coda to or from a stop depends on the tone of the primary stem. For example, a Stem I verb containing an -n coda with a level or rising tone becomes an -n coda with a falling tone in Stem II. However, a Stem I verb containing an -n coda with a falling tone becomes an -t coda in Stem II.
Some examples of alternating verbs from the corpus are given in Table 15.

Table 15 Sizang stem alternations from the corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Stem I</th>
<th>Stem II</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Button I</th>
<th>Button II</th>
<th>Match?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>am</td>
<td>stąp</td>
<td>‘forget’</td>
<td>Tonal, Coda</td>
<td>-m³</td>
<td>-p</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>a₂u</td>
<td>a₂u</td>
<td>‘shout’</td>
<td>Tonal</td>
<td>-w¹/²</td>
<td>-w³</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>bâŋ</td>
<td>bâŋ</td>
<td>‘resemble’</td>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>-ŋ³</td>
<td>-k</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>dōŋ</td>
<td>dōk</td>
<td>‘ask’</td>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>-ŋ³</td>
<td>-k</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>hâːt</td>
<td>hâːt</td>
<td>‘strong’</td>
<td>Tonal, Vowel</td>
<td>-t²</td>
<td>-t³/-Ø³</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>kʰ waive</td>
<td>kʰwak/kʰwak</td>
<td>‘complain’</td>
<td>Tonal, Coda</td>
<td>-Ø¹</td>
<td>-t</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>pʰuk</td>
<td>pʰuk</td>
<td>‘fall.down’</td>
<td>Tonal, Coda</td>
<td>-k²</td>
<td>-k³/-Ø³</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>sīka</td>
<td>sīka</td>
<td>‘set.snare’</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>-Ø³</td>
<td>-k</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>tɛɛŋ</td>
<td>tɛɛn</td>
<td>‘establish’</td>
<td>Tonal, Vowel</td>
<td>-ŋ¹/²</td>
<td>-n³</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>tɛp</td>
<td>tɛɛn</td>
<td>‘press’</td>
<td>Vowel, Coda</td>
<td>-p³</td>
<td>-Ø³</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 15, verbs were chosen randomly from the corpus to demonstrate different verb stem alternations in Sizang Chin. As noted in the “Change” column, verb stems may undergo a change of tone, coda, or vowel. However, some verbs, like sîk ‘set.snare’ in row 8, do not display any morphophonemic change, at all. The changes observed in the corpus are then compared with Button’s reconstruction in the “Match” column. There are some instances where the verb stem alternation pattern hypothesized by Button (2011) does not match the patterns seen in Sizang, as shown in Table 16. Therefore, when examining the data, I sought advice from a native speaker regarding the two stem forms of each verb in the corpus. As it is not a goal of this thesis to give a complete rationale of alternations, further investigation is still needed as to the nature of the ablaut. However, this thesis aims to provide an explanation of how verb stem alternation plays a role in narratives, by examining its realization in narrative texts.

2.3.6 Summary

The clause types within Sizang may be classified as intransitive, transitive, and ditransitive. The predicate is realized as either a dynamic or stative verb, which is
often marked with pre-verbal or post-verbal agreement. Negation occurs after the verb head but before the verb agreement enclitic. The verb also displays a form of *ablaut* commonly referred to as verb stem alternation. The relationship between the predicate and argument(s) within the clause may be altered by valence changing operations.

### 2.4 Valence changing operations

In Sizang, valency is altered by two basic operations: valence raising and valence lowering. Valence raising is effected by the causative enclitic =sâk and valence lowering is effected by the middle enclitic kê=. Valence raising operations are reviewed first.

#### 2.4.1 Valence raising operations

In Sizang, raised valency is commonly effected by the causative enclitic =sâk with a Stem I verb. The causative construction is most-commonly used to add an argument to a transitive clause, thus making it ditransitive.

An illustration of causation within a transitive clause is given in (45).

(45)  âː.maː=naː  tʰiŋ.ŋaː=sîaː  âː=tâːnũː  sîl=sâk  hê

3SG=ERG fruit=ABS 3.POSS=daughter wash.I=CAUS be

Lit. ‘She fruit her daughter wash-cause be’

‘She made her daughter wash the fruit’ (Elicited).

In (45), there are three core arguments, âː.maː: ‘she’ is the ergative subject argument and the causer, tʰiŋ.ŋaː: ‘fruit’ is the absolutive direct object argument and the theme, while âː=tâːnũː: ‘her daughter’ is the indirect object causee argument. This clause is ditransitive, due to the two object arguments. This ditransitive clause is related to the transitive clause ‘her daughter washes the fruit’, which then takes the extra causer argument âː.maː=naː: ‘she’, with the causative enclitic =sâk occurring with the verb.
2.4.2 Valence lowering operations

In Sizang, lowered valency is commonly expressed by the middle enclitic kelig with a verb. The middle construction is commonly used for reciprocal, reflexive or passive constructions.

A reciprocal construction is illustrated in (46).

(46) ámaː=tɛǐː tʰíŋkúːŋ=tɛǐː nːá =dɔːn kîîː=kɔai hiâː
     3s=pl tree=pl two 3.poss=tree.top MID=embrace.I be
     Lit. ‘they trees two their treetop embrace be’
     ‘They, the two trees, their treetops hug each other’ (Tei le Zuang thu).

In (46), the subject argument is á = dɔːn ‘their treetops’. The beginning of the sentence specifies that there are two trees, thus there are two treetops that are performing a single action: kɔai ‘embrace’, a transitive verb. However, because the action is reciprocal and a single argument (the treetops) is both the subject and object of the clause, the middle enclitic kîîː lowers the valency, making kɔai ‘embrace’ the intransitive predicate kîîː=kɔai ‘embrace eachother’.

A passive construction is illustrated in (47).

(47) pɔaːi=sīa xaj.kûn=a kîîː=vɔt hiâː
     party=ABS Yangon=at MID=do.I be
     Lit. ‘party Yangon at do be’
     ‘The party is being thrown in Yangon’ (Elicited).

In (47), the subject argument is pɔaːi ‘party’ and the location information is provided by the oblique argument xaj.kûn=a ‘at Yangon’. The subject argument is unexpressed. Finally, the predicate, vɔt ‘do’ takes the middle proclitic kîîː = which makes it an intransitive predicate, which does not take an object argument.

2.4.3 Summary

Valency is raised with the causative marker =sâk, causing either an intransitive clause to become transitive or a transitive clause to become ditransitive, by allowing a causer argument to be added. Valency is lowered with the middle marker kî = which is used to form reciprocal constructions, reflexive constructions and passive constructions by allowing one argument to be removed from the clause. Applicative constructions also affect arguments.
2.5 Applicative constructions

Applicative constructions may also be considered valence raising operations, along with causativization. However, Dixon and Aikhenvald (2000, pp. 13–14 emphasis mine) state that applicatives have two prototypical schemas:

**EITHER**

(a) Applicative applies to an underlying intransitive clause and forms a derived transitive.

(b) The argument in underlying S function goes into A function in the applicative.

(c) A peripheral argument (which could be explicitly stated in the underlying intransitive) is taken into the core, O function.

(d) There is some explicit formal marking of an applicative construction, generally by an affix or some other morphological process applying to the verb.

**OR**

(a) Applicative applies to an underlying transitive clause and maintains transitivity, but with an argument in a different semantic role filling O function.

(b) The underlying A argument stays as is.

(c) A peripheral argument (which could be explicitly stated in the underlying intransitive) is taken into the core, in O function.

(d) The argument which was in O function is mored out of the core into the periphery of the clause (and may be omittable).

(e) There is some explicit formal marking of an applicative construction generally by an affix or some other morphological process applying to the verb.

In Sizang, the function of applicatives is to make an oblique argument referent a core argument referent by allowing a core argument to remain a part of the core, while also filling an oblique argument position. One of the most-commonly used applicative constructions in Sizang involves the comitative suffix -pûːi.

An example of a comitative applicative construction is illustrated in (48).

(48) á=kʰuaː mual-pân = in ṭin-dóŋ pûaː a: láp-pûː: hê: 3.POSS = village shrine-from = PP house-until carry NF dance.II-COM be ‘From the shrine of his village to his home, (they) carry and dance with him’ (Stern, 1984, p. 44).

This text is describing a ritual, in which a celebration is held after a man kills an elephant. This man is made to sit on top of the elephant’s head and is then paraded around by a crowd of people. He is referenced by the possessor proclitic á = in
The comitative which occurs in the second clause indicates that both the man and the people who were carrying him are dancing. Had a postposition been used, only the people, and not the man, would be dancing.

The “formal [morphological] marking of an applicative construction” in Dixon and Aikhenvald’s schema (2000, pp. 13-14) also appears to be true for applicatives in Sizang, as all applicatives co-occur with Stem II verbs. As applicatives center around the arguments of a clause, however, it is necessary to illustrate how Sizang applicatives compare to Sizang postpositions in oblique arguments. The correspondence is shown in Table 16 below.

**Table 16 Applicatives and corresponding postpositions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicative</th>
<th>Postposition</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-pūi: COMITATIVE</td>
<td>tɔː</td>
<td>‘with’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-sāk BENEFACTIVE</td>
<td>=aːtuː</td>
<td>‘for’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-sān RELINQUITIVE</td>
<td>pān</td>
<td>‘from’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every applicative in Table 16 has a corresponding postposition that is used in an oblique argument. However, when the applicative is used, the argument is now a core argument, not an oblique argument, so the postposition is no longer necessary. As both valence changing operations and applicative constructions have now been reviewed, existence and copula clauses are reviewed next.

### 2.6 Existence and copula constructions

Existence and copula constructions are formed with a single argument, a predicate, and additional information. Existence constructions are described first.

#### 2.6.1 Simple existence verb clause constructions

In Sizang, existence verb constructions are formed using the verb ōm ‘exist’, as shown in Diagram 7.

**Diagram 7 Sizang simple existence verb clause**

(Subject) + (Additional information) + Existence Predicate
An elicited example of an existence verb clause is given in (49).

(49) duː kʰát  ōm  ḥè:
    forest one exist.I be

    Lit. ‘forest one exist be’
    ‘There is a forest’ (Elicited)

In (49), the subject noun duː ‘forest’, modified by the quantifier kʰát ‘one’, is declared to exist by the existence predicate ōm.

Existence verb constructions may also take the irrealis mood, as shown in (50).

(50) ziŋ = tɛː pɔɔai  ōm  tuː  ḥè:
    morning = TEMP festival exist.I irr be

    ‘There will be a festival in the morning’ (Elicited)

In (50), the time adverbial ziŋ = tɛː occurs before the subject indicating the time at which the subject referent will occur/exist.

Postpositional information can also occur within the clause, as shown in (51).

(51) vɔk = sča  huən  suŋ = aː  ōm  ḥè:
    pig = ABS garden inside = at exist.I real

    ‘The pig is in the garden’ (Elicited)

The postpositional phrase in (51) huən suŋ = aː however, contains a relator noun (discussed in §2.2.3) to describe the location of an object or person, in conjunction with the verb ōm ‘to exist’. Simple copula constructions are constructed similarly to simple existence clauses, as shown in §2.6.2.

2.6.2 Simple copula constructions

Simple copula constructions are constructed with the copula ḥè: ‘be’, as shown in (52).

Diagram 8 Sizang simple copula construction

(Copula Subject) + Copula Complement + Predicate
In (52), the first noun phrase *tasĩaː nũ = sǐaː* ‘that woman’ is the copula subject. The second noun phrase, *sųŋ-so.jaː = nũː* ‘schoolteacher’, is the copula complement. *hẽ* ‘be.true’ is the copula. This construction communicates that the woman is a school teacher.

Two entities may also be equated with other copulas, as in (53).

(53) [á = *pum*]CS [tūk kūaː]CC pʰǎː əx

3.POSS = body fist nine amount.I NF

‘His body measured nine fists tall and...’

In (53), the copula is *pʰǎː* ‘amount’. It relates the copula subject, *á = pum* ‘his body’ to the copula complement *tūk kūaː* ‘nine fists’.

Another example of a stative verb acting as a copula is demonstrated in (54).

(54) [á = *ŋɔai-mǔl*]NP [tōŋ kʰaːt]NP pʰǎː sǎːu tiː hẽ

3.POSS = anus-body.hair forearm one measure long.I say be

‘His anus-hair was about the length of a forearm, they say...’

In (54), *pʰǎː* ‘amount’ is occurs with the stative verb *sǎːu* ‘long’. Together, they relate the copula subject *á = *ŋɔai-mǔl* ‘his anus-hair’ and the copula complement *tōŋ kʰaːt* ‘one forearm’.

