VERB STEM ALTERNATION IN SIZANG CHIN NARRATIVE DISCOURSE

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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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No matter what anyone else may say about their own cohort in the Linguistics Department at Payap, I stand by my colleagues, and proudly proclaim that we were the best group this department has ever seen. We challenged it all. We had native English speakers getting worse grades that non-native English speakers, we had people dosing off in class, we habitually waited until the last minute to finish work, but we sure had fun doing it and I doubt that any other class can say they get along with each other as well as we do. I thank Andy for sharing data with me and accompanying me in India, Cross for introducing me to his native Falam language, Deep for agonizing with me during our trials-by-fire, Eli for showing me what it means to be a good witness to people, Jean-François for his wise words of wisdom, Leah for opening my mind through our many discussions, Mark for his patience and honesty, Sara for sharing her uplifting spirit with us all and Stephanie for checking my facts and for being so organized when the rest of us were not.

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ဇင်းမယ်မြို့မှာရှိတဲ့မြန်မာပြည်သားတွေအားလုံးကို အထူးကျေးဇူးတင်ပါတယ်။
ခင်ဗျားတို့ကြောင့် ကျနော်မြန်မာယဉ်ကျေးမှုအကြောင်းကို ပိုမိုပြီးတော့သင်လို့ရပြီး
ကိုယ့်အမှားတွေကိုလည်း ပြုပြင်လို့ရတဲ့အတွက်ကြောင့်မို့လို့ အထူးကျေးဇူးတင်ပါတယ်။
ဘုရားသခင်ဆက်လပ်ပြီးတော့သုံးပြုစေပြီး ကောင်းကြီးပေးပါစေလို့ ဆုတောင်းပေးပါ၏။

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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.

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บทคัดย่อ

ภาษาซีจาง ฉิ่น (ภาษาในกลุ่มกูกี-ฉิ่น พม่า-ทิเบต) เป็นภาษาที่พูดในรัฐฉิ่นเหนือ ประเทศเมียนมาร์ ภาษาซีจาง ฉิ่น มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงเสียงสระของชุดคำ ซึ่งรู้จักในงานวรรณกรรมของกูกี-ฉิ่นในฐานะ “การสับเปลี่ยนฐานคำกริยา” ซึ่งรูปแบบหนึ่งของคำกริยา (ฐาน 1) ปรากฏในบริบทที่ชัดเจน และอีกรูปแบบหนึ่ง (ฐาน 2) ปรากฏในอีกบริบทหนึ่ง เมื่อไม่นานมานี้ การสับเปลี่ยนดังกล่าวได้ถูกจัดกลุ่มให้อยู่ความสัมพันธ์ของผู้กระทำ ที่ซึ่งคำกริยาฐาน 1 บ่งบอกถึงลักษณะของผู้กระทำ และคำกริยาฐาน 2 บ่งบอกถึงสิ่งอื่นที่ไม่ใช่ผู้กระทำ อย่างไรก็ตาม วิธีการที่ใช้ในการจัดกลุ่มนี้ไม่ได้บ่งบอกถึงความแตกต่างชัดเจนระหว่างปรากฏการณ์ในระดับอนุประโยค และปรากฏการณ์ระดับคำ

เพื่อเป็นการสังเกตการสับเปลี่ยนฐานคำกริยาในสภาพแวดล้อมที่เป็นธรรมชาติยิ่งขึ้น งานวิจัยนี้จึงตรวจสอบความสัมพันธ์ของการสับเปลี่ยนฐานคำกริยาด้วยข้อมูลเบื้องหน้าและเบื้องหลังในเรื่องเล่าโดยบุคคลที่สามชาวซีจาง ข้อมูลเบื้องหน้ากล่าวถึงอนุประโยคภายในเรื่อง ที่ประกอบไปด้วยเหตุการณ์หลักอันเกิดขึ้นไปเบื้องหน้าตามลำดับเหตุการณ์ ข้อมูลเบื้องหลังกล่าวถึงอนุประโยคที่ไม่ใช่เหตุการณ์หลัก แต่เป็นการเพิ่มข้อมูลสนับสนุนให้กับเหตุการณ์หลัก สมมติฐานสำหรับการศึกษาครั้งนี้คือ อนุประโยคข้อมูลเบื้องหน้าจะสัมพันธ์กับคำกริยาฐาน 1 และอนุประโยคข้อมูลเบื้องหลังจะสัมพันธ์กับคำกริยาฐาน 2 อย่างไรก็ตาม ผลการศึกษานี้แสดงให้เห็นว่า อนุประโยคข้อมูลเบื้องหลังส่วนใหญ่ประกอบไปด้วยคำกริยาฐาน 1 และอนุประโยคข้อมูลเบื้องหน้าบางครั้งประกอบไปด้วยคำกริยาฐาน 2

คำกริยาฐาน 2 ที่ปรากฏในอนุประโยคของภาษาซีจาง ฉิ่น ไม่เหมือนกับภาษากูกี-ฉิ่นอื่นๆ เนื่องจากใช้เพื่อบ่งบอกการทำให้อนุประโยคเป็นนาม หรือเพื่อบ่งบอกกรรมกริยาที่สูงขึ้นในโครงสร้างกรรม ฐาน 2 ปรากฏในภาษาซีจางเนื่องมาจากคำท้าย 2 แบบในภาษาพม่า-ทิเบตดั้งเดิม กล่าวคือคำที่ทำให้เป็นคำนามดั้งเดิม และคำที่ทำให้เป็นอนุประโยคดั้งเดิมซึ่งก่อให้เกิดคำกริยาฐาน 2 หลังจากเพิ่มคำลงท้ายเหล่านี้ลงไป การทำให้อนุประโยคเป็นนามซึ่งใช้คำกริยาฐาน 2 บ่งบอกว่าอนุประโยคทั้งหมดเป็นนาม การทำให้อนุประโยคเป็นนามเหล่านี้มีหน้าที่เพื่อก่อให้เกิดอนุ

ประโยคที่ให้ข้อมูล และอนุประโยคที่ให้ข้อมูลสำคัญรองลงมาอย่างมีจุดมุ่งหมาย ในด้านความหมายแล้ว อนุประโยคที่เป็นนามจะทำให้เหตุการณ์ย้ายออกจากลำดับในเรื่อง ทั้งนี้ เวเลนซ์ที่เพิ่มขึ้นมาใช้ประโยชน์จากคำกริยาฐาน 2 โดยการเพิ่มคำลงท้ายที่เป็นกรรม ได้ก่อให้เกิดกรรมให้กับส่วนที่เป็นกรรมตรงเดิม จึงเป็นการเพิ่มเวเลนซ์ของอนุประโยคและนำตัวละครที่ไม่ใช่ตัวละครหลักเข้าสู่จุดสนใจ ดังนั้นแล้ว ภาษาซีจาง ฉิ่น มีการใช้การสับเปลี่ยนฐานคำกริยาเพื่อเพิ่มจำนวนเหตุการณ์ให้กับเบื้องหลังผ่านการทำให้อนุประโยคเป็นนามและนำตัวละครเพิ่มขึ้นจากส่วนกรรมมายังส่วนหลักของอนุประโยคผ่านเวเลนซ์ที่เพิ่มขึ้น

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Σ	verb complex
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABS	absolutive
APPL	applicative
ATTR	attributive
AUG	augmentative
BEN	benefactive
CAUS	causative
CC	copula clause
CIS	cislocative
COM	comitative
COND	conditional
COP	copula
E	either Stem
ERG	ergative
EXCL	exclusive
FEM	feminine
HORT	hortative
I	Stem I
II	Stem II
INCL	inclusive
INTENSE	intensifier
IMP	imperative
IRR	irrealis
MAIN	main clause
MASC	masculine
MC	main clause
MID	middle
NF	non-final coordinating marker
NMLZ	nominalizer
NP	noun phrase
OO	oblique object
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PP	postposition
Q	question
QUOTE	quotation
SC	subordinate clause
SG	singular
SUPL	superlative
TEMP	temporal
VP	verb phrase

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 စိၤယင်း /sí.jĭ́/, 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.