2.6.3 Summary of existence and copula constructions

Existence predicates are formed with the verb *ōm* ‘exist’. They are used to assert the existence of the subject referent. They can also be used to assert the location of the subject referent through the inclusion of a locational postpositional phrase. Copula constructions may be formed with either the verb *hẽ* ‘be’ or with an attributive predicate. These previous constructions may all be used to form simple sentences.
2.7 Simple sentence constructions

In simple sentences the only obligatory element is the clause core. They may optionally include pre-clause material, such as a postpositional phrase (§2.2.3). The structure of a simple sentence construction is shown in Diagram 9.

Diagram 9 Forming simple sentence constructions

(Pre-clause) + Clause core

Two types of simple sentence constructions are reviewed: declaratives in §2.7.1 followed by interrogatives in §2.7.2.

2.7.1 Declaratives

Declarative statements are commonly found in existence and copula constructions (see §2.6) and in the final clause of any sentence. Their structure is given in Diagram 10.

Diagram 10 Declaratives

Clause_{\text{MAIN}} + Realis

Declaratives in Sizang are commonly formed with a main clause ending with the realis marker $\text{hiâː}$, which is grammaticalized from the stative verb $\text{hiâː}$ ‘be’.

A declarative is demonstrated by an example from the corpus in (55).

\[(55) \quad d = \text{núː-in-nâː} \quad tua \quad mûn = a \quad tʰiː \quad kʰɔâːm \quad hê
\]

3 = two-ERG-ERG that place=at die.I together be

Lit. ‘They two that place at die together’

‘The two of them died together in that place.’

(The Tei Tree and The Zuang Tree)

In (55), the subject argument is $d = \text{núː}$ ‘they two’. The other argument is an oblique object which provides the locational information $\text{tua mûn = a}$ ‘at that place’. The predicate is $tʰiː kʰɔâːm$ ‘die together’, which is followed by $hê$ ‘be’, which indicates that the event has actually happened.

A brief overview of interrogatives is given next.
2.7.2 Interrogative constructions

Sizang Chin includes both polar and content interrogatives. The structure of polar interrogatives is summarized in Diagram 11.

Diagram 11 Polar interrogative construction

\[
\text{Clause}_{\text{MAIN}} + \text{Question marker}
\]

The most typical polar interrogative marker \( z\dot{\text{e}}am \) is illustrated in (56).

\[
(56) \quad [n\dot{\text{a}}\dot{\text{a}} = z\dot{i} \quad \text{\( z\dot{\text{e}}am \)}} \quad n\dot{\text{a}}\dot{\text{a}} = \text{bom} \quad \text{\( z\dot{\text{e}}am \)}} \quad t\dot{\text{e}} = \text{in}]_{\text{QUOTE}} \quad \text{do}\dot{\text{h}}
\]

\[
\text{2.POSS = wife} \quad \text{Q} \quad \text{or} \quad \text{2.POSS = friend} \quad \text{Q} \quad \text{say = PP} \quad \text{ask.I}
\]

\[
\text{Lit. ‘your wife Q or your friend Q saying ask’}
\]

\[
\text{‘He asked, saying “is it your wife or your friend?” (The Tei Tree and The Zuang Tree)}
\]

In this narrative, a rich man is asking a young man whether the woman with him is his wife or his girlfriend. The question is given in the form of a quote (see §2.8.4), but the key element of the interrogative is the question marker \( z\dot{\text{e}}am \). Stern (1963, p. 271) states that \( z\dot{\text{e}}am \) is used in “polite discourse” and “occasionally also in colloquial speech”.

As discussed by Stern (1963, p. 272), another common colloquial polar interrogative marker is \( \text{le} \). Its use is demonstrated in (57).

\[
(57) \quad n\dot{\text{a}}\dot{\text{a}} = \text{m\dot{\text{a}}} \quad \text{le} \\
\quad \text{2 = see.I} \quad \text{Q}
\]

\[
\text{Lit. ‘you see Q’}
\]

\[
\text{‘Do you see it?’}
\]

With this polar interrogative marker, pre-verbal agreement clitics are mandatory and the use of post-verbal agreement clitics would be considered ungrammatical.

For polar questions, Sizang also commonly utilizes the question marker \( m\dot{\text{x}} \), as shown in (58).

\[
(58) \quad \text{\( \text{t\dot{\text{x}} = t\dot{\text{x}} = \eta} \quad b\dot{\text{e}}k \quad m\dot{\text{x}} \)}} \\
\quad \text{1PL.INCL = PL = 1 only} \quad \text{Q}
\]

\[
\text{Lit. ‘we only Q’}
\]

\[
\text{‘Are we all alone?’ (Sing Za Nang, 2010, p. 8)}
\]
In this type of interrogative, either a nominal or pronoun must fill the argument slot for either subject or object, depending on the focus. However, interrogatives with \( m\text{h} \) are strictly polar questions.

The structure of content interrogative constructions is illustrated in Diagram 12.

**Diagram 12 Content interrogative construction**

\[
(\text{Interrogative word}) + \text{Clause}_{\text{MAIN}} + (\text{Question marker})
\]

The most-common formation of content interrogatives is made using an interrogative word as illustrated in (59)

\[
(59) \quad \text{\textit{ba\text{"a}ŋ hoŋ = h\text{"a}i = n\text{"i}}} \quad \text{z\text{"a}m}
\]

\[
\text{what CIS = be.tardy = 2 Q}
\]

Lit. ‘what to.me late you Q’

‘Why are you late [coming to me]?’ (Stern, 1963, p. 46)

In (59), the interrogative word \( \text{\textit{ba\text{"a}ŋ}} \) ‘what’ provides the content of the interrogative, the cislocative \( \text{\textit{hoŋ}} \) provides the object argument ‘me’, the verb \( \text{\textit{h\text{"a}i}} \) ‘late’ provides the predicate, the postverbal agreement enclitic \( = n\text{"i} \) ‘you’ refers to the subject referent, and \( \text{\textit{z\text{"a}m}} \) indicates that this clause is an interrogative construction.

Content questions occur more frequently in colloquial speech without \( \text{\textit{z\text{"a}m}} \), as shown in (60).

\[
(60) \quad \text{\textit{ba\text{"a}ŋ.h\text{"a}ŋ nui\text{"e}}} = n\text{"i}
\]

\[
\text{why laugh.1 = 2}
\]

‘Why are you laughing?’ (Sing Za Nang, 2010, p. 10)

In the case of (60), the interrogative \( \text{\textit{ba\text{"a}ŋ.h\text{"a}ŋ}} \) ‘why’ indicates that a question is being asked. A summary of the Sizang speech acts is provided next.

**2.7.3 Summary**

Declarative sentences typically contain a single clause which ends with the verb \( \text{\textit{h\text{"e}}} \) ‘be’, marking a default realis mood at the end of the clause. Interrogative constructions involve both polar interrogatives and content questions. Polar interrogatives contain at least one argument and optionally some form of an interrogative, marker such as \( \text{\textit{l\text{"e}}} \) or \( \text{\textit{m\text{h}}} \). Now that the fundamentals of simple
sentence constructions have been covered, the next section briefly discusses complex sentence constructions.

2.8 Complex sentence constructions

There are three types of complex sentence constructions in Sizang. These are subordinate constructions, coordinate constructions and quotative constructions. Nominalization and relativization, which utilize verb stem alternation, are also reviewed here.

2.8.1 Coordinate constructions

Coordinate clauses are linked together by the non-final (NF) particle əː, as shown in Diagram 13.

Diagram 13 Forming coordinate constructions

Clause₁ + ə + Clause₂

(61) shows an example of a coordinate construction formed with two clauses.

(61) sáhaːŋ kʰaât =in =nǎː əː mɛǐi tɔâː tɔâː lǎm əː
  tiger one =ERG =ERG 3.POSS=tail with road show.I NF
  sáhaːŋ =in =nǎː lǎm-píː əː tɔân kʰuaː tǒn=puâiː
tiger =ERG =ERG road-AUG enroute village accompany.II =COM

‘A tiger showed the way with his tail and accompanied [him] to the village’

In (61), the coordinate construction joins two events into one sentence, with the non-final particle ə at the clause boundary of the first clause, which ends with the predicate laŋ ‘show’. In the second clause, the second predicate tǒn = puːt ‘accompany’ marks the boundary of the final clause of the sentence. Quotative constructions are described next.
2.8.2 Subordinate constructions

In a complex sentence, subordinate clauses always precede the main clause in a sentence and must always have a subordinator at the end of the clause. This structure is shown in Diagram 14.

Diagram 14 Subordinate constructions

\[
[ \text{Clause}_{\text{SUB}} + \text{Subordinator}] + \text{Clause}_{\text{MAIN}}
\]

An example of a subordinate clause is shown in (62).

(62) \[\text{ná} = \text{ĩŋkûâŋpuː-tɛː} \quad [\text{høŋ} = \text{hîl} = \text{tû}: ]_{\text{PUR}} \quad \delta m \quad \text{tâmaː} \]

2.\text{POSS} = \text{family} = \text{PL} \quad [\text{CIS} = \text{teach.II} = \text{PUR}]_{\text{PUR}} \quad \text{exist.I because}

‘because your family is there to teach you...’

(From a conversation in March 2015)

In (62), the purposive clause, \text{høŋ} = \text{hîl} = \text{tû}: ‘to teach you’ is embedded in the primary subordinate reason clause.

Nominalization is also utilized in forming subordinate clauses in Sizang.

When overtly marked, the nominalizer = \text{naː} follows a subordinated nominalized clause, as shown in (63).

(63) \[\text{[tʊa} \quad \text{á} = \text{lâm} \quad \text{áp} = \text{naː}]_{\text{NP}} \quad \text{pân} = \text{in}]_{\text{SUB}} \quad \text{that} \quad 3.\text{POSS} = \text{road} \quad \text{forget.II} = \text{NMLZ} \quad \text{from} = \text{PP}

sâhâny \quad \text{kʰât} = \text{in} \quad \text{á} = \text{mɛi} \quad \text{tû}: \quad \text{lâm} \quad \text{lak} \quad \text{aː}

tiger \quad \text{one} = \text{ERG} \quad 3.\text{POSS} = \text{tail} \quad \text{with} \quad \text{road} \quad \text{show.I} \quad \text{NF}

‘[Pu ZaDo then lost his way.] From his forgetting the way, a tiger showed him the path with his tail and...’

In (63), the adverbial clause is structured as a postpositional phrase with a clausal object. The subordinate clause provides a reason for the event expressed in the main clause, ending with the postposition \text{pân} ‘from’ (see §2.2.3 for an overview of postpositional phrases and their uses).

Similarly to these subordinate constructions, relative clauses also rely on clausal nominalization to form. They are reviewed in the next section.
2.8.3 Relative clauses

In a complex noun phrase, a noun head can be modified by a relative clause. In Sizang, a relative clause can occur either before the nominal head (pre-head) or after the nominal head (post-head). A post-head example is given in (64).

\[(64) \quad \text{na} = \text{lāi} \quad \text{[hoŋ = tʰák]} \quad \text{ka} = \text{ŋä} \quad \text{a} \\
\quad \text{2s.poss = letter} \quad \text{cis = send.II} \quad \text{1sg = get.I} \quad \text{nf} \]

‘I got your letter that you sent me, and...’ (Stern, 1984, p. 52).

In (64), the head is lāi ‘letter’, while the unmarked relative clause is hoŋ = tʰák ‘send to me’, which is nominalized by Stem II. This relativized noun is the direct object theme argument of the ditransitive clause. The subject is referenced by the pre-verbal agreement proclitic ka on the verb.

A pre-head relative clause is illustrated in (65).

\[(65) \quad \text{sēn} \quad \text{ŋam = â} \quad \text{teṣaj} \quad \text{ŋēi} \quad \text{pâː = î} \quad \text{în} \quad \text{a-san} \quad \text{sēa} \quad \text{China land = at live.I used.to man = poss house attr-red abs} \]

‘The red house of the man who had lived in China...’ (Elicited)

In (65), the head of the relative clause is the possessor of the noun head referent, în ‘house’. This possessor is pâː ‘man’, which is modified by the relative clause, sēn ŋam = â teṣaj ŋēi ‘used to live in China.’ Note that the relative clause is not overtly identified as a relative clause beyond its position in relation to the external head. Unlike (64), the head verb of the relative clause in (65) surfaces as Stem I, as its Stem II form would be tēn. This possibly indicates that the elicited noun phrase here is the subject argument of a clause. However, the relativized noun lāi in (64), is the object argument of the clause. These explanations fit the conclusions of King (2009, pp. 146–148), who states that relativized subjects occur with Stem I verbs and relativized objects occur with Stem II verbs.
2.8.4 Quotative constructions

Quotative constructions in Sizang are formed by placing the verb \textit{ti}ː ‘say’ after any clause, as shown in (66).

(66) [\textit{kei} sēka = nēː suŋ = aː sākʰiː kʰat ʂk hiː]
\hspace{1cm} 1.POSS trap inside = at barking.deer one snare.I be  
\hspace{1cm} \textit{tū} = \textit{in}]_{QUOTE} aːu hːe \textit{say} = PP shout.I be  
\hspace{1cm} ‘He shouted, saying “there is a barking deer caught in my trap!”’