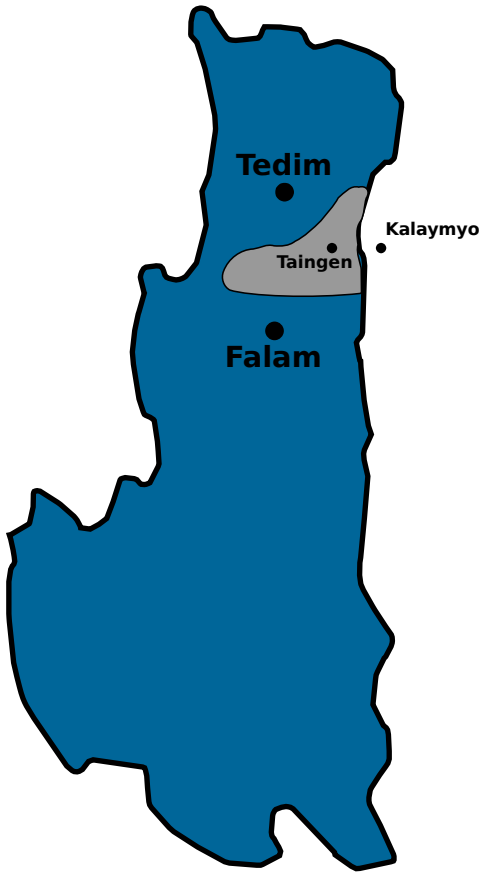

Figure 1 Location of the Sizang Valley within Chin State, Myanmar

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 1 The descendants of the five sons of Pu Thuantak (Naylor, 1925, p. 45)

Son	Descendants
Ngengu	Khuasak and Lophei villagers
Vanglok	Thuuklai, Buanman, and Limkhai villagers
Daitawng	None left.
Hinnung	Hualnam people
Nunzong	Taukon people

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”,

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.

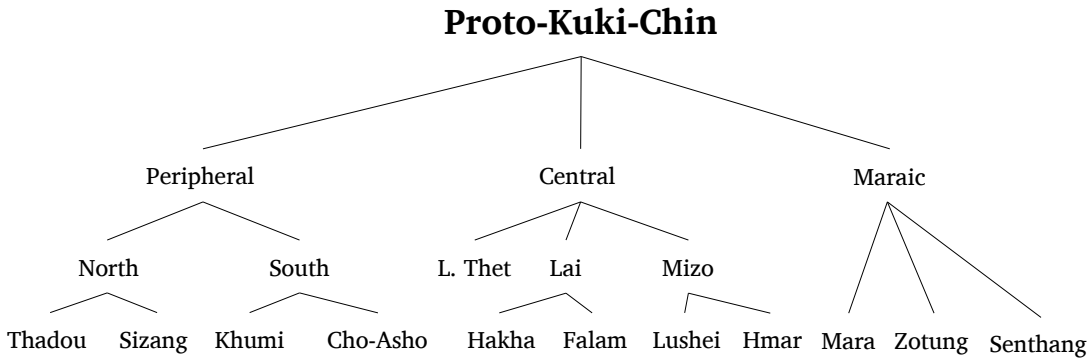

Figure 2 VanBik (2009, p. 23) classification of Proto-Kuki-Chin.

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"

Central (r-)	**Peripheral (g-)**		**Gloss**
Falam	**Sizang (ŋ-)**	**Tedim (g-)**	
t̪ʰiŋ⁴⁴.t̪ʰɛj⁴⁴.ɾaʔ²¹	*tʰĭŋ.ŋă:*	*siŋ³⁴.gaʔ*	'fruit tree'
ɾɔ⁴⁴.kuuŋ⁴⁴	*ŋua:.tuâ:i*	*gɔ³³.tuai³³*	'bamboo shoot'
ɾuul²³	*ŋul*	*gul³³*	'snake'
ɾil²³	*ŋil*	*gil³³*	'intestines'
ɾuu⁵²	*ŋŭ:*	*gu:³⁴*	'steal'

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 /r/ 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

	Bilabial	Labio-Dental	Alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Plosives	p b		t d	k	
	p^h		t^h	k^h	
Nasals	m		n	ŋ	
Spirants		v	s z		h
Lateral			l		

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

	Front	Central	Back	Diphthongs	Triphthongs
High	i iː		u uː	iːa iaː uːi uiː	uai
Mid	ɛ ɛː		o oː		
				ɔːi	
Low		a[1] aː	ɔ ɔː	aːi aiː	
				aːu	

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 *tɛ̆l* 'understand' and *tɛːl* 'choose'. Button (2011, p. 15) interprets the difference as a

[1]Phonetically, this should be [ɐ], 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 /lĭm/ ‘image’ and /lĭ:m/ ‘ball of string’ as [lĭm] (lax vowel) and [lĭm] (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) /a:/, Rising (34) /ă:/, and Falling (42) /â:/. Stern (1963, pp. 229–230) maintained there was a high-level tone /á:/ 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 5 Sizang toneme contrasts

Tone	Example
Mid-Level (33)	*sa:* ‘hot’
Rising (34)	*să:* ‘meat’
Falling (42)	*sâ:* ‘think’

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

> [t]he indicative mood is realized by Form I of the verb, the subjunctive by Form II. 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'Chò (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'Chò" (Kee Shein Mang, 2006, p. 108, emphasis mine). Specifically, in K'Chò, 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 Túngdìm (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, applicative 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

$$(\text{Possessor})+\mathbf{Head}+(\text{Stative Verb})+(=\text{Gender})+(\text{Quantifier})+(\{\text{Case},\text{Dem}\})$$

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꞉* *zɔ꞉ŋ=pă꞉*]** NP *luŋ* *kim* *ŋɔ̂l* *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, *zɔ꞉ŋ* 'be.poor', and finally the gender-marking suffix *pă꞉* '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).

(2) [*tuːa suǎŋ*]$_{NP}$ = *sǐːa* [*kʰuaː.sâːk* = *tɛ̌ː* = **îː** *á* = *kʰuaː.siam*]$_{NP}$ *hîː*
that stone = ABS Khuasak = PL = **POSS** 3.POSS = village.talisman be
'That stone was the village talisman of the people of Khuasak [village].'

In (2), the possessive noun phrase, *kʰuaː.sâːk* = *tɛ̌ː* = *îː á* = *kʰuaː-siam* 'Khuasak's village talisman', consists of the head (possessee) noun phrase, *á* = *kʰuaː-siam* 'their village talisman' which consists of the noun head *kʰuaː.siam* 'village talisman' preceded by the third person possessive determiner *á* = , which is co-referential with the possessor noun phrase. This phrase, *kʰuaː.sâːk* = *tɛ̌ː* = **îː** 'people of Khuasak village', consists of the noun phrase *kʰuaː.sâːk* = *tɛ̌ː* 'people of Khuasak village', which is marked by the possessor argument marker = **îː**.