In (66) the quote is a complete clause. It is subordinate to the main clause \textit{aːu} ‘shout’, and indicated by the verb \textit{ti}ː ‘say’, which occurs directly after the direct quote.

However, quotations may also be coordinated with the following clause by placing the non-final particle \textit{aː} after \textit{ti}ː, as shown in (67).

(67) lām-pēː tōn lɛ = ɨŋ nual = tēː = nāː hoy = man kʰêk tūː tūː aː  
\hspace{1cm} road-AUG enroute.I COND = 1 other = PL = ERG CIS = capture.I again IRR \textit{say NF}  
\hspace{1cm} [lām-pēː ɨŋl dūː]_{NP} suŋ = aː tōt lɛː \textit{road-AUG without forest inside = at enroute.II TEMP}  
\hspace{1cm} ‘He said, “if I get back enroute, strangers will capture me again” and when he was lost inside the path-less forest...’

The quote in (66) is what is said in the context the verb of the main clause, which is \textit{aːu} ‘shout’. In (67), \textit{tū} ‘say’ is the main verb of the first clause. Therefore, \textit{tū} is, at the same time, defining the boundary of a quote and acting as a predicate.

2.8.5 Summary of complex sentence constructions

The complex sentence constructions considered in this section include coordinate clauses, subordinate clauses, relative clauses, and quotative constructions.

A coordinate construction is achieved by linking a main clause to another main clause, with the non-final particle \textit{aː}. A subordinate construction is formed by ending a subordinate clause with a subordinator, before a main clause of a sentence. Relative clauses in this corpus are all pre-head co-occurring with a Stem I verb, but
Stern (1963) gave an example of post-head relative clauses occurring with a Stem II verb. Quotative constructions are formed by placing the verb tiː ‘to say’ after a direct quote, which is a complement of a quotative main clause. The constructions considered in this chapter are reviewed in the next section.

2.9 Summary of constructions

This chapter provides an overview of Sizang grammar by summarizing the basic and complex constructions that have been discussed. These are summarized in Table 17.
Table 17 Sizang Chin constructions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Simple noun phrases</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intransitive clause</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitive clauses</td>
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<td>Simple copula clause</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicative constructions</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Speech acts

Polar interrogative construction

Content interrogative

(Interrogative word) + Clause<sub>MAIN</sub> + (Question Marker)

Complex sentences

Coordinate construction

Clause<sub>1</sub> + α + Clause<sub>2</sub>

Quotative construction

[Clause + tiː]<sub>QUOTE</sub> + [Clause<sub>MAIN</sub>]

Subordinate constructions

Adverbial clause

[Clause + Subordinator]<sub>SUB</sub> + Clause<sub>MAIN</sub>

Relative clause

[Noun + Predicate] or [Predicate + Noun]

By describing the basic structures of Sizang, this chapter provides the reader with a basis for understanding how clauses are evaluated for types of narrative information, which is the topic of the next chapter.
Chapter 3
Foreground and Background Information

3.1 Introduction
The central research question of this thesis is whether the grounding value of a clause correlates with verb stem alternation. To answer this question, the grounding value of each clause is first determined semantically. Then, once the grounding type of each clause is identified, the verb stem of each clause is correlated with each grounding type. The hypothesis of this thesis is that Stem I verbs are associated with foreground information and Stem II verbs are associated with background information. This chapter demonstrates that this hypothesis is not supported since there is a mixture of Stem I and Stem II in both types of information.

The chapter proceeds with an overview of the data source, providing information on how the data was collected in §3.2. Afterwards, summaries of all of the narratives in the corpus are provided in §3.3. Next, an overview on how the data was processed is given, followed by a discussion of how the data was processed in §3.4. The chapter then proceeds to show the results of the correlation of stem forms with foreground information §3.5 and background information §3.6. The chapter concludes in §3.7.

3.2 Data source
Three of the nine texts analyzed in this thesis are from Stern (1984). In 1954, while touring the Chin Hills with Luce and Henderson, Stern worked with one Sizang man named Pa Lian Kham, the official Burmese interpreter of the city of Tedim, with the assistance of an English-speaking interpreter. Pa Lian Kham wrote several Sizang texts in the Sizang orthography. The stories were then dictated orally at a fast pace and then dictated again for translation and re-transcription, as necessary. The texts were then recorded a final time (Stern, 1963, pp. 223–224). Sizang appears to have developed a “written register” with influences from Tedim, making it distinct from the spoken form. Stern (1963, p. 223 emphasis mine), speaking about his informant,
remarks that, “Mr. Lian Kham is sensitive to dialect differences, and he took pains to correct occasional lapses into Kamhau [(Tedim)], a defect from which previous works also suffer”. Thus, it is important to recognize that Pa Lian Kham’s idiolect of Sizang may have been influenced by his occupation as the Tedim-Burmese interpreter, due to the similarities of Tedim Chin and Sizang Chin.

For the remaining six texts, I traveled to Kalaymyo, Sagaing Division in March 2017, under the gracious hospitality of Tahan Siyin Baptist Church, located in the Taungphila ward of Kalaymyo. I surveyed the Sizang there, to see who would be able to narrate third person folktales of approximately six minutes in length. In order to avoid the problems that Stern encountered, I looked for an informant that used Sizang regularly in everyday life. Four texts were first dictated by Thawng Khan Khup to his wife, who wrote them down in a notebook. The informant only read from the notebook as an outline, because I had asked him not to dictate the written texts, but tell the story as if he were speaking to someone naturally, in order to avoid influences from Tedim. We recorded two more texts spontaneously, without any notes or visual cues. After recording the texts, I transcribed the recordings into the Sizang orthography with the help of Pa Ngin Cin Pau, a native of Khuasak village and a member of the Thatmun clan. The first transcription was hand-written, and then re-typed and printed. The six printed texts were then given to three separate individuals for translation into Burmese. Due to time constraints, I did the majority of the glossing and free translation into English in Chiang Mai, with limited help from the language community.

3.3 Summary of texts
This section gives a summary of each text in the corpus. Stern’s texts (§3.3.1–3.3.3) are summarized in brief, as the full text is published in Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area (1984). The texts collected by the author (§3.3.4–3.3.9) are summarized in more detail.

3.3.1 The story of the rich man and the poor man
The story opens with a rich man and a poor man setting traps in a forest. The rich man sets his trap high up in a tree, the poor man sets his trap in the field. The rich man watches the poor man’s trap, which catches a barking deer, and promptly takes the barking deer out of the poor man’s trap, moving it to his own trap up in the tree.
Then, the rich man invites the poor man to check the traps with him and mocks the poor man, since his trap caught nothing. The poor man accuses the rich man of lying, so they bring their dispute to the chief of the village, who decides that the rich man won the barking deer, since it was in his trap.

The poor man, in disagreement with the chief's decision, summons the rabbit chief to give a second opinion. The rabbit chief takes a few days to think about the situation and comes back late to the chief and the two men. The rabbit chief excuses his lateness, because he used a basket of reeds to carry water in order to extinguish a fire on the gravel of the riverbank. The chief tells him that this feat is not plausible. The rabbit chief agrees, saying that a trap catching a barking deer up in a tree is also an unbelievable feat. The poor man wins the barking deer.

3.3.2 The story of the rabbit and the lion

The text begins with an explanation that all animals live in tribes and that the lion chief charges a tax of one animal per tribe. After many animal tribes had paid their tax to the lion, it was time for the rabbit tribe to pay their tax. However, they neglected to do so.

The lion chief, enraged, tells the rabbit chief that he will eat him, if he does not pay his tax. The rabbit chief explains that he, in fact, did send an animal as a tax, but that someone who looked like the lion chief ate it. The lion chief is furious and says that he will bite the impostor to death. He then demands that the rabbit chief take him to the impostor.

The rabbit chief takes the lion chief to a bridge that he had earlier constructed and points at the impostor, which in actuality is the reflection of the lion in the water below the bridge. The lion chief does not realize this and, enraged, jumps into the water to kill the impostor and drowns. The story concludes by explaining that, ever since that time, lions have never collected taxes again.

3.3.3 The story of the dispute over seniority

A sambar, a monkey, and a cuckoo bird meet under a pipal tree and pledge that they will work together to defeat any enemy that they may face. However, as time passes, they start to lose respect for each other. They decide to figure out which among them is the eldest, in order to decide whom to respect. The sambar speaks first, saying that the pipal tree barely touched his navel when he was little, making him
the eldest. The monkey speaks second, saying that when he sat down, he was as tall as the pipal tree, thus making him the eldest. Finally, the cuckoo speaks, saying that it was the seed in his feces that planted this pipal tree, making him truly the eldest. Therefore, the sambar and monkey respected the cuckoo from that day on.

3.3.4 How Pu Tongseal got his gongs
The text begins with a description of the main character, Pu Tongseal, which identifies him as a strong leader, with strength unmatched by any other headman from any other village.

Pu Tongseal captures Soi Eang, the leader of Dimpi village. Then, he demands that Soi Eang give him a set of gongs. Soi Eang surrenders the gongs and is set free to return to his village. Upon returning to his village, Soi Eang has a huge celebration. When he hears of this celebration, Pu Tongseal calls his brother, Kuntong, and the two of them listen from the top of Vaih mountain. They hear Soi Eang playing gongs, which sound a lot better and louder than the gongs that Pu Tongseal got from him.

So, Pu Tongseal captures Soi Eang again, demanding that he hand over the gongs that he was playing at the celebration. Soi Eang tells Pu Tongseal that if he can shoot through two doves with one arrow, he will hand over the gongs. Pu Tongseal succeeds in shooting the doves, but Soi Eang refuses to hand over the gongs.

Another day, Soi Eang hears the call of a pair of barking deer and tells Pu Tongseal that if he can shoot the pair of barking deer with a single arrow, he will hand over the gongs. Pu Tongseal successfully shoots the pair of barking deer with one arrow. So, Soi Eang finally hands over the gongs. Pu Tongseal gives the first set of gongs that he took from Soi Eang to his brother, Kuntong. This is why, to this day, the first set is called “Kuntong’s gongs”.

3.3.5 How the tiger led Za Do along the path
This story is set during the civil war between various Chin groups. The story opens with the Falam having conquered Khuasak, the head village of the Sizang valley. Many people are killed and survivors are taken as slaves. One such survivor is a young boy named Za Do.

After witnessing the death of his sister, he is taken by the Falam people back to their village and is made to work as a caregiver to the baby of a Falam couple. After the
master and mistress of the house leave to work in the fields, Za Do takes the bone he was using to put his hair up and stabs the baby in its fontanel, killing it. Za Do then steals a set of gongs and runs out of the house. He realizes, however, that since he is only a child, he may not find his way back home and risks capture again. Suddenly, a tiger comes and leads him to Tunghum village. From Tunghum, Za Do finds his way home, where he lives the rest of his life as a revered man, with many possessions and offspring.

3.3.6 The story of Nawm Thuam
This story describes the legacy of Nawm Thuam, the former chief of Thavak village. He is described as a man of great courage, strength, and wealth. It is said that even when he let his mithun (bos frontalis, also called “gayal” in English) out in the morning, the herders would turn back and stare in awe at Nawm Thuam’s house, saying “wow, isn’t he great!”

Even when he died, he was not buried as other Chin people are commonly buried. Rather, he was buried in a ravine near Lungngal mountain, and the site is called “Nawm Thuam’s Grave” to this day.

3.3.7 The story of Thingpi
The text recounts the events of two siblings who were lynched at Vomhzang village. When the siblings are about to die, they curse the village, causing a drought all over the Sizang valley. The villagers go from place to place, thinking it is going to rain, but it never does. Finally, it is suggested that they perform a sacrifice to the two siblings, in hopes that the rain will come back. A sacrificial animal (leii) is sought and found, and the sacrifice is performed. After the sacrifice, the rain returns. As this story is believed to be true, the narrative then goes into historic detail about the aftermath of the first sacrifice.

A stone was erected in the area where the sacrifice was performed, to serve as the protective amulet of Khuasak village. It is said that after that stone was erected, the village of Saizang (with 100 households) was unable to defeat Khuasak in battle (with only 60 households). When the people of Saizang succeeded in stealing the amulet, a great plague came over their village, killing many. The people of Saizang then wrapped the stone and returned it to the people of Khuasak, who picked it up.
in Vaihmual and placed it back in its rightful place, where the Thingpi sacrifice was normally performed.

The people of Buanman village and the people of Saizang both have traditional songs regarding this amulet. To this day, even the Saizang people (who are not Sizang) keep this story in memory.

3.3.8 The Tei tree and Zuang tree
Two lovers are traveling and arrive at the house of a rich man, who invites them in to eat with him. The rich man asks the boy whether the girl with him is his wife or his girlfriend. The boy lies, saying the girl is his wife. The rich man then insists on buying the wife from him for the price of eight buffalo.

The girl does not want to be with the rich man, so she enchants his bowl, so that he will die after eating from it. However, the rich man, not knowing that the bowl is enchanted, switches his bowl with the boy’s. The boy eats from the enchanted bowl and then sets off with the eight buffalo.

Knowing that her boyfriend will die, the girl follows after him. After arriving at a place called Zuang, the boy dies, collapsing face-up. The girl then takes a dagger and places it blade-up on the boy’s chest. She then falls on top of him and embraces him, killing herself, so that they die together.

This is described as the origin of the Tei tree, which grows near Buanman village, and the Zuang tree, which grows near Khuasak village. Those trees appear to be embracing. It’s also believed that they cannot be chopped down. It is said that one man tried to chop the tree down and could not, but then was crushed to death by one of the tree limbs. Another man, while trying to burn the tree, was caught by the flame and was burned to death. It is said that until 1986, the Sizang still performed a sacrifice to the Zuang tree, out of fear of its spirit.

3.3.9 How the Zomis got their mithun
The story takes place during the eighth generation of the Chin people, while they were still living in the historic village of Ciímnuai. A man named Pu Hang Sing hears from some of the village men that there is an animal that roars three times a year along the Tuikang river. Wondering what that animal could be, he goes to the river to search for the animal.
When he reaches the cave called Suanghawng, he sees large mithuns with horns and white palms. Wondering how he can capture the animals, he sees a vision, in which a man tells him to feed them a special leaf and a rod of bamboo to entice the animals to follow him home. He does so, successfully, and arrives back home.

He ties up the mithun at his home and breeds them, until there are many mithun in the land. The mithun have become a staple in Chin sacrifices and ceremonies, which is why they are bred even in modern times.

3.4 Processing the data
This section provides an overview of the workflow of the analysis and the criteria used to determine clause boundaries in the data, morphophonemically determine the stem of the verb, and semantically identify foreground and background information. The analysis workflow is covered in §3.4.1, the criteria for semantically determining clauses is considered in §3.4.2, the criteria for distinguishing stem forms is related in §3.4.3, and the criteria for identifying foreground information and different types of background information are outlined in §3.4.4. The section concludes with an overview of how the data was coded and tracked in §3.4.5.

3.4.1 Analysis workflow
As there is no digital copy of Stern’s texts, they were all re-typed into Fieldworks Language Explorer (FLEx), using Stern’s transcription conventions (§1.3). Stern tended to gloss by word, rather than by morpheme. So, morpheme glosses were inserted into the FLEx versions of the texts.

Likewise, after all of the texts collected in Kalaymyo were recorded, hand-written, and typed on the computer, the texts were entered into FLEx, using the Sizang orthography as a baseline. The IPA transcription for nouns was simple, as it only involved listening to the raw recording and marking the tone. For verbs, verification was sought from a native speaker.

The texts were then entered into a spreadsheet, one clause per row. The stem type was entered into a separate column. The grounding value of each clause was also entered into a separate column. These steps are explained in more detail in the following sections, beginning with the criteria for determining a clause.
3.4.2 Determining clauses

To determine and parse clauses within each narrative, I looked for the clause structures first introduced in Chapter 2. In Sizang, existence clauses, copula clauses and intransitive clauses are identified as clauses containing only one argument and a predicate or copula. Transitive clauses are classified as clauses containing at least one object argument and a predicate.

Furthermore, as previously identified by Henderson (1965, p. 30), in the context of Tedim narratives, sentence-final clauses in Sizang tend to end with the verb hiː 'be'. Non-sentence final clauses in Sizang either end with the non-final (NF) coordinator aː or the subordinator in. Subordinate clauses also tend to precede main clauses. Therefore, clauses are structures which contain at least one argument and a predicate or copula, which, within narrative discourse, usually ends with a coordinator, subordinator, or the verb hiː 'be'. Once clauses were identified, verb stems were distinguished.

3.4.3 Distinguishing verb stems

Several measures were used to distinguish verb stems within the narrative. When able, I referred to Button’s (2011, p. 31) analysis, in which he states that most Stem II verbs in Sizang have a falling tone. However, there are some instances where the Stem II verb contains either a level or a rising tone. Button’s data also reveals that the alternation of the coda to or from a stop depends on the tone of the primary stem. However, not all of Button’s data are consistent. For example, the Button data indicates that tʰɛŋ is the Stem II form of tʰɛân, when in fact, the Stem II form is tʰɛât.

I also met with Rev. Vum Khat Pau of Yangon Siyin Baptist Church and reviewed the verbs in each narrative. Due to time constraints, not every verb could be analyzed, and therefore some verb stems are coded as “Unknown” for the thesis. Rev. Vum Khat Pau (Kuntong clan) often used the following carrier phrase to think of the Stem II form.

\[(a = V-na: \quad hûn)_{NP} \]
\[3 = V.II-NMLZ \quad \text{time} \]
\[\text{‘The time that he VERBs’}\]

This carrier phrase is a noun phrase containing a nominalized complement, as hûn ‘time’ is the head of the phrase (see §2.2.1). Rev. Vum Khat Pau was able to quickly
identify the stem of each verb by its morphophonemic structure and recite the opposite stem. His participation was incredibly helpful, because some of the verbs were not present in Button’s data, Sizang dictionaries, or even Tedim dictionaries. Next, the criteria for identifying foreground and background information is discussed.

3.4.4 Identifying foreground and background

In order to evaluate the grounding value of each clause in the narratives, I use two sets of criteria. To identify foreground information, I use the criteria given in Payne (1992, p. 379), which state that foreground information:

- Contains events that actually occur within the narrative and advance the timeline.
- Do not contain states, thoughts, reported speech, repeated information/flashbacks, nor hypothetical situations.

While Payne’s criteria also exclude simultaneous events, it is not possible at this time to determine whether two foreground events in a single sentence in Sizang are simultaneous or consecutive. When speaking to Sizang people about simultaneous events, they told me that simultaneous events and consecutive events have the same constructions. Therefore, all events occurring in coordinating constructions are assumed to be consecutive, unless there is pre-clausal information, such as the postpositional phrase lân in ‘while’, that indicates that two events occur simultaneously.

To identify background information, I use the definitions provided by Dooley and Levinsohn (2001, pp. 82–83), based on the six types of non-events given by Grimes (1975).

- Participant identification, often presented at the beginning of a narrative, is information which describes the participants within the narrative.
- Setting is the temporal or circumstantial information about an event that takes place within the narrative.
- Explanation is extra information related to the events within the narrative.
• **Collateral** information describes what did not happen in the narrative as background to what did happen. Anything that is considered irrealis is also categorized as collateral information.

• **Evaluation** is the narrator’s commentary on the events within the narrative. Evaluations may add context, but they do not modify the actual storyline.

• **Performative information** includes morals, conclusions, and any situation where the narrator addresses the audience directly.

These definitions of foreground and background information are semantic in nature and thus allow the correlation with verb stem alternation without taking morphosyntactic processes into account. The coding of these data is explained next.

### 3.4.5 Coding the data

Each verb was labeled as “Stem I”, “Stem II”, “Identical”, or “Unknown”. The label “Identical” was used when a particular verb appears to only have one form and the label “Unknown” was used if the speaker, from whom I elicited the verbs, could not give both stems. In this paper, only the verbs whose stems could be verified as either Stem I or Stem II are examined. Now that the methodology has been outlined, the correlation between foreground information and verb stem alternation is explained in the remainder of this chapter, beginning with foreground information in §3.5 and continuing with background information in §3.6.

### 3.5 Foreground information

Foreground information contains the temporally-sequenced main events of the narrative, making up the central storyline. Out of 409 total clauses examined from nine narratives, 148 clauses contain foreground information. Of these 148 clauses, 129 of them have a Stem I head verb, ten of the clauses have a Stem II head verb, five of the clauses have a head verb whose stem does not change, and three clauses have a head verb whose Stem Is unknown.
As hypothesized, the majority of the foreground information clauses contain a Stem I verb, as shown in (69).

(69) á-háːu pǎː=ín tʰúŋ.kúŋ tún  á=sêa hû
      NMLZ-rich man =ERG tree top 3 =set.snare.I be

   ‘The rich man set his snare atop a tree’ (Stern, 1984, pg. 45).

The event, expressed in (69), is part of a story about a rich man and a poor man, who set out to hunt barking deer. The sentence contains only one clause and one event: the setting of a snare. The end of the clause is also marked with the verb hû ‘be’, indicating that it is a realized event.

In contrast, two clauses and two events are shown in (70).

(70) [ámaː sê-a-na tʰúŋ.kúŋ tūŋ á: sá.kʰiː kʰâːt ɔǐːk-sâk aː]\_MC
     3s trap.II-NMLZ tree top at muntjac one snare.I-CAUS NF
     [tāː kîk hê]\_MC
     return.I again be

   ‘[He] caused the muntjac to be caught in his own trap on top of the tree and went back home’ (Stern, 1984, pg. 45).

In (70), the first event ɔǐːk-sâk ‘snare.I-CAUS’ surfaces as Stem I (Stem II: ɔâː), as does the second event tāː ‘return’ (Stem II: tāː). The coordination of these two events is indicated by aː, which is the non-final sentence marker.

The 10 instances of Stem II, in foreground information clauses, are all verbs containing either the benefactive enclitic =sâk or the comitative enclitic =puːː.
To demonstrate this environment, (71) shows a foreground information clause with the head verb surfacing as Stem II, along with the benefactive enclitic = sāk.

(71) ụu zāː doː in.na [āː = tuk-kīl-ak-ŋu]ₙₚ  tāː
Pu Za Do  ERG 3.POSS = hair.knot-lock.e-chicken-bone  with
āː = nau  tʰiːp  pān.in  āː : hʒl-ŋup = sāk  aː :
3S.POSS = child  fontanel  from  at  drive.II-sleep.II = BEN  NF
Lit. 'Pu Za Do, his hair-knot lock chicken bone with, his child fontanel from at drive make.sleep'

'With the chicken bone used to tie the knot in his hair, Pu Za Do stabbed the child in the fontanel to death' (Pu ZaDo Sahang Lam Lakna Thu)

In (71), there are three participants, Pu Za Do, ək-ŋu ‘chicken-bone’, and nau ‘child’. The head verbs are the Stem II form of the transitive verb hɔl ‘drive’ and the Stem II form of the intransitive verb lūm ‘sleep’. The use of Stem II here is most-likely due to the applicative construction, marked by the benefactive. This verbal construction conveys the meaning ‘V to death’, as demonstrated in (72).

(72) ∅  ka= pɛît  lūm = tːuː  hː
t 1SG = bite.I  sleep.I = IRR  be

‘[The lion said], “I will bite him to death!”’ (Stern, 1984, pg. 48)

The speaker in (72) is a lion, who is threatening to bite another lion (which is actually his reflection in the water) to death. The subject argument is referenced by the pre-verbal first person agreement marker ka = and the object argument is elided, as it is understood from the discourse context.

Similarly, (73) shows a foreground information clause with a Stem II head verb, along with the comitative enclitic = puiː.

(73) a=lɔai  liaǐt  pfa  aː : a=lɔm-nːũ  tɛn=puiː  hː
t 3S.POSS = buffalo  eight  give.I  NF  3S.POSS = friend-FEM  marry.II = COM  be
Lit. ‘His buffalo eight give and his girlfriend marry.with be.’

‘[The village head] gave his eight buffalo and married with [the man’s] girlfriend.’

In (73), the head verb tɛaŋ ‘establish’ is in its Stem II form. In this story, a boyfriend and girlfriend meet a rich man, who asks the boyfriend if the woman with him is his
girlfriend or his wife. The boyfriend lies, saying that she is his wife. The rich man declares that he will take the “wife” and gives eight buffalo as payment. The comitative here takes two arguments: the village head, referenced only by the third person possessive marker in the noun phrase a = ləbai ‘his buffalo’ and brings it into the core argument along with the argument a = ləm-n̥ː ‘[the young man’s] girlfriend’, which is explicitly encoded within the clause. The comitative then gives the sense that these two core arguments are doing the same action (marriage) together.

To summarize, in foreground information, the majority of head verbs within clauses surface as Stem I, with 129 instances. Every instance of Stem II surfacing within the clauses contains either the comitative enclitic = pūː. or the benefactive enclitic = sāk. Therefore, for foreground information clauses, the default Stem I is Stem I, as hypothesized.

The distribution of foreground information by verb stem type is given in Table 18.

Table 18 Summary of foreground information by stem type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem Type</th>
<th>Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identical</td>
<td>5 (3.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem II</td>
<td>10 (6.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stem I</strong></td>
<td>129 (87.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foreground</td>
<td>148 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation of verb stem alternation with background information is examined in the next section.