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 6 Classification of gender in Sizang (Naylor, 1925, pp. 5–6)

	Masculine	**Feminine**	
		Mature	**Immature**
Humans	= *pằː*	= *nŭ̀ː*	= *nŭ̀ː*
Large wild animals	= *taŋ*	= *puî̀ː*	= *la*
Domestic/ Small wild animals	= *tal*	= *puî̀ː*	= *la*
Birds	= *bal*	= *puî̀ː*	= *puî̀ː*
Fish	No distinction		

In (3)-(8), these gender enclitics immediately follow the head noun.

(3) *maːŋ* = ***pǎː***
chief = **MASC**
'male chief'

(4) *lɔm* = ***pǎː***
friend = **MASC**
'boyfriend'

(5) *naːu* = ***nŭː***
sibling.Y = **FEM**
'younger sister'

(6) *ĭn* = *tɛ̂ːak* = ***nŭː***
house = establish.II = **FEM**
'mistress'

(7) *sial* = ***puîː***
mithun = **FEM**
'female mithun' (Naylor 1925)

(8) *sákʰiː* = **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 =*nŭː* 'FEM' and =*pǎː* '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)	*ĭn*	***pɔl.kʰât***	(10)	*ĭn*	***tʰum***
	house	**some**		house	**three**
	'Some houses'			'Three houses'	
	(Elicited)			(Elicited)	

In (9) the noun *pɔl* 'group' and the numeral *kʰât* 'one' together mean 'some'. Within the noun phrase *pɔl.kʰât* 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* ***tăm*** *mámâː* *kăːp* *aː*
gun **be.many** INTENSE shoot.I NF
'[They] shot a lot of guns and...'

As in (9) and (10), the quantifier *tăm* '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

Colloquial			**Elicited**	
Proximal		**Distal**	**Proximal**	**Distal**
hîː 'this'	*tɯː* 'now'	*tɯːa* [*taː*] 'that'	*hîːsîːa* 'this'	*tâːsîːa* 'that'

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

(12) *ĭn* *hîːsîaː*
house this
'This house' (Elicited)

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

(13) [***tɯːa*** ***niː***]$_{NP}$ *a-kîː-pân*
that **day** 3-MID-begin.I

amâː=tɛ̆ː	*tʰum*	*lôm*	*a=kîː-kâːi*	*aː*
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 *tɯː* 'now', as in *tɯː niː* 'today'. However, *tɯː* is only used as a proximal demonstrative in conjunction with nouns referring to time, such as *kûm* 'year' or *tʰâː* 'month'.

2.2.1.5 Case marking

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

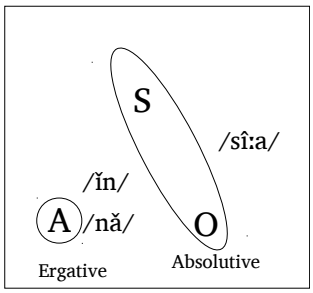

Figure 3 Ergative-absolutive marking in Sizang

Two markers are classified as ergative: *=ĭn* and *=nă:*, while *=sîːa* is classified as an absolutive marker.

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

(14) [*á=saːi* *luː=**sĭːa***]$_{NP}$ [*míhiŋ* *liː=**in***]$_{NP}$ *zɔŋ* *aː*
3.POSS=elephant head=**ABS** human four=**ERG** carry.I NF
'Four people carried the head of his elephant on a pole and...' (Stern, 1984, p. 44)

In (14), all participants are clearly marked for case. The object argument *á=saːi luː* 'his elephant's head' is marked by the absolutive marker *=sĭːa* and the subject argument *míhiŋ liː* 'four people' is marked by the ergative marker *=in*. 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) [*á=lɔm=pă:*]$_{NP}$ [*lɔai* *liăt*]$_{NP}$ *hɔl* *aː*
3.POSS=friend=MASC buffalo eight drive.I NF
'Her boyfriend drove eight buffalo...'

In (15), the first argument *á=lɔm-pă:* 'her boyfriend', a human, is assumed to be the subject and the second argument *lɔai liăt* 'eight buffalo' is assumed to be the object.

Note that in colloquial speech *=nă:* is used as the ergative case marker instead of *=in*, as shown in (16).

(16) *á.mă:=**nă:*** *vôk=sŭ:a* *nam* *tɔ̂:* *t^{h}ât* *hû:*
3SG=**ERG** pig=ABS knife with kill.I be
Lit. 'He pig knife with kill be'
'He killed the pig with a knife.' (Elicited)

In (16), there are two core arguments. The subject argument is the third person singular pronoun *á.mă:* 'he' marked by the ergative enclitic *=nă:* and the object argument is the noun *vôk* 'pig' marked by the absolutive enclitic *=sŭ:a*. In addition, there is one oblique argument containing the head noun *nam* 'knife' and the postposition *tɔ̂:* 'with'. The predicate is *t^{h}ât* 'kill'. The clause ends with the verb *hû:* '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* *lɛ̂:* *zɔŋ*]$_{NP}$*=**in*** *hûhɛ:=∅* *t^{h}ŭ:-ŋa:i* *hû:*
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 *lɛ̂:*, making them a single NP. The entire noun phrase is then marked by the ergative enclitic *=in*. The direct object of the clause is *hûhɛ:* '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

Person	Singular	Plural	
First	*kɛ̌ːi*(=*mǎː*)	INCL	EXCL
		ɛ̌ːi(=***tɛ̌ː***)	*kôː*(=***tɛ̌ː***)
Second	*nǎŋ*(=*mǎː*)	***noː***(=***tɛ̌ː***)	
Third	*âː*=*mǎː*	*âː*=*mǎː*=***tɛ̌ː***	

After the pronominal root, =*mǎː*, 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 =*tɛ̌ː* 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) ***pǎːtaŋ*=*pǎː*=*nǎː*** *nŭːmɛ̂ːi*=*sŭːa* *lâːibuː* *kʰât* *pŭːa* *hûː*
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 *pǎːtaŋ*=*pǎː* 'boy' and the direct object *nŭːmɛ̂ːi* 'woman', while the indirect object argument, *lâːibuː kʰât* 'one book', is unmarked.

A subject personal pronoun is illustrated in (19).

(19) ***aːmǎː*=*nǎː*** *nŭːmɛ̂ːi*=*sŭːa* *bɔ̀ːlûːŋ* *lɔ̂ːn* *hûː*
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 *aː*=*mǎː* '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) *nâ꞉ = da꞉k-bŭ꞉* *tô꞉* ***hoŋ*** *kû꞉.tăn* *tân*
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 *tân*).

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

(21) *naŋ = mă꞉* *k = **oŋ*** *nĕ꞉* *tû꞉* *hû꞉*
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 *îː=* (§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

	Singular	Plural	
1	*kǎː=*	*îː=* (INCL)	*kôː=* (EXCL)
2	*nǎ=*	*noː=*	
3	*âː=*	*âː=*	

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 *aː* to *oː*. 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) [***kǎː=*** *lɔm* *mjo.mjiɴ̃=sĭː.a*]$_{NP1}$ [*sǎŋ-sə.jaː* *kʰât*]$_{NP2}$ *hûː*
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 *kǎː=* precedes the head noun *lɔm* 'friend'. It is the copula subject in a simple copula construction that equates ***kǎː=lɔm mjo.mjiɴ̃=sĭː.a*** 'my friend Myo Myint' with the copula complement noun phrase *sǎŋ-sə.jaː kʰât* 'school teacher'.