### 3.6 Background information

Background information is the part of the narrative which does not affect the temporally-sequenced events on the timeline (foreground information), but rather supports the mainline by providing the setting, explanations, collateral information, participant identification, and evaluative and performative information for those events. Again, the hypothesis of this thesis, is that background information should correlate with Stem II. However, results demonstrate that Stem I surfaces often in
background information, just as Stem II sometimes surfaces in foreground information. Within each subsection, an overview of the structure of each type of clause is given, followed by the results of the data.

### 3.6.1 Participant identification

Participant identification information introduces, reintroduces, or describes a participant in a narrative (Dooley & Levinsohn, 2001, p. 82). These clauses tend to appear at the beginning of the narrative. In the corpus, participant identification occurs in 29 out of 409 clauses. Of these, all known head verbs are Stem I (26 instances), as is demonstrated in (74).

\[
(74) \quad [tʰâːt.laŋ \ tǎː=pǎː \ \text{pu} \ \text{ton.seal}=sǐːa] \\
\text{That.lang} \ \text{offspring=MASC} \ \text{uncle} \ \text{Tong.Seal=ABS} \\
[(a=pum \ tǔk \ kūːa \ pʰǎː \ aː]_{\text{MAIN}} \\
3.\text{POSS}=\text{body} \ \text{fist} \ \text{nine} \ \text{amount.I} \ \text{NF} \\
[a=ŋoai-mūl \ tōŋ \ kʰāt \ pʰāː \ sāːu]_{\text{QUOTE}} \ tē \ hê \\
3.\text{POSS}=\text{anus-hair} \ \text{forearm} \ \text{one} \ \text{amount.I} \ \text{long.I} \ \text{say.I} \ \text{be} \\
\]

'It is said, that as for Thatlang’s son, Pu Tongseal, his body was nine fists high and his anus hair was the length of a forearm’ (Pu Tongseal Daak Ngakna Thu).

The sentence, in (74), consists of three clauses. The last clause is a quotative main clause with the verb \text{tē} ‘say’, which has only one form, with no verb stem alternation. The two participant identification clauses that precede \text{tē} ‘say’ are contained within the quote. Each of these are copula clauses. The head verb of the first clause is \text{pʰǎː} ‘amount’. In the second clause, this verb is modified by the verb \text{sāːu} ‘long’. Together they have the meaning ‘about X long’. The stems in both participant identification clauses are Stem I.
The results for participant identification information clauses are summarized in Table 19.

**Table 19 Summary of participant identification information by stem type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem Type</th>
<th>Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3 (10.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identical</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stem I</strong></td>
<td><strong>26 (89.7%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem II</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated in Table 19, out of the 29 participant identification information clauses within the data, whose stem type could be determined, 26 clauses contained a head verb surfacing as Stem I and no clauses contained a verb surfacing as Stem II. The hypothesis that background information always correlates with Stem II is thus false when it comes to participant identification. However, there are different results for setting information, which is reviewed next.

### 3.6.2 Setting

Setting information provides the temporal and locational context of the event. Within the data, 83 of 409 clauses are setting information clauses. Of these 83 clauses, 21 instances contain verbs that do not change and 12 instances contain verb stem forms that are unknown. This leaves 51 clauses with head verbs that are all Stem II.
An example of a typical setting clause is given in (75).

(75) \[[\text{în} \quad \text{á}=tʰɛît \quad \text{tîîaŋ} \quad \text{in}] \text{sc} \[\ldots \quad \text{mì} \quad \text{zɔːŋ}=pǎ \quad \text{mùn} \quad \text{a} \quad \text{house} \quad \text{3}=\text{arrive.II} \quad \text{when} \quad \text{PP} \quad \ldots \quad \text{person} \quad \text{poor}=\text{MASC} \quad \text{place} \quad \text{at} \]

\[[tʰї=sά\quad sǐa\quad \text{vǐl} \quad \text{ká}=tɛŋ] \text{quotr} \\]
1p = animal set.snare.II watch.I climb = HORT

\[[\text{tʰї} \quad \text{a}] \text{mc} \quad [\text{pά} \quad \text{hї}] \text{mc} \quad \text{say.I} \quad \text{NF} \quad \text{invite.I} \quad \text{be} \]

Lit: ‘House he arrive when, person poor man place at “our traps check upwards let’s” say and invite.’

‘Upon arriving at home, the rich man invited the poor man and said “let’s go check our traps”’ (Stern, 1984, pg. 45).

The sentence in (75) is comprised of four separate clauses. The first is a temporal clause, distinguished by the word \( \text{tîîaŋ} \) ‘when’ and the postposition \( \text{in} \). The main verb within the temporal clause, \( tʰɛît \) ‘arrive’, is the Stem II variant of \( tʰeŋ \) ‘arrive’. In contrast, the head verb within the main clause, which is foreground information, is \( pά \) ‘invite’, a Stem I variant. Within this sentence, \( pά \) is the main verb, providing the foreground information for this particular event on the timeline, whereas \( tʰɛît \) is providing the background information regarding when the main event took place.

In (76), the event setting clause expresses a completed event, subordinate to the main event of the sentence.

(76) \[[\text{tu̇a} \quad tʰɪŋ-pʰː \quad \text{ŋau} \quad a=sēp \quad zɔːk \quad \text{tîŋ} \quad \text{in.ná}] \text{sc} \quad \text{that} \quad \text{Thingpi} \quad \text{sacrifice} \quad \text{3}=\text{work.II} \quad \text{finish.II} \quad \text{when} \quad \text{PP} \quad \]

\[[[\text{gúa} \quad \text{hoŋ} \quad \text{zu} \quad \text{kík} \quad \text{hї}] \text{quotl} \text{tʰ} \quad \text{hї}] \text{mc} \quad \text{rain} \quad \text{cis} \quad \text{rain.I} \quad \text{again} \quad \text{be} \quad \text{say.I} \quad \text{be} \]

‘When they had finished doing the Thingpi sacrifice, they said “it’s raining on us again!”’

In (76), the subordinate clause expresses the completion of the Thingpi sacrifice with the combination of the Stem II form of \( \text{ṣeam} \) ‘work’ and the Stem II form of \( \text{zɔːk} \) ‘finish’. The verbs are followed by \( \text{tîŋ in.ná} \) ‘when’, which overtly marks the clause as a temporal clause.
The results for setting clauses are summarized in Table 20.

### Table 20 Summary of setting information by stem type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem Type</th>
<th>Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>13 (15.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identical</td>
<td>21 (24.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem I</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stem II</strong></td>
<td><strong>51 (60.0%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Setting</td>
<td>85 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated in Table 20, all 51 setting information clauses within the data, whose stem type could be determined, occur with Stem II verbs. This result is in line with the hypothesis that background information correlates with Stem II verbs. However, unlike setting clauses, explanatory information clauses show a mix of Stem I and Stem II head verbs.

### 3.6.3 Explanation

Explanation is information through which the narrator (or the speaker in a conversation) clarifies what is happening in the narrative. Out of 67 explanation clauses in the data, 60 instances contain a head verb surfacing as Stem I. An example is given in (77).

(77) \[
\text{[túː ɗón } \text{maː=in.aː]_{POSTP} [kindsight daːk tê=in.aː]_{SC} ōm lai hê
\text{now until INTENSE=PP Kuntong gong say.E=PP exist.I still be}
\]

Lit. ‘now until this, Kuntong gong say exist still be’

‘To this day, [they] still call them “Kuntong’s gongs”’ (*Pu Tongseal Daak Ngakna Thu*).

In the explanation clause, in (77), the head verb ōm ‘exist’ surfaces as Stem I. This explanation clause and its elided arguments assert that (people) still call some gongs Kuntong’s gongs. The complement of the existence verb, kûm.toŋ daːk tê=in.aː ‘Kuntong gong say’ expresses what the (people) call the gongs. The clause provides background information as to what is being said/called, and the main existence clause is providing an explanation to something related to events on the timeline, but not on the timeline, making it background information.
Anything said by a participant in the narrative (i.e. quoted speech) is also considered explanation, as demonstrated in (78).

(78) sazu’in [kêci ká=pûmpû=sîka
sambhur = ERG 1SG 1S.POSS = body = ABS
nô: ñeçal sâñj zonj lian zô: pañi hê]QUOTE
2pl. both than also large.I more go.I be
‘The sambhur (said), “My body is bigger than both of yours!”’ (Stern, 1984, pg. 50)

The sentence in (78) contains a quote, spoken by the sambhur. This quote is a copula construction. It compares the size of the sambhur’s body with those of the cuckoo bird and the monkey. The verbs within the clause are not advancing the narrative and are thus not events, and it is not participant identification, as the sambhur was introduced earlier in the narrative. Both verbs within the explanation information clause are Stem I.

The results for explanation information clauses are summarized in Table 21.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem Type</th>
<th>Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3 (4.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identical</td>
<td>4 (6.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stem I</strong></td>
<td><strong>60 (89.6%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem II</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Explanation</strong></td>
<td><strong>67 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated in Table 21, out of a total of 67 explanation information clauses, all 60 clauses whose stem type could be determined contained a Stem I head verb and no clauses contained a Stem II verb. Therefore, this is further evidence against the hypothesis that background information always contains Stem II verbs.

### 3.6.4 Collateral information

Collateral information relates what did not happen to what did happen in the main events of the narrative. In the corpus, collateral information clauses surface as conditionals, imperatives, interrogatives, negatives, purposives, and other irrealis
clauses, either denoting probability or future events. Out of the 79 collateral clauses in the data, 58 have a Stem I head verb and six have a Stem II head verb. In another four clauses, there is no verb stem alternation. In the last eight clauses, the head verbs cannot be verified as either Stem I or Stem II. In this discussion of collateral information, conditionals are discussed first, followed by imperatives, interrogatives, negatives, purposives, and finally other irrealis clauses.

The sentence in (79) contains two types of collateral information clauses: a conditional information clause followed by an imperative clause.

\[(79) \begin{align*}
[na=\text{tīə} \quad nū\text{am} \quad \text{le}]:\text{COND} & \quad [nā: = dāk. būč \quad tō: \quad hòŋ \quad kī.tān \quad tān]:\text{IMP} \\
2 = \text{return.E} & \quad \text{want.I} \quad \text{COND} & \quad 2 = \text{gong.set} \quad \text{with CIS} \quad \text{relinquish.I} \quad \text{IMP}
\end{align*}
\]

“If you want to go back home, give me your gong set.” (Pu ZaDo Daak Ngakna Thu)

The first clause in (79) is marked as a conditional clause by the conditional marker lēː. The complex predicate consists of two verbs: tīə ‘return.home’, which has only one form, and nūam ‘want’, which is in Stem I. The second clause is overtly marked as an imperative by the imperative marker tān. The predicate consists of one verb kī.tān ‘relinquish’, which is in Stem I. There are 14 instances of imperative clauses in the corpus, with 13 instances of a Stem I verb and one instance of an unknown stem.

As for conditional clauses, there are 13 instances of clauses containing the marker lēː. Six of those instances occur with a Stem I verb, as in (79), four instances occur with a verb whose stem does not have a secondary form (“Identical”), and three instances occur with a verb whose Stem Is unknown. While Stern (1963) and King (2007) posit that Stem II conditionals exist, I argue that the marker leː has two functions. The first is as a conditional marker, which is demonstrated in (79) and the second is as a temporal marker, which is demonstrated in (80).

\[(80) \begin{align*}
\text{tūa} \quad tʰîykūŋ-\text{tē}: \quad \text{nū} \quad pʰūk \quad \text{a}: \text{MC} & \\
\text{that} \quad \text{tree-PL} \quad \text{two} \quad \text{chop.I} \quad \text{NF}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
[[d = pʰūt: \quad \text{le}:]_{\text{SC}} \quad pʰūk \quad tʰē-\text{ŋəl} \quad hēt]_{\text{MC}}
\]

\[
3 = \text{chop.II} \quad \text{when} \quad \text{fell.I} \quad \text{able.I-NEG} \quad \text{probably.not}
\]

‘They chop at those trees and when they chop, they probably can’t fell them.’ (Tei le Zuang Thu)

In (80), there is a temporal subordinate clause, \(d = pʰūt: \text{le}: \ ‘\text{when they chop}’, which repeats the information in the preceding clause in a tail-head linkage relationship.
This clause's head verb is the Stem II form \( pʰ\text{uː} \) ‘chop’. After glossing this story in the field and discussing it with native speakers, the use of Stem II here occurs within a temporal setting clause, rather than a conditional clause. King (2009, pg. 152) briefly addressed the issue of conditionals sometimes surfacing as Stem I, where, according to her hypotheses, Stem II would be expected. King states that the reason for the alternation may be due to some conditional clauses being contrafactuals, thus making it a realis-irrealis issue. However, in the Sizang corpus, there are no contrafactuals and the conditionals that are present always surface as Stem I. As for Stern (1963, pg. 276), he analyzes one form of conditional to be “polite” and the other “colloquial”, and states that the stems change accordingly. His hypothesis is also not supported by the data in the corpus.