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

(23) [*tɯːa* *suǎŋ*]$_{NP}$=*sĭː.a* [*kʰɯaː.sâːk=tĕː=îː* ***á=kʰɯaː.siam***]$_{NP}$ *hûː*
that stone=ABS Khuasak=PL=POSS **3.POSS**=village.talisman be
'That stone was the village talisman of the people of Khuasak [village].'

(24) *toŋ.sɛːal=in* ***á=naːu*** *kûːn.toŋ* *tɔ̂ː* …
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=tɛ̌ː* ‘people of Khuasak village’, which is prefixed by the same possessive determiner *á=* as the possessee *naːu kûn.toŋ* ‘his younger brother Kuntong’ of the singular possessor *toŋ.sɛːal* ‘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/oŋ* , 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) *toŋ.sɛːal=in* **[*á=naːu* *kûːn.toŋ*]$_{NP}$** ***tɔ̂ː*** …
Tongseal=ERG **3.POSS=younger.sibling** **Kuntong** **with** …
‘Tongseal, [together] with his younger brother, Kuntong…’

The postposition *tɔ̂ː* ‘with’ follows the object noun phrase *á=naːu kûːn.toŋ* ‘his younger brother, Kuntong’, forming an oblique argument.

The postposition of a locational postpositional phrase is the locative enclitic *=aː* '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*** *á=laːm* *pʰôt* *hîː*
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 *=aː* 'at' conveys the meaning 'at the village shrine'.

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

(27) *bílpíː* *maːŋ=pǎː* *kʰuaː* *háːusâː-pǎː* ***kúŋ*** *tʰɛŋ* *pʰɛːŋ* *hîː*
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 *pân* 'to' and *dóŋ* 'from', as illustrated in (28).

(28) *á=kʰuaː* *mual* ***pân=in*** *ĭn* ***dóŋ*** *pŭaː* *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 *pân*(*in*) 'from' and *dôŋ* 'until', respectively. This is because, both the postpositions *pân*(*in*) 'from' and *dôŋ* 'until' derive from "relator nouns" (cf. DeLancey, 1997).

A temporal postpositional phrase is demonstrated in (29).

(29) ***zɨŋ*** ***tiaŋ*** *exam* *nɛi* *tâ:.na:* *tû:* *ni:* *saŋ* *kâ:* *ŋɔ̂l*
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 *tiaŋ* is preceded by its object *zɨŋ* 'morning'. This postpositional phrase means 'tomorrow'.

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

Table 10 Sizang postpositions

Form	Gloss	Lexical Source	Gloss
dôŋ	'until' (to the point of)	*dôŋ*	'until'
tɔ̂:	'with'	–	–
a:	'at'	–	–
kû:ŋ = a:	'towards'	*kû:ŋ*[2]	'place' (Stern)
kû:ŋ = pân	'from'	*kû:ŋ*	'place' (Stern)
tiaŋ	'when'	–	–
lai	'while'	*lai*	'middle'
nŭa:i	'under'	*nŭa:i*	'underside'
pân(*in*)	'from'	*pân*	'begin'
sa:ŋ	'beside'	*sa:ŋ*	'side'
suŋ	'inside'	*suŋ*	'inside'
tŭŋ	'on top'	*tuŋ*	'surface'

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 *kiaŋ* '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) *uǐː=sǐːa* *tʰiː* *hûː*
dog=ABS die.I be
'The dog died' (Elicited)

In (30) the subject *uǐː* 'dog' has overt absolutive marking and is the only argument with the dynamic intransitive verb *tʰiː* 'die'.

The structure is the same for stative verbs, as shown in (31).

(31) *bɛ:al=sǐ:a* *kû:=tam* *hû:*
dog=ABS MID=break.I be
'The pot is broken.' (Elicited)

The structure of (31) is identical to that of (30). The subject is *bɛ:al* 'pot' and the predicate consists of the verb *tam* 'break' which is modified by the middle marker *kû:=*, 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) *ha:usa:pă:=**nă:*** *ŭi:=∅* *să:t* *hû:*
headman=**ERG** dog=ABS hit.I be
'The headman hit the dog.' (Elicited)

Although there is no overtly marked object in (32), *ŭi:* 'dog' is the second constituent in the clause, which indicates that it is the object of the transitive verb clause. Also, the ergative enclitic *=nă:* 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) *âːmâː* = ***nǎː*** *nŭːmêːi* = ***sŭːa*** *bɔ.lŭŋ* *lɔ̂ːn* *hûː*
3SG = **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.lŭŋ* 'ball' is unmarked. The indirect object *nŭːmêːi* 'female' takes absolutive marking and is positioned immediately after the subject *âːmâː* '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) *pǎːtaŋ* = *pǎː* = *nǎː* *bɔ.lŭŋ* = ∅ *kʰât* *nŭːmêːi* ***kûːŋ*** = ***aː*** *lɔ̂ːn* *hûː*
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 *nŭːmêːi kûːŋ* '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

	Singular	**Plural**	
1	*kă:* = Σ	***û:*** = Σ (INCL)	*kă:* = Σ = ***û:*** (EXCL)
2	*nă* = Σ	*nă* = Σ = **(*û:*)**	
3	*â:* = Σ	*â:* = Σ = **(*û:*)**	

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) *á* = *sa:i* ***á*** = *á:i* *hû:*
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, *á* =, preceding the verb *á:i* refers to the subject of the clause and the head noun *sa:i* refers to the object of the clause.

Pluralization occurs by attaching the pluralizing enclitic =*û:* to the verb head, as demonstrated in (36).

(36) *na:* = *dɛ̂i:* = ***û:*** *lɛ:*
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 *dêi:* 'like', but the pluralizing enclitic *=û:* attaches to the end of the verb before the question marker *lɛ:*.

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 á=t^{h}êt tiaŋ=in*** *zǎ:.do:=sǔ:a á=sáha:ŋ=nǎ:* *nǔ:.sîa: a:*
tuŋ.hum 3=arrive.II when=PP Za.Do=ABS 3.POSS=tiger=ERG leave.I NF
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 *t^{h}ɛŋ* in its Stem II form *t^{h}êt*. The second clause is a non-final co-ordinate clause, which is marked by the co-ordinating marker *a:*. In this clause, no agreement marker is affixed to the main verb *nǔ:.sîa:* 'leave'.

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

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

	Singular	Plural
1	Σ=*k^{h}î:*	Σ=*k^{h}û:* (EXCL)
2	Σ=*nî:*	Σ=*nû:*
3	Σ(=*hî:*)	Σ(=*û:*=*hî:*)

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) *ǎ:n* *nɛ́:=nî:*
rice eat.I=**2**
Lit. 'rice eat you'
'Are you eating?' (Sing Za Nang, 2010, p. 6)

In (38), *ǎːn* 'rice' is the object argument of the transitive verb *nɛ̌ː* 'eat'. The subject argument is referenced by the second person post-verbal agreement enclitic =*nûː*.

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)

	Singular	Plural	
1	Σ=*iŋ*	Σ∅ (INCL)	Σ=***uŋ*** (EXCL)
2	Σ=*tɛʔ*	Σ=***uʔ****tɛʔ*	
3	Σ(=*i/ʔ*)	Σ=***uʔ***	

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) *dɛ̂i*=*bo*=***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 =*ûː*, as demonstrated in (40).