An interrogative collateral information clause is shown in (81).

(81) \[
[ká=leí\quad zn\quad leí]_{np}\quad á=tíŋ\quad záam
\]
1S.POSS=tribute  search.II  tribute 3=worthy.I  Q
\[
tě=in\}_{QUOTE}\quad dōŋ\quad hū
\]
 say=PP  ask.I  be

‘[They] asked “Is the tribute [animal] that we searched for worthy?”’  (Thingpi Taangthu)

In (81), the head verb of the interrogative clause is \( tíŋ \) ‘be.worthy’, a Stem I form. Out of eight interrogative collateral clauses in the corpus, six of them contain Stem I verbs. However, there is one instance where the interrogative clause contains a Stem II verb, as demonstrated in (82).

(82) \[
sáhaːŋ=nǎː\quad baŋ.ɓaŋ\quad ṇun\quad kăn=pŭiː\quad záam\}_{QUOTE} tě\quad lěː
\]
tiger=ERG  how  river  cross.II=COM  Q  say.E  COND

‘If you ask, “how did the tiger cross the river [with him]?”’  (Pu ZaDo Daak Ngakna Thu)

In (82), the head verb of the interrogative clause, \( kăn \) ‘cross’, is suffixed by the comitative enclitic and surfaces in Stem II. The only difference between the construction in (82) and the other interrogative clauses in the corpus, is the presence of the applicative comitative enclitic \( =pŭiː \). As discussed when reviewing foreground information (§3.5), any applicative clause always contains a Stem II verb.
As for the 15 negative collateral information clauses in the corpus, 14 instances contain Stem I verbs and the stem of the verb in the remaining instance is unknown. A negated clause is illustrated in (83).

\[(83) \text{mì:s} háːu=pàː sʰã-a-naː [tʰâŋ tû=]_{\text{POSTP}}\]

\begin{tabular}{llll}
person & rich = MASC & trap & tree top = at \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{lll}
bàŋmaː & ˢkų-葡京 & hî: \\
\hline
nothing & \text{snare.I-NEG} & be
\end{tabular}

‘The rich man’s trap at the top of the tree caught absolutely nothing’ (Stern, 1984, pg. 45).

In (83), the head verb of the clause ˢk ‘snare’ surfaces as Stem I. Therefore, both events, the archetype of foreground information, and negatives, the archetype of collateral information, appear with Stem I verbs in this example.

An example of a purposive collateral information clause is demonstrated in (84).

\[(84) [\text{t}=kʰ=zmàː=ntû=]_{\text{SC}}=tû=_{\text{in}}\]

\begin{tabular}{llllllllll}
1 PLINCL = MID = respect.II-NMLZ = PUR = PP & [akûa & u & ham = bɛl & hî: & ꦏ GPI & MAIN & [who older.sibling aged = SUPL & be & Q] \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

Lit. ‘We respect-for who older.sibling aged-most be Q’

‘In order for us to respect each other, who is the eldest?’ (Stern, 1984, pg. 50).

In (84), the purposive construction is formed by suffixing (-naː) = tû= = in to the verb. The purposive = tû is grammaticalized from the postposition aktû: ‘for’. In all three instances of a purposive collateral information clause, the verb surfaces as Stem II, as expected.

Finally, an irrealis collateral information clause is demonstrated in (85).

\[(85) \text{t}=kʰ-kʰən tʰâp kul tû: \]

\begin{tabular}{llllll}
1p = MID-divide.II & individually & need.I & IRR & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

Lit. ‘Our dividing individually need’

‘We will need to split up individually’ (Stern, 1984, pg. 50).

In (85), the clause is marked by the irrealis marker tû. Within the clause, the head verb is kul ‘need’ in its Stem I form. It takes the nominalized verb phrase \( \text{t}=kʰ-kʰən \) ‘we divide’ in Stem II as its argument.
(86) demonstrates how *kul* may also appear as the only verb in a clause.

\[
\text{âːmaː-tɛǐː} \quad \emptyset \quad \text{kul-buan-tɛː}
3S-PL \quad 3S.OBJ \quad \text{need.I-NEG-BELIEF}
\]

‘They don’t need it’ (Sing Za Nang 2010, pg. 8).

The predicate has two arguments, the third person plural pronoun *âːmaː-tɛǐː* and an elided object argument. This construction sheds light on the interpretation of (85), in which the subject argument is indicated by the pre-verbal first person plural inclusive agreement marker i=:. Therefore, just as there is an overt nominalization occurring in setting information clauses, the dynamic verb *kʰɛn* ‘divide’, in (85), is nominalized to become the object argument of *kul*. Therefore, the form of the verb is Stem II.

The association of different collateral information types with verb stem types is presented in Table 22.

**Table 22 Occurrences of stems within collateral information clauses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collateral Clause Type</th>
<th>Stem Type</th>
<th>Stem I</th>
<th>Stem II</th>
<th>Identical</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conditionals</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperatives</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogatives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negatives</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irreals</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td><strong>59 (76.6%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 (6.5%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 (6.5%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>8 (10.4%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated by the results in Table 22, the majority of instances of collateral information occur with Stem I. However, Stem II collateral information, is in purposive collateral clauses, but there are also instances of Stem II occurring in interrogatives, negatives, and irrealis collateral clauses. The results here contradict the hypothesis, that Stem II correlates with background information, as 76.6% of collateral information clauses correlate with Stem I, not Stem II. Evaluations are examined next.
3.6.5 Evaluations and performative information

Evaluations are instances in the narrative in which the narrator or a character voices their personal feelings or perspective about the present situation (Grimes, 1975, p. 61). There are no instances of evaluation information clauses in the corpus. Performative information is examined next.

Performative information usually contains statements from the narrator addressed to the audience about the narrative (e.g. morals and conclusions) (Dooley & Levinsohn, 2001, p. 83). A typical performative clause occurs at the end of a narrative, and, in this corpus, always contains a head verb that surfaces as Stem I, as shown in (87).

(87) tuːa á = hêmân = in tɔː pê = in tuːa dôn
    that 3 = that.being.said = PP  lion = ERG that until
    sîîːa kâi nɔîn-ŋɔǎl hê
    tax collect.I anymore-NEG be

    Lit. ‘That that.being.said, lion that until tax collect anymore negative be’
    ‘Because of that, to this day, lions don’t collect taxes anymore’ (Stern, 1984, pg. 49).

The sentence in (87) is depicting a conclusion that has come about as a result of the events in the narrative. In this case, because the rabbit tricked the lion into drowning himself, the lion is no longer able to collect taxes. This piece of information is not a part of the sequence of events within the narrative. Rather, it is related directly to the audience, by the narrator, and is thus considered performative background information.

The results for performative information clauses are summarized in Table 23.

Table 23 Summary of performative information by stem type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem Type</th>
<th>Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identical</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stem I</strong></td>
<td>5 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem II</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Performative</strong></td>
<td>5 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As demonstrated in Table 23, out of only five performative clauses in the corpus, all five clauses contain head verbs which surface as Stem I.

3.7 Conclusion

Explaining verb stem alternation on the basis of foreground information versus background information introduces another method for predictability regarding the use of each verb Stem I in discourse. However, the analysis does not support the hypothesis that Stem I correlates with foreground information and Stem II correlates with background information. In total, Stem I surfaced in foreground information in 125 out of 135 clauses (92.6%) and Stem II surfaced in 10 clauses (7.4%). In all of the background information clauses combined, Stem I still surfaced in 149 out of 205 background information clauses (72.7%), with only 56 confirmed instances of Stem II surfacing in all of the background information clauses (27.3%). Because Stem I surfaces more frequently in all types of information, it is clear that Stem II does not correlate to background information, nor does Stem I directly correlate to foreground information. Chapter 4 argues that Stem II in Sizang Chin surfaces in clausal nominalizations and applicative constructions due to Stem II’s original function as a nominalized form.
Chapter 4
Beyond Foreground and Background Information

4.1 Introduction
The hypothesis was that Stem I would correlate with foreground information and Stem II would correlate with background information. As shown in Table 24, this hypothesis is incorrect.

Table 24 Verb stem correlation with foreground and background information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause Type</th>
<th>Stem I</th>
<th>Stem II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>125/135</td>
<td>10/135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreground</td>
<td>(92.6%)</td>
<td>(7.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>26/26</td>
<td>0/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>0/51</td>
<td>51/51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>58/58</td>
<td>0/58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collateral</td>
<td>60/65</td>
<td>5/65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(92.3%)</td>
<td>(7.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performative</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>0/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100.0%)</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Background</td>
<td>149/205</td>
<td>56/205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(72.7%)</td>
<td>(27.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 24, Stem I surfaces in 125/135 clauses within foreground information (92.6%) and 149/205 clauses within background information (72.7%). Stem I thus surfaces in the majority of clauses for both types of information. Therefore, contrary to the hypothesis that Stem I correlates with foreground information and Stem II correlates with background information, Stem I is indeed
the dominant stem form for all types of information within narrative discourse, except for setting information. All clauses within setting information are adverbials. As Stem II in Sizang indicates nominalization of the verb, adverbial clauses are clausal nominalizations which has extended into clausal nominalizations. Stem II is also prominent in applicative constructions, as all applicative constructions contain a nominalized complement.

In Sizang Chin, Stem II verbs surface within nominalized clauses and applicative constructions. To provide an explanation for the occurrence of verb stem alternation in Sizang, the structure of this chapter is as follows: My interpretation of the phenomenon is offered in §4.2 along with a reassessment of my own hypothesis and King’s (2009) argumentation. Stem II as a marker of clausal nominalization is discussed in §4.3, followed by a discussion of Stem II in applicative constructions in §4.4. The chapter then concludes with a summary in §4.5.

4.2 Interpreting the phenomenon

King (2009, p. 141) reduces the function of Stem II within Kuki-Chin languages to “the morphosyntactic manifestation of the nonagentive voice.” While King provides solid argumentation for argument-level phenomena, she inadvertently confuses the function of Stem II in clausal-level phenomena with its function in argument-level phenomena. To fully understand what is occurring in Sizang Chin, this section re-examines the morphosyntactic origins of verb stem alternation. It also re-examines King’s analysis of verb stem alternation within Sizang Chin. The section concludes by re-assessing the falsified hypothesis of the thesis in light of the actual results, which demonstrate that all verb stem alternation in Sizang Chin stems from nominalization.

4.2.1 The history of verb stem alternation

Regarding the origins of Stem II, King (2009, p. 143) argues that it is derived from two morphemes: a nominalizing *-t and a causativizing *-s → -ʔ. This argument stems from Matisoff’s (2003, p. 472) *-s > -ʔ Proto-Tibeto-Burman causative suffix. I argue that Stem II surfaces solely due to the grammaticalization of the proto-nominalizer *-s (Matisoff, 2003, pp. 468–470). *-s is called a nominalizer and locativizer in PTB (Matisoff, 2003, p. 466) and a subordinator for Chin languages (Matisoff, 2003, pp. 468–470). I thus hypothesize that *-s is the proto-subordinator
and nominalizer, as subordinate clauses often derive from postpositional phrases, requiring a nominal complement.

I also hypothesize that the proto-nominalizer (*-s > -ʔ) suffixed onto verb stems forming nominals. These inflected verbs underwent ablaut, with tone change (caused by the suffixed stop coda), monophthongization and/or a change of coda. The nominal affixation and subsequent change in syllable structure is illustrated in (88).

(88) \( am + ? \rightarrow apʔ \rightarrow âp \) ‘to forget’

As illustrated in (88), the Stem I verb *am* ‘to forget’ is suffixed by the nominalizer -ʔ. Two things happen as a result of the suffixation: First, the bilabial nasal coda undergoes fortition, thus assimilating with the glottal stop. Next, the tone of the syllable is changed from level to mid-falling in the Stem II form. The change of tone is attested for by Button (2011, pp. 19–20), who states that the glottal stop coda found in Mizo, Zahau and Tedim may come from the Proto-Tibeto-Burman *-s, which was realized first as -h, then as a glottal stop in Mizo, Zahau and Tedim and a falling tone in Thadou and Sizang.

While it has been previously argued that verb stem alternation in Kuki-Chin languages is linked to nominalization and causativization, all verb stem alternation in Sizang Chin is linked to nominalization, even in operations that affect transitivity, like applicative constructions.
In constructions containing nominalized clauses or an applicative, the Stem II reflex of the verb is always the same in Sizang. By contrast, Chhangte (1993, p. 87) demonstrates that Mizo has different stems, depending on whether the verb has been nominalized or causativized, as shown in Table 25.

**Table 25 Mizo stem alternation patterns (Chhangte 1993, p. 87)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem I</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Nominalized</th>
<th>Causativized</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ṭṭiâiâ</td>
<td>‘be fearful’</td>
<td>ṭṭit</td>
<td>ṭṭiʔ</td>
<td>‘fear someone’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṭṭiʔ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rhiâl</td>
<td>‘to proclaim’</td>
<td>r̃hil</td>
<td>r̃hilʔ</td>
<td>‘tell someone something’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r̃hilʔ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dûm</td>
<td>‘be blue’</td>
<td>dûm</td>
<td>dûm</td>
<td>‘make something blue’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dûm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dûn</td>
<td>‘to stand’</td>
<td>dûn</td>
<td>dûn</td>
<td>‘to stand something up’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The syllable structure of the nominalized verb stems in Table 25 always differs in coda or tone from the syllable structure of the causativized verb stem. There is no evidence from this corpus, however, to suggest that Sizang has a different Stem II for verbs within applicative constructions and nominalized constructions.

As the morphological origin for Stem II in Kuki-Chin has now been reviewed, a re-assessment of King (2009)’s argument for verb stem alternation is given in the next section, as her work was the initial inspiration of this topic.

**4.2.2 Re-assessing King’s analysis of Sizang**

Now that the Sizang Chin Stem II origins and functions have been explained, it is now possible to relate this to the work of King (2009). She provides a large table, detailing the morpho-syntactic situations in which Stem I and Stem II surface in various Kuki-Chin languages. However, for Sizang and Tedim, her table is not complete. Therefore, in Table 26, I have reworked her table, separating clausal-level phenomena from argument-level phenomena. Each category is addressed below, explaining where my analysis differs from King’s (2009) when necessary.
Table 26 Revision of King (2009, p. 153)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>King</th>
<th>Davis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clauses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complement clauses</td>
<td>II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conditional clauses</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverbial clauses</td>
<td></td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comitative</td>
<td>II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benefactive</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agentive nominalization</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-agentive nominalization</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject relative</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-subject relative</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complement clauses, which were not analyzed for Sizang by King (2009), surface as Stem II, because syntactically they are clausal nominalizations that fill argument positions. The most straightforward example of a complement clause is reviewed in (89).

(89) ìt = kû-kʰêñ  tʰâp  kul  tû:
     1P = mid-divide.II  individually  need.I  IRR

Lit. ‘Our dividing individually need’

‘We will need to split up individually’ (Stern, 1984, pg. 50).

In (89), the verb kû-kʰêñ ‘divide ourselves’ is nominalized, because it is functioning as a complement of the head verb of the clause kul ‘need’.

Concerning conditional clauses in Sizang, King (2009, pp. 151–152) suggests that Type 1 conditional clauses assume a hypothetical situation to be false, and Type 2 conditionals assume the hypothetical situation to be true. While King provides substantial evidence to support this claim for Lai, Mizo, and Falam, the evidence provided for conditionals in Sizang is removed from any context, and no examples of
conditionals co-occurring with Stem I in Tedim are given in her paper. The examples given by King for Sizang are cited from Stern and reproduced in (90) and (91).

(90)  \[ n = oŋ \ pāi \ lēk^3 \]
\[ 2 = \text{CIS} \ \text{go.II} \ \text{COND} \]
‘If you come to me’ (Stern, 1963, p. 276).

(91)  \[ kēi \ pāi \ lē = η \]
\[ 1\text{SG} \ \text{go.I} \ \text{COND} = 1 \]
‘If I go’ (Stern, 1963, p. 276).

(90) is problematic, since it is the only example of a Sizang conditional clause given by either Stern or King, which contains a Stem II verb. There is also no context provided for the examples, which makes it difficult to assess King’s argument of one conditional “assumed to be true” and the other “assumed to be false”. Also, Stern’s corpus of texts does not contain (90), suggesting that this was an elicited clause included in Stern’s grammar. Likewise, no context is provided for (91), making the true-false hypothesis difficult to test.

As demonstrated in Chapter 3 (§3.6.4), the conditional marker \( lē \) also functions as a postposition with a Stem II verb. That is, \( lē \) marks the clause as a temporal adverbial, a clausal nominalization, rather than a conditional. Therefore, in Sizang, King’s two types of conditionals do not exist and occurrences of \( lē \) in the corpus which can be identified as conditional clauses always occur with a Stem I verb.

Since adverbials are postpositional phrases, a nominal, their verbs always surface as Stem II.

While there are not many examples of argument-level nominalization in the corpus, the majority of data examined agrees with King’s (2009) findings, that agentive nominalizations surface as Stem I in Sizang and non-agentive nominalizations likewise surface as Stem II.

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\( lē \) is a conditional in Tedim, but not in Sizang, which has lost all final glottal stops.

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\( ^3 \) The final /k/ on \( lē \) is often realized as a glottal stop in Sizang, which may indicate that Pa Lian Kham, Stern’s informant, went into one of his “occasional lapses into Kamhau [Tedim]” (Stern, 1963, p. 223).
A possible example of an agentive nominal/subject relative is given in (92).

(92) [sɛîn ŋam = dî: teçaŋ ŋɛίi] REL pɔː = tî: ı̈n a-san sîka
    China land = at live.I used.to man = POSS house ATTR-be.red ABS
    ‘The red house of the man who had lived in China...’ (Elicited noun phrase)

The emboldened relative clause modifies the possessor pɔː ‘man’ of the noun phrase head ı̈n ‘house’. The head verb within the relative clause modifying pɔː ‘man’ is teçaŋ ‘live’, which is in Stem I. The issue with (92), however, is that since there is no context, it is difficult to determine whether the noun phrase head ı̈n ‘house’ is a subject or a non-subject.

Inversely, an example of a non-agentive nominal/object relative is given in (93).

(93) na = lârî [hɔŋ = tʰâk] REL ka = ƞâː aː 2s.poss = letter cis = send.II 1SG = get.I NF
    ‘I got the letter that you sent me, and...’ (Stern, 1984, p. 52).

In (93), the noun head is lârî ‘letter’ which is relativized by the unmarked relative clause ending in a Stem II verb is hɔŋ = tʰâk ‘send to me’. This relativized noun is the direct object theme argument of the ditransitive clause. The subject is referenced by the pre-verbal agreement proclitic kaː attached to the Stem I verb ƞâː ‘get’.

King (2009) did not examine subject relative clauses in Sizang but she did examine non-subject relative clauses, concluding that verbs within non-subject relative clauses always surface as Stem II, due to their non-agentive focus. While this corpus does not contain many examples of relative clauses, most instances of relative clauses fit King’s original analysis. However, there is one notable counter example, as shown in (94).

(94) miː hâu = pɔː = in [miː zɔŋ = pɔː]
    person rich = man = ERG person poor = MASC
    sâːsîîːa-naː suŋ = aː ɔːk sákʰi = sîka sút aː trap inside = at snare.I deer = ABS untie.I NF
    Lit. ‘person rich man person poor man trap inside snared deer unite and’
    ‘The rich man untied the barking deer which was inside the poor man’s trap, and...’ (Stern, 1984, p. 45)

As shown by the relative clause (in bold) in (94), Stern transcribes the Stem I verb ɔːk ‘snare’ within the relative clause that is modifying the non-agentive argument
sáŋʰiː ‘barking deer’. King’s (2009) analysis, however, states that the verb of a relative clause should surface as Stem II when describing a non-agent and Stem I when describing the agent.

As the data show, King (2009) was correct in arguing that causative verbs always surface as Stem I in Sizang. However, the issue of benefactives extends into the discussion of applicatives. As addressed in §2.5 and §4.4, as applicative constructions differ from causatives, in that an oblique argument is brought into the core or that a single argument functions as both a core and oblique argument, applicative constructions are reflecting a type of valence-altering operation that does not form a clear “transitive” argument. Also, while applicative constructions often appear similar to causative constructions, the predicate commonly expresses a derived morphology (Pacchiarotti, 2017, p. 115).

Whereas King (2009) attempts to provide a reason as to why verb stem alternation occurs in all Kuki-Chin languages, the goal of this thesis is to account for verb stem alternation in only Sizang. As King’s (2009) hypothesis does not fully explain what is happening in Sizang, I attempted use discourse analysis to examine verb stem alternation in text. While I was able to obtain a clearer understanding of verb stem alternation in Sizang than King (2009) did with her small sample of data, my original hypothesis proved to be false.

4.2.3 Re-assessing my own hypothesis

Regarding clausal level phenomena, the hypothesis was that Stem II would correlate with background information. While this hypothesis has been shown to be inaccurate, this investigation demonstrates that one of the functions of clausal nominalizations in Sizang Chin is to place events into the background.

Syntactically, clausal nominalization marks the clause as an adverbial, which is common in Tibeto-Burman languages (Genetti, 2011, p. 170). Hopper and Thompson (1980, p. 285) state that nominalized clauses are naturally background information since they syntactically become noun phrases within the sentence. The form and the function of what Hopper and Thompson argue for in English and what is realized in Sizang Chin are the same.

Concerning argument-level phenomena, as demonstrated in Chapter 2, intransitive, transitive, and ditransitive clauses in Sizang Chin all occur with Stem I verbs. King (2009, p. 155) states that except for Falam, Tedim, and Sizang, all applicatives and
causatives contain Stem II verbs. As shown in Figure 2, in Sizang Stem II only surfaces in clauses containing applicatives, with causative constructions always containing a Stem I verb. However, Hopper and Thompson (1980, p. 251) point out that while transitivity is viewed as a clausal property, the transitivity of a clause is determined by various discourse-level factors. Indeed, King’s original argument agrees with Hopper and Thompson (1980, p. 294), that agentive subjects are strongly grammaticalized in language, so it makes sense that Kuki-Chin languages differentiate agentive participants from nonagentive participants when modified by relative clauses or nominalized. Regarding applicative constructions in Sizang, their function is to substitute the use of oblique arguments, either by bringing a non-core participant into the core or by allowing a core argument participant to remain a part of the core, while also filling an oblique argument. What follows is an overview of clausal nominalization in §4.3 and applicative constructions in §4.4, which are the two environments where Stem II verbs surface in Sizang.

### 4.3 Clausal nominalization

Clausal nominalization is the main factor of the correlation between Stem II and background information. Specifically, Stem II surfaces in adverbial clauses, which are in the form of a postpositional phrase, a nominal structure. This section begins with a description of adverbial clauses in §4.3.1, addressing temporal clauses (§4.3.1.1) and purposive clauses (§4.3.1.2), as these are prominent in the corpus. Afterwards, noun phrases containing relative clauses are discussed in §4.3.2.

#### 4.3.1 Adverbial clauses

The two most-common types of adverbial clauses containing a Stem II verb are temporal clauses and purposive clauses.

Stem II surfacing in adverbial clauses is not a feature specific to Sizang. Bawi Tawng (2017, p. 127) also observes that adverbial clauses in Lai, which are subordinate clauses by nature, occur with a Stem II verb. He states that adverbial clauses in Lai are marked by subordinating conjunctions which often contain either the postposition *ah* or *in*. Many adverbial clauses in Sizang are also overtly marked by the postpositions =*a* or =*in*. 
4.3.1.1 Temporal clauses

A typical temporal adverbial clause is revisited in (95).

(95)  \[ \text{[in } \text{t=ṭʰɛît } \text{tiaŋ } \text{in} \text{]} \text{sc ... mi: } \text{zxn=pả: } \text{mûn } \text{a: } \text{house } \text{3=arrive.II when PP ... person poor=MASC place at} \]

\[ \text{[ṭ=stå } \text{sła } \text{vl } \text{ká=txŋ]} \text{QUOTE} \]

\[1p = \text{animal set.snare.II watch.I climb=} \text{HORT} \]

\[\text{[tá: } \text{ar]} \text{MC } \text{[pá: } \text{hrt]} \text{MC} \]

say.I NF invite.I be

Lit: house he arrive when, person poor man place at “our traps check upwards let’s” say and invite.

‘Upon arriving at home, the rich man invited the poor man and said “let’s go check our traps”’ (Stern 1984, pg. 45).

The first clause in (95) is a temporal adverbial clause (bolded), which is distinguished by the word tiaŋ ‘when’ and ends in the postposition in, which indicates that it is syntactically a postpositional phrase. Adverbial clauses that take the form of postpositional phrases are common in Tibeto-Burman languages (Genetti, 2011, p. 174).

The temporal marker tiaŋ ‘when’ frequently appears after nominals in Sizang, as illustrated in (96).

(96)  \[ \text{[ni: } \text{kʰát} \text{]} \text{NP tiaŋ } \text{day one when} \]

\[ \text{N QUANT PP} \]

‘One day...’ (Pu Tonseal Daak Ngakna Thu)

In (96), the postposition tiaŋ follows a noun phrase with ni ‘day’ as the head noun, which is modified by the quantifier kʰát ‘one’, expressing the meaning ‘one day’.

The postposition tiaŋ may also mark nominals denoting a time of day, as in (97).