(40) *kǒː* *hɛ̌ː*=*bua*=***ûː***=***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 *hɛ̌ː*=*bo*=*ŋ*, in (40), an allomorph of *boː*, *bua* 'NEG' precedes the pluralizing enclitic =*ûː*, 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) *mi꞉* *zɔ꞉ŋ = pă꞉* *luŋ* *kim* ***ŋɔ̂l*** *a꞉*
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 *ŋɔ̂l*.

A dynamic verb is negated in (42).

(42) *tɔ̌꞉-pí꞉ = in* *tu꞉a* *dôŋ* *sû꞉a* *kâ꞉i* *nɔ̂n* ***ŋɔ̂l*** *hû꞉*
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 *ŋɔ̂l* negates the clause *kâ꞉i nɔ̂n* 'collect [taxes] anymore'.

There is another negative marker, commonly realized as *bo*, with at least two allomorphs: *bâ꞉* and *buâ꞉*. 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) *dɛ̂i = 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 "iŋ series" agreement markers, as is the case in (43). However, the *ŋɔ̂l* negation marker can occur with post-verbal agreement markers, as shown in (44).

(44) *hɛ̌ː* *ŋɔ̂l=kʰɯ̂ː*
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)

Stem I	Stem II	Stem I	Stem II	Stem I	Stem II
-k	-Ø^{3}	-Ø^{1}	-t	-k^{1}	-k^{3}
-k^{2}	-k^{3}/-Ø^{3}	-Ø^{2}	-k^{2}/-t^{2}	-k^{2}	-k^{3}/-Ø^{3}
-k^{3}	-Ø^{3}	-Ø^{3}	-k	-k^{3}	-k^{3}
-t	-Ø^{3}	-ŋ$^{1/2}$	-n^{3}	-l$^{1/2}$	-l^{3}
-t^{2}	-t^{3}/-Ø^{3}	-ŋ^{3}	-k	-l^{3}	-l^{3}
-t^{3}	-Ø^{3}	-n$^{1/2}$	-n^{3}	-j$^{1/2}$	-j^{3}
-p	-Ø^{3}	-n^{3}	-t	-j^{3}	-j^{3}
-p^{2}	-p^{3}/-Ø^{3}	-m$^{1/2}$	-m^{3}	-w$^{1/2}$	-w^{3}
-p^{3}	-Ø^{3}	-m^{3}	-p	-w^{3}	-w^{3}

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

No.	Stem I	Stem II	Gloss	Change	Button		Match?
					I	II	
1	*am*	*âp*	'forget'	Tonal, Coda	-m^{3}	-p	No
2	*aːu*	*âːu*	'shout'	Tonal	-w$^{1/2}$	-w^{3}	Yes
3	*bâŋ*	*bân*	'resemble'	Coda	-ŋ^{3}	-k	No
4	*dôŋ*	*dôk*	'ask'	Coda	-ŋ^{3}	-k	Yes
5	*hăːt*	*hât*	'strong'	Tonal, Vowel	-t^{2}	-t^{3}/-Ø^{3}	Yes
6	*kʰĭːa*	*kʰĭːak/ kʰĭːat*	'complain'	Tonal, Coda	-Ø^{1}	-t	No
7	*pŭːk*	*pûː*	'fall.down'	Tonal, Coda	-k^{2}	-k^{3}/-Ø^{3}	Yes
8	*sîːa*	*sîːa*	'set snare'	No change	-Ø^{3}	-k	No
9	*tɛaːŋ*	*tɛ̂ːn*	'establish'	Tonal, Vowel	-ŋ$^{1/2}$	-n^{3}	Yes
10	*tɛ̂p*	*tɛ̂ːn*	'press'	Vowel, Coda	-p^{3}	-Ø^{3}	No

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 *sîːa* '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 *kîː=*. 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=sǐaː* *âː=tăːnŭː* ***sil=sâk*** *hîː*
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=tăːnŭː* '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 *kîː=* with a verb. The middle construction is commonly used for reciprocal, reflexive or passive constructions.

A reciprocal construction is illustrated in (46).

(46) *ámaː=tɛ̌ː* *tʰíŋkúːŋ=tɛ̌ː* *níː* *á=dɔːn* ***kîː=kɔai*** *hîː*
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 *kîː=* lowers the valency, making *kɔai* 'embrace' the intransitive predicate *kîː=kɔai* 'embrace eachother'.

A passive construction is illustrated in (47).

(47) *pɔaːi=sǐaː* *jaŋ.kûn=a* ***kîː=vɔt*** *hîː*
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 *jaŋ.kûn=a* 'at Yangon'. The subject argument is unexpressed. Finally, the predicate, *vɔt* 'do' takes the middle proclitic ***kîː=*** which makes it an intranstive 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 *kîː=* 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 ĭn-dóŋ pŭaː aː* ***lâp-pûiː*** *hîː*
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

á = kʰua: ‘his village’, while the people carrying the man are not overtly mentioned. 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

Applicative	Postposition	Meaning
-pûi: COMITATIVE	*tɔ̂:*	‘with’
-sâk BENEFACTIVE	*= a:tû:*	‘for’
-sân RELINQUITIVE	*pân*	‘from’

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 *ŏm* ‘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) *duî:* *k^{h}ât* *ŏm* *hî:*
forest one exist.I be
Lit. 'forest one exist be'
'There is a forest' (Elicited)

In (49), the subject noun *duî:* 'forest', modified by the quantifier *k^{h}ât* 'one', is declared to exist by the existence predicate *ŏm*.

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

(50) *ziŋ = tɛ̌:* *pɔ̂:ai* *ŏm* *tû:* *hî:*
morning = TEMP festival exist.I IRR be
'There will be a festival in the morning' (Elicited)

In (50), the time adverbial *ziŋ = tɛ̌:* 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) *vok = sɨ̌:a* ***huǎn*** ***suŋ = a:*** *ŏm* *hî:*
pig = ABS garden inside = at exist.I REAL
'The pig is in the garden' (Elicited)

The postpositional phrase in (51) *huǎn suŋ = a:* however, contains a relator noun (discussed in §2.2.3) to describe the location of an object or person, in conjunction with the verb *ŏm* '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 *hî:* 'be', as shown in (52).

Diagram 8 Sizang simple copula construction

(Copula Subject) + Copula Complement + Predicate

(52) *ta:sĭa: nŭ:=sĭa: săŋ-sə.ja:=nŭ: hî:*
that woman=ABS school-teacher=FEM be
'That woman is a school teacher.' (Elicited)

In (52), the first noun phrase *ta:sĭa: nŭ:=sĭa:* 'that woman' is the copula subject . The second noun phrase, *săŋ-sə.ja:=nŭ:* 'schoolteacher', is the copula complement. *hî:* '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*]$_{CS}$ [*tŭk kŭa:*]$_{CC}$ *p^{h}ă: a:*
3.POSS=body fist nine amount.I NF
'His body measured nine fists tall and...'

In (53), the copula is *p^{h}ă:* 'amount'. It relates the copula subject, *á=pum* 'his body' to the copula complement *tŭk kŭa:* 'nine fists'.

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

(54) [*á=ŋɔai-mŭl*]$_{NP}$ [*tôŋ k^{h}ât*]$_{NP}$ [*p^{h}ă: **să:u***]$_{COP}$ *tî: hî:*
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), *p^{h}ă:* 'amount' is occurs with the stative verb *să:u* 'long'. Together, they relate the copula subject *á=ŋɔai-mŭl* 'his anus-hair' and the copula complement *tôŋ k^{h}ât* 'one forearm'.