(97)  \[ \text{ziŋ tiaŋ exam nei tâ:na: tâ: ni: saŋ kâ: } \text{ŋɔl} \text{morning when exam have.I because now day school attend.I } \text{NEG} \]

Lit. ‘Morning at exam have because, now day school attend not’

‘Because [I] have an exam tomorrow/*this morning, [I] didn’t go to school today’ (Facebook chat notes, 12 October 2017).
In (97), *tiaŋ* is the postposition in the postpositional adverbial phrase *ziŋ tiaŋ* meaning ‘at morning’ (tomorrow). Note that *ziŋ tiaŋ* cannot mean ‘this morning’, and is often considered by speakers to be a single lexical noun.

These observations explain why verbs consistently surfaced as Stem II within setting information, because all setting information in these Sizang narratives is expressed through adverbial clauses, which are clausal nominalizations.

4.3.1.2 Purposive clauses

Purposive clauses occur five times in the corpus, as demonstrated in (98). They also take the form of a postpositional phrase.

(98) \[ \text{[žâːktûː-} \text{naː=} \text{tuû=} \text{in]} \text{SC} \]

\[ \text{1PL.INCL.AGR = MID = respect.II-NMLZ = PUR = PP} \]

\[ \text{[akûa \ u \ ham=bêl \ hê \ zîːam]} \text{MAIN} \]

who older.sibling aged = SUPL be Q

‘In order for us to respect each other, who is the eldest?’

(Stern, 1984, pg. 50).

As shown in (98), purposive constructions are formed by suffixing \(-\text{naː} \text{=} \text{tuû=} \text{in}\) to the verb. The purposive marker \(= \text{tuû}\) is grammaticalized from the postposition *aːtuː* ‘for’. When positioned after verbs, the purposive enclitic often follows the nominalizing suffix \(-\text{naː}\), which overtly indicates that the clause is nominalized. Apart from entire clauses, Stem II also surfaces in noun phrases modified by relative clauses. These structures are reviewed next.
4.3.2 Noun phrases containing relative clauses

King (2009, pp. 146–148) states that relativized subjects occur with Stem I verbs and relativized objects occur with Stem II verbs. An example containing both a relativized subject and a relativized object within one sentence is given in (99).

(99) \( [\text{či-hoŋ} \ pčak]_{\text{REL}} \quad \varnothing \quad \text{sang} \)
1.INCL-CIS give.II [gongs] than
\( [\text{tū}: \ nū \ d = tūm]_{\text{REL}} = \varnothing = \text{sīca} \quad \text{niŋ} \quad zā: \ hū \)
this day 3=play.I=[gongs]=ABS loud.I more be
Lit. ‘we toward give \( \varnothing \) than this day they play \( \varnothing \) loud more be’
‘These [gongs] they are playing today are louder than the ones they gave us’ (How Pu Tongseal Got His Gongs)

There are two relative clauses in (99), both with the head noun ‘gongs’ elided. The first relative clause contains three arguments: ‘they’ (elided subject), ‘gongs’ (elided object) and či-hoŋ ‘we’ (indirect object, marked by the cislocative). The Stem II verb pčak ‘give’ is modifying the elided object ‘gongs’, which is the subject of the first postpositional phrase. The second relative clauses modifies another set of gongs, functioning as the subject of the main clause, with a Stem I verb tūm ‘play’. Both of these relative clauses may be considered as pre-head relative clauses and yet, one relative clause contains a Stem II verb and the other contains a Stem I verb. As there are no clearer examples of relative clauses in the corpus, the description of relative clauses for Sizang remains inconclusive and is thus a subject for further study.

4.3.3 Summary

To summarize Stem II verbs surface in temporal and purposive adverbials, which are clausal nominalizations that take the form of postpositional phrases. Stem II verbs also surface in relative clauses which modify the object argument of a main clause, but more investigation is needed, as (99) demonstrates a Stem I verb within the relative clause that is modifying the object argument, as well. Other than nominalized constructions, Stem II verbs frequently surfaced in applicative constructions in the corpus, which are discussed in the next section.
4.4 Applicative constructions

Stem II verbs always surface in applicative constructions. In relation to the investigation, out of the ten instances of Stem II in foreground information, one instance occurs with the benefactive applicative construction with the enclitic =sāk and nine instances occur with the comitative applicative construction with the enclitic =pūk.

A benefactive applicative construction is reviewed in (100).

(100) \text{pū⁻zā⁻doː}=\text{in.na} \quad \text{[āː=tu⁻k-kil⁻aːk⁻ŋu]}_{\text{oo}} \quad \text{tō:}

\text{Pu Za Do = ERG} \quad \text{3.POSS = hair.knot-lock.É-chicken-bone with}

\text{[āː=nau \quad tʰiːp \quad pān.īn \quad āː]}_{\text{oo}} \quad \text{hōl-lup = sāk \quad a:}

\text{3.POSS = child \quad fontanel \quad from \quad at \quad drive.II-sleep.II = BEN \quad NF}

Lit. Pu Za Do, his hair-knot lock chicken bone with, 3 child fontanel from at drove make.sleep and

‘With the chicken bone used to tie the knot in his hair, Pu Za Do stabbed the [master and mistress]’s child in the fontanel, killing him, and...’ (Pu Za Do Sahang Lam Lakna Thu)

In (100), there is syntactically only one core argument: \text{pū⁻zā⁻doː} (ergative subject). There are two oblique arguments \text{aːk⁻ŋu} ‘chicken bone’, which occurs with the postposition tō: ‘with’, and \text{āː=nau \ tʰiːp} ‘their child’s fontanel’, which occurs with the postposition pān.īn āː ‘from’. In this sentence, Pu Za Do (subject) causes the child (the direct object, but part of the locational oblique object argument) to die by stabbing the child’s fontanel (oblique object) with the chicken bone (oblique object). The child, which is referenced in an oblique argument is brought into the core as a direct object by the benefactive applicative construction.

This situation in (100) fits Peterson’s (2007, p. 39) first characteristic of an applicative construction, because it involves “a participant that normally would not be instantiated in a core object relation, but rather as an oblique....” Thus, the direct object argument \text{āː=nau} ‘their child’ has been brought out of the oblique argument contained in the postpositional phrase \text{āː=nau \ tʰiːp \ pān.īn} ‘from their child’s fontanel’ and has been brought into the core as the object argument. Thus, this clause takes the form of a transitive clause (where Stem I is the expected default in Sizang), yet is marked by Stem II, due to the applicative.
The other nine instances of applicative constructions all contained the comitative enclitic \( =\)puː\(\), which is attached to the Stem II form of the verb. An example is shown in (101).

\[
(101) \quad a = lɔai \quad liāt \quad pīa \quad a = lɔm-nuǐː \quad tɛn = pūːi \quad hɛ:
3. POS\(S\) = buffalo \quad eight \quad give.I \quad NF \quad 3. POS\(S\) = friend\(\text{-FEM}\) marry.II = COM \quad be
\]

Lit. his buffalo eight give and his girlfriend marry.with is

‘[The village head] gave his eight buffalo and married [the man’s] girlfriend.’ (The Tei Tree and The Zuang Tree)

In (101) there are two clauses and two overt arguments. The subject argument of the first clause is the village head (nominally mentioned in the previous context of narrative but denoted here by the third person possessive enclitic \( a = ‘his’\)), the object argument is \( lɔai \) ‘buffalo’, and the unexpressed recipient is the boyfriend. The subject argument of the second clause is still the village head, but the object argument is \( a = lɔm-nuǐː \) ‘his [the young man’s] girlfriend’. The comitative applicative in Sizang marks the object argument of the clause as a “co-participant” with the subject argument, similar to Hakha Lai’s comitative applicative (see Peterson, 2007, p. 18).

4.5 Summary

As demonstrated by the historical analysis offered in this chapter, Stem II occurs in Sizang because of nominalization. Clausal nominalization, which utilizes a Stem II verb to indicate the nominalization of a clause, is the origin of Stem II verbs in setting information clauses, and collateral information clauses containing either a complement or a purposive. Thus, Stem II indicates a clausal nominalization which is used to form either an adverbial clause or a complement clause.

For arguments, an applicative construction (which has the same syntactic form as a complement clause) with a Stem II verb indicates that a non-core argument, such as an oblique is functioning as a core argument, thus raising the valency of the clause and bringing that non-core participant into the core. Applicative constructions in Sizang have a complement clause structure, with the applicative marker behaving as a main verb and the applicativized verb behaving as the complement of the applicative marker. The thesis concludes in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5
Conclusion

5.1 Introduction
This thesis has provided an updated morphosyntactic overview of Sizang Chin, along with an examination of verb stem alternation in the context of narrative discourse. This thesis demonstrates, contrary to King’s (2009, p. 141) analysis of the function of Stem II within Kuki-Chin languages as “the morphosyntactic manifestation of the nonagentive voice”, that Stem II within Sizang Chin narrative discourse occurs within clausal nominalizations and applicative constructions.

Clausal nominalization accounts for Stem II surfacing in background information: 1. Setting information expressed as adverbial clauses and 2. Collateral information expressed as purposive constructions.

Applicative constructions account for Stem II surfacing in foreground information. While applicative constructions and causative constructions are both valence-raising operations, causative constructions in Sizang consistently contain a Stem I verb, whereas applicative constructions always contain a Stem II verb. Functionally, applicative constructions bring a participant from an oblique argument into the core argument of the clause, and are exemplified in the data by benefactive and comitative constructions. But the syntactic reason that Stem II occurs in applicative constructions, is because the applicativized verb is the complement of the verb grammaticalized as the applicative marker, thus surfacing in the nominalized Stem II form. These processes are reviewed in Table 27.
Table 27 Summary of processes involving Stem II for grounding types

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<td>Nominalization</td>
<td>Event brought into background through nominalization</td>
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</table>

A review and summary of the thesis is given next.

5.2 Review of thesis
Chapter 1 gave an introduction to the Sizang people and language, presented a brief literature review of verb stem alternation in Kuki-Chin languages, and presented the contributions, limitations and outline of the thesis. Chapter 2 contained the morphosyntactic overview of Sizang Chin, separating the constructions of arguments from constructions of clauses. The overview established verb stem alternation as primarily a nominalizing function, that also occurs in some subordinate clauses and in all applicative constructions. Chapter 3 presented the methodology and results of the study of verb stem alternation in nine narratives. Contrary to the original hypothesis that Stem II would correlate with background information, the results demonstrated that Stem I verbs occur more frequently in both foreground and background information. This conclusion lead to the discussion and analysis presented in Chapter 4, that any occurrence of Stem II in foreground or background information can be traced to Stem II being a nominalization.

5.3 Using discourse to analyze verb stem alternation
Prior to this thesis, most analyses of verb stem alternation in a Kuki-Chin language were conducted at the sentence level, using elicited data. So-Hartmann (2009, p. 33) primarily relies on corpus data with some elicited sentences, but does not specifically analyze verb stem alternation in the corpus. King (2009), whose goal was to analyze verb stem alternation across Kuki-Chin languages, primarily uses data from other sources, as she used Stern (1963) for Sizang. As indicated by her
dissertation (King, 2010, pp. 59–60), even King’s Falam data mostly comes from elicited sentences, although some corpus data were used.

The original purpose of looking at narrative discourse, was to examine the correlation of verb stems and foreground and background information in Sizang Chin narrative discourse. Although the hypothesis that Stem II would correlate with background information was shown to be false, analyzing the data clause-by-clause allowed for the verb stem of each clause to be examined in the context of the surrounding clauses. Thus, the clauses which functioned as arguments were examined within a main clause, which helped to establish the claim, that clausal nominalization was the morphosyntactic operation that caused Stem II to surface in setting and collateral information. Thus, looking at clauses in a narrative discourse context demonstrated, that all instances of Stem II within the discourse could be linked to nominalization.

5.4 Directions for future research

This thesis is the first academic work on Sizang to use narrative discourse as its primary data source since Stern (1963). It also provides an updated grammatical sketch of Sizang Chin. However, this thesis is the first work to look at verb stem alternation in a Kuki-Chin language based entirely on data from narrative texts.

This thesis has demonstrated that Stem II correlates with clausal nominalization and applicative constructions in Sizang Chin narrative discourse. One logical extension of the methodology used in this thesis is to examine other types of discourse, such as hortatory or conversational discourse, to further examine the use of verb stem alternation in Sizang Chin. As Hakha, Falam, and Mizo have different grammaticalization patterns than Sizang, it would be useful to examine why Stem II surfaces differently in argument-level phenomena across Kuki-Chin languages. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate whether Sizang Chin does, indeed exhibit a “third Stem” (VanBik, 2009, p. 15).

There are even more questions to be asked about argument structure in Sizang. As Sizang does not appear to have object agreement marking, another topic to investigate is how Sizang encodes object agreement in comparison to other Kuki-Chin languages like Hakha (Peterson, 2003b, pp. 414–415) or Hyow (Peterson, 2003a). These questions would be best answered with a more in-depth study of
Sizang grammar and discourse, utilizing different types of texts, such as procedural, hortatory or conversational discourse.
Bibliography


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