2.6.3 Summary of existence and copula constructions

Existence predicates are formed with the verb *ŏm* '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 *hî:* '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

$\text{Clause}_{\text{MAIN}}$ + Realis

Declaratives in Sizang are commonly formed with a main clause ending with the realis marker *hûː*, which is grammaticalized from the stative verb *hûː* 'be'.

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

(55) *á=níː-in-nǎː* *tɯːa* *mûn=aː* *tʰiː* *kʰɔ̂ːm* *hûː*
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 *á=níː* 'they two'. The other argument is an oblique object which provides the locational information *tɯːa mûn=aː* 'at that place'. The predicate is *tʰiː kʰɔ̂ːm* 'die together', which is followed by *hûː* '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

$\text{Clause}_{\text{MAIN}}$ + Question marker

The most typical polar interrogative marker *zíːam* is illustrated in (56).

(56) [*nǎː=ziː* ***zíːam*** *mɔ̌ː* *nǎː=lɔm* ***zíːam*** *tûː=in*]$_{\text{QUOTE}}$ *dôŋ*
2.POSS=wife **Q** or 2.POSS=friend **Q** say=PP ask.I
Lit. 'your wife Q or your friend Q saying ask'
'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 *zíːam*. Stern (1963, p. 271) states that *zíːam* 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 *lɛː*. Its use is demonstrated in (57).

(57) *nǎː=mûː* *lɛː*
2=see.I Q
Lit. 'you see Q'
'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 *mɔ̌ː*, as shown in (58).

(58) *ɛ̌ːi=tɛ̌ː=ŋ* *bɛ̂k* *mɔ̌ː*
1PL.INCL=PL=1 only Q
Lit. 'we only Q'
'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 *mǒː* 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) *bâŋ* *hoŋ=háːi=**nîː*** *zíːam*
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 *bâŋ* 'what' provides the content of the interrogative, the cislocative *hoŋ* provides the object argument 'me', the verb *háːi* 'late' provides the predicate, the postverbal agreement enclitic *=**nîː*** 'you' refers to the subject referent, and *zíːam* indicates that this clause is an interrogative construction.

Content questions occur more frequently in colloquial speech without *zíːam*, as shown in (60).

(60) *baːŋ.hâːŋ* *nuiː=**nîː***
why laugh.I=**2**
'Why are you laughing?' (Sing Za Nang, 2010, p. 10)

In the case of (60), the interrogative *baːŋ.hâːŋ* '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 *hîː* '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 *lɛ̌ː* or *mǒː*. 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 *aː*, as shown in Diagram 13.

Diagram 13 Forming coordinate constructions

Clause_1 + *aː* + Clause_2

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

(61) *sáhaːŋ* *kʰât* *=in* *=nắː* *á=mɛ̌i* *tɔ̂ː* *lăm* *laːk* *aː*
tiger one =ERG =ERG 3.POSS=tail with road show.I NF
sáhaːŋ=in=nắː *lăm-píː* *tɔ̂n* *kʰuaː* *tŏn=pûiː*
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 *aː* at the clause boundary of the first clause, which ends with the predicate *laːk* 'show'. In the second clause, the second predicate *tŏn=pûiː* '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) *ná = ĭnkuânpuî:-tĕ:* [*hoŋ = hîl = tû:*]$_{\text{PUR}}$ *ŏm* ***tâ:na:***

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

'because your family is there to teach you...'

(From a conversation in March 2015)

In (62), the purposive clause, *hoŋ = hîl = 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 *= na:* follows a subordinated nominalized clause, as shown in (63).

(63) **[[*tu:a* *á = lăm* *âp = na:*]$_{\text{NP}}$ *pân = in*]$_{\text{SUB}}$**

that **3.POSS = road** **forget.II = NMLZ** **from = PP**

sáha:ŋ *k^{h}ât = in* *á = mĕi* *tô:* *lăm* *la:k* *a:*

tiger one = ERG 3.POSS = tail with road show.I 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 *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) ***na = lâ:i*** **[*hoŋ = t^{h}ák*]$_{\text{REL}}$** *ka = ŋâ:* *a:*
2S.POSS = letter **CIS = send.II** 1SG = get.I NF
'I got your letter that you sent me, and...' (Stern, 1984, p. 52).

In (64), the head is *lâ:i* 'letter', while the unmarked relative clause is *hoŋ = t^{h}ák* '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) **[*sên*** ***ŋam = â:*** ***tɛ:aŋ*** ***ŋê:i*]$_{\text{REL}}$** ***pă: = î:*** *ĭn* *a-san* *sĭ:a*
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, *ĭn* 'house' This possessor is *pă:* 'man', which is modified by the relative clause, *sên ŋam = â: tɛ:aŋ ŋê:i* '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 *tên*. This possibly indicates that the elicited noun phrase here is the subject argument of a clause. However, the relativized noun *lâ:i* 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 *tîː* 'say' after any clause, as shown in (66).

(66) [*keːi* *sîːa=naː* *suŋ=aː* *sákʰiː* *kʰât* *ɔ̌ːk* *hîː*
1.POSS trap inside=at barking.deer one snare.I be
tîː=in]$_{\text{QUOTE}}$ *aːu* *hîː*
say=PP shout.I be
'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 *aːu* 'shout', and indicated by the verb *tîː* 'say', which occurs directly after the direct quote.

However, quotations may also be coordinated with the following clause by placing the non-final particle *aː* after *tîː*, as shown in (67).

(67) *lăm-píː* *tɔ̂n* *lɛ=ŋ* *ŋual=tɛ̌ː=nă̌ː* *hoŋ=man* *kîːk* *tûː* ***tîː*** ***aː***
road-AUG enroute.I COND=1 other=PL=ERG CIS=capture.I again IRR **say** **NF**
[*lăm-píː* *ŋɔ̌l* *dûiː*]$_{\text{NP}}$ *suŋ=aː* *tôt* *lɛ̂ː*
road-AUG without forest inside=at enroute.II TEMP
Lit. 'road enroute if-I, others to-me capture again he said and, road without forest inside at enroute when'
'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 *aːu* 'shout'. In (67), *tîː* 'say' is the main verb of the first clause. Therefore, *tîː* 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 *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 *tî:* '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

Category	Construction
Simple noun phrases	(Possessor) + Head + (Stative Verb) + (Gender) + (Quantifier) + ({Case, Dem})
Intransitive clause	Subject + Intransitive Predicate
Transitive clauses	Subject + Object + Transitive Predicate
Ditransitive clauses	Subject + Object + Object + Transitive Predicate
Existence clause	(Subject) + (Additional info) + Existence Predicate
Simple copula clause	(Copula subject) + Copula Complement + Copula
Simple sentence	(Pre-clause) + Clause Core
Negatives	Clause core + Negative marker
Applicative constructions	(Argument) + Verb.II-Applicative marker
	Speech acts
Polar interrogative construction	$\text{Clause}_{\text{MAIN}}$ + Question Marker
Content interrogative	(Interrogative word) + $\text{Clause}_{\text{MAIN}}$ + (Question Marker)
	Complex sentences
Coordinate construction	Clause_1 + *a:* + Clause_2
Quotative construction	[Clause + *tî:*]$_{\text{QUOTE}}$ + [$\text{Clause}_{\text{MAIN}}$]
	Subordinate constructions
Adverbial clause	[Clause + Subordinator]$_{\text{SUB}}$ + $\text{Clause}_{\text{MAIN}}$
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 *Ciimnuai*. 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 *hûː* '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 *hûː* '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 *tʰɛ̂n* is the Stem II form of *tʰɛŋ*, when in fact, the Stem II form is *tʰɛ̂t*.

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.

(68) [*aː* = *V-naː* *hûn*]$_{NP}$
3 = V.II-NMLZ time
'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 morpho-syntactic 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-há:u* *pǎ:=ín* *tʰíŋ.kú:ŋ* *túŋ* *á=sî:a* *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) [*áma:* *sî:a-na* *tʰíŋ.kú:ŋ* *túŋ* *a:* *sá.kʰi:* *kʰât* *ɔ̌:k-sâk* *a:*]$_{MC}$
3S trap.II-NMLZ tree top at muntjac one snare.I-CAUS NF
[*tîa:* *kǐk* *hû:*]$_{MC}$
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 *ɔ̌:k-sâk* 'snare.I-CAUS' surfaces as Stem I (Stem II: *ɔ̂:*), as does the second event *tîa:* 'return' (Stem II: *tǐa:*). The coordination of these two events is indicated by *a:*, 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 *=pûi:*.

To demonstrate this environment, (71) shows a foreground information clause with the head verb surfacing as Stem II, along with the benefactive enclitic *=sâk*.

(71) *pŭ: ză: do:* *in.na* [*â:=tuk-kîl-a:k-ŋû:*]$_{NP}$ *tɔ̂:*
Pu Za Do ERG 3.POSS=hair.knot-lock.E-chicken-bone with
â:=nau *tʰi:p* *pân.ĭn* *â:* ***hɔ̂l-lup=sâk*** *a:*
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, *a:k-ŋû:* '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 *lûm* '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=pɛ̂t* ***lûm=tû:*** *hû:*
3S 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 *=pûi:*.

(73) *a=lɔai* *liăt* *pĭa* *a:* *a=lɔm-nŭ:* ***tɛ̂n=pûi:*** *hû:*
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=lɔai* 'his buffalo' and brings it into the core argument along with the argument *a=lɔm-nŭ̂:* '[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 *=puû:*. or the benefactive enclitic *=sâk*. Therefore, for foreground information clauses, the default Stem 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

Stem Type	Instances
Unknown	3 (2.0%)
Identical	5 (3.4%)
Stem II	10 (6.8%)
Stem I	**129 (87.2%)**
Total Foreground	148 (100%)

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) [*tʰâːt.laŋ* *tăː=păː* *puː* *toŋ.sɛal=sĭːa*
That.lang offspring=MASC uncle Tong.Seal=ABS
[[*á=pum* *tŭk* *kŭaː* ***pʰăː*** *aː*]$_{\text{MAIN}}$
3.POSS=body fist nine **amount.I** NF
[*á=ŋoai-mŭl* *tôŋ* *kʰât* ***pʰăː*** ***săːu***]$_{\text{MAIN}}$]$_{\text{QUOTE}}$ *tîː* *hîː*
3.POSS=anus-hair forearm one **amount.I** **long.I** say.E 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 *tîː* 'say', which has only one form, with no verb stem alternation. The two participant identification clauses that precede *tîː* 'say' are contained within the quote. Each of these are copula clauses. The head verb of the first clause is *pʰăː* 'amount'. In the second clause, this verb is modified by the verb *săːu* '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

Stem Type	Instances
Unknown	3 (10.3%)
Identical	0 (0.0%)
Stem I	**26 (89.7%)**
Stem II	0 (0.0%)
Total Participant Identification	29 (100%)

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) **[*ĭn* *á=t^{h}êt* *tîaŋ* *in*]$_{SC}$** [… *mi꞉* *zɔ꞉ŋ=pă꞉* *mûn* *a꞉*
house **3=arrive.II** **when** **PP** … person poor=MASC place at
[*î꞉=să꞉* *sî꞉a* *víl* *ká=tɔ꞉ŋ*]$_{QUOTE}$
1P=animal set.snare.II watch.I climb=HORT
[*tî꞉* *a꞉*]$_{MC}$ [*pâ꞉* *hî꞉*]$_{MC}$
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 sentence in (75) is comprised of four separate clauses. The first is a temporal clause, distinguished by the word *tíaŋ* 'when' and the postposition *in*. The main verb within the temporal clause, *t^{h}ét* 'arrive', is the Stem II variant of *t^{h}eŋ* 'arrive'. In contrast, the head verb within the main clause, which is foreground information, is *pâ꞉* 'invite', a Stem I variant. Within this sentence, *pâ꞉* is the main verb, providing the foreground information for this particular event on the timeline, whereas *t^{h}êt* 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) [*tu꞉a* *t^{h}iŋ-pĭ꞉* *ŋau* ***a=sêp*** ***zɔ̂꞉k*** *tîaŋ* *in.nă*]$_{SC}$
that Thingpi sacrifice **3=work.II** **finish.II** when PP
[[*ŋŭa꞉* *hoŋ* *zu* *kî꞉k* *hî꞉*]$_{QUOTE}$ *tî꞉* *hî꞉*]$_{MC}$
rain CIS rain.I again be say.I 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 *sɛam* 'work' and the Stem II form of *zŏ꞉* 'finish'. The verbs are followed by *tîaŋ in.nă.* '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

Stem Type	Instances
Unknown	13 (15.3%)
Identical	21 (24.7%)
Stem I	0 (0.0%)
Stem II	**51 (60.0%)**
Total Setting	85 (100%)

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) [*tûː dóŋ maː=in.aː*]$_{\text{POSTP}}$ [*kûːn.toŋ daːk tîː=in.aː*]$_{\text{SC}}$ **ǒm** *laːi hîː*
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 *ǒm* '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, *kûːn.toŋ daːk tîː=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) *sazûk = in* [*kɛ̂ːi* *ká = pûmpǔː = sŭːa*
sambhur = ERG 1SG 1S.POSS = body = ABS
nóː *ŋɛːal* *săːŋ* *zoŋ* ***lîan*** ***zǔː*** ***paːi*** *hûː*]$_{\text{QUOTE}}$
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 21 Summary of explanation information by stem type

Stem Type	Instances
Unknown	3 (4.5%)
Identical	4 (6.0%)
Stem I	**60 (89.6%)**
Stem II	0 (0.0%)
Total Explanation	67 (100%)

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) [*na=tûːa* ***nŭam*** *lɛː*]$_{\text{COND}}$ [*nâː=daːk.bŭː* *tɔ̂ː* *hoŋ* *kûː.tăn* *tân*]$_{\text{IMP}}$
2=return.E **want.I** COND 2=gong.set with CIS relinquish.I IMP
"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 *lɛ̂ː*. The complex predicate consists of two verbs: *tûːa* 'return.home', which has only one form, and *nŭam* 'want', which is in Stem I. The second clause is overtly marked as an imperative by the imperative marker *tân*. The predicate consists of one verb *kûː.tăn* '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 *lɛ̂ː*. 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 *lɛː* 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) [*tuːa* *tʰíŋkúːŋ-tɛ̆ː* *níː* *pʰŭːk* aː]$_{\text{MC}}$
that tree-PL two chop.I NF
[[***á=pʰûː*** ***lɛː***]$_{\text{SC}}$ *pŭːk* *tʰɛ̂i-ŋɔ̂l* *hɛ̂t*]$_{\text{MC}}$
3=chop.II **when** fell.I able.I-NEG 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, ***á=pʰûː lɛː* '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 *pʰûː* '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=lɛːi* *zôn* *lɛːi*]$_{NP}$ ***á=tiŋ*** *zíːam*
1S.POSS=tribute search.II tribute **3=worthy.I** Q
tûː=in]$_{QUOTE}$ *dôŋ* *hûː*
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 *tiŋ* '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* *baŋ.bâŋ* *ŋun* ***kân=pûiː*** *zíːam*]$_{QUOTE}$ *tîː* *lɛ̂ː*
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, *kǎn* '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 *=pûiː*. 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) *mi꞉* *há꞉u = pă꞉* *sî꞉a-na꞉* [*t^{h}íŋ* *túŋ = a꞉*]$_{\text{POSTP}}$
person rich = MASC trap tree top = at
bâŋmâ꞉ ***ǒ꞉k-ŋɔ̂l*** *hî꞉*
nothing **snare.I-NEG** be
'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 *ǒ꞉k* '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) [***î꞉ = kî꞉ = zâ꞉ktâ꞉-na꞉ = tû꞉ = in***]$_{\text{SC}}$
1PLINCL = MID = **respect.II-NMLZ = PUR = PP**
[*akûa* *u* *ha꞉m = bɛ̂l* *hî꞉* *zí꞉am*]$_{\text{MAIN}}$
who older.sibling aged = SUPL be Q
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 (*-na꞉*) = *tû꞉ = in* to the verb. The purposive = *tû꞉* is grammaticalized from the postposition *a꞉tû꞉* '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) ***î꞉ = kî꞉-k^{h}ɛ̂n*** *t^{h}âp* *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 (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 ***î꞉ = kî꞉-k^{h}ɛ̂n*** 'we divide' in Stem II as its argument.

(86) demonstrates how *kul* may also appear as the only verb in a clause.

(86) *â꞉maː-tɛ̌꞉* ∅ *kul-buan-tɛ̂꞉*
3S-PL 3S.OBJ 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 *â꞉maː-tɛ̌꞉* 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 *î꞉=*. 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

	Stem Type	Stem I	Stem II	Identical	Unknown
Collateral Clause Type	Conditionals	**8**	0	4	3
	Imperatives	**13**	0	0	1
	Interrogatives	**6**	1	1	0
	Negatives	**18**	1	0	1
	Purposives	0	**2**	0	2
	Irrealis	**14**	1	0	1
	TOTAL	**59 (76.6%)**	5 (6.5%)	5 (6.5%)	8 (10.4%)

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) *tɯ:a* *á=hî:mân=in* *tɔ̌:.pú:=in* *tɯ:a* *dôŋ*
that 3=that.being.said=PP lion=ERG that until
sî:a ***kâ:i*** ***nɔ̂n-ŋɔ̌l*** *hî:*
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

Stem Type	Instances
Unknown	0 (0.0%)
Identical	0 (0.0%)
Stem I	**5 (100.0%)**
Stem II	0 (0.0%)
Total Performative	5 (100.0%)

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 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

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

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* + *ʔ*	→	*apʔ*	→	*âp* 'to forget'
	Stem I + NMLZ		Assimilation		Stem II

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)

Stem I	Gloss	Nominalized	Causativized	Gloss
ṭîî	'be fearful'	*ṭit*	*ṭi?*	'fear someone'
rhîl	'to proclaim'	*rhil*	*rhil?*	'tell someone something'
dûm	'be blue'	*dum*	*dùm*	'make something blue'
dîŋ	'to stand'	*din*	*dìn*	'to stand something up'

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)

Context	King	Davis
Clauses		
complement clauses		II
conditional clauses	II	I
adverbial clauses		II
Applicatives		
comitative		II
benefactive	II	II
Arguments		
agentive nominalization		I
non-agentive nominalization	II	II
subject relative		I
non-subject relative	II	II

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) ***ûː=kûː-kʰên*** *tʰâp* *kul* *tûː*
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 *kûː-kʰên* '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 pâi* ***lɛ̂k***[3]
2=CIS go.II **COND**
'If you come to me' (Stern, 1963, p. 276).

(91) *kɛ̌i pai* ***lɛ=ŋ***
1SG go.I **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 *lɛ:* also functions as a postposition with a Stem II verb. That is, *lɛ:* 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 *lɛ:* 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.

[3]The final /k/ on *lɛ:* 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). *lɛʔ* is a conditional in Tedim, but not in Sizang, which has lost all final glottal stops.

A possible example of an agentive nominal/subject relative is given in (92).

(92) **[*sên ŋam = â: tɛ:aŋ ŋɛ̂:i*]** $_{\text{REL}}$ ***pǎ: = î:*** *ǐn* *a-san* *sǐ:a*
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 ***pǎ:*** 'man' of the noun phrase head *ǐn* 'house'. The head verb within the relative clause modifying ***pǎ:*** 'man' is *tɛ:aŋ* '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 *ǐn* 'house' is a subject or a non-subject.

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

(93) ***na = lâ:i*** **[*hoŋ = t^{h}ák*]** $_{\text{REL}}$ *ka = ŋâ:* *a:*
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 *lâ:i* 'letter' which is relativized by the unmarked relative clause ending in a Stem II verb is *hoŋ = t^{h}ák* '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 *ka:=* attached to the Stem I verb *ŋâ:* '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) *mi:* *há:u = pǎ: = in* **[*mi:*** ***zɔ:ŋ = pǎ:***
person rich = man = ERG **person** **poor = MASC**
sǎ:.sî:a-na: ***suŋ = a:*** ***ɔ̌:k*]** $_{\text{REL}}$ ***sák^{h}i = sǐ:a*** *sǔ:t* *a:*
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 *ɔ̌:k* 'snare' within the relative clause that is modifying the non-agentive argument

sákʰi: '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 postpostition *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) **[*ǐn* *á=tʰêt* *tiaŋ* *in*]**$_{SC}$ … *mi:* *zɔ:ŋ=pǎ:* *mûn* *a:*
house **3=arrive.II** **when** **PP** … person poor=MASC place at
[*î:=sǎ:* *sî:a* *víl* *ká=tɔ:ŋ*]$_{QUOTE}$
1P=animal set.snare.II watch.I climb=HORT
[*tî:* *a:*]$_{MC}$ [*pâ:* *hî:*]$_{MC}$
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) [*ni:* *kʰât*]$_{NP}$ ***tiaŋ***
day one **when**
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 *kʰât* 'one', expressing the meaning 'one day'.

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

(97) ***zɪŋ*** ***tiaŋ*** *exam* *nɛi* *tâ:.na:* *tû:* *ni:* *saŋ* *kâ:* *ŋɔ̂l*
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).

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) [*îː = kîː = **zâːktâː-naː = tûː = in***]$_{SC}$

1PL.INCL.AGR = MID = **respect.II-NMLZ = PUR = PP**

[*akûa*	*u*	*haːm = bɛ̂l*	*hîː*	*zíːam*]$_{MAIN}$
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 (*-naː*) = *tûː* = *in* to the verb. The purposive marker = *tûː* is grammaticalized from the postposition *aːtûː* ‘for’. When positioned after verbs, the purposive enclitic often follows the nominalizing suffix *-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) **[*ɛ̌ːi-hoŋ* *pîːak*]$_{\text{REL}}$** ∅ *saŋ*
1.INCL-CIS **give.II** [gongs] than
[*tûː* *níː* *á*=*tŭm*]$_{\text{REL}}$=∅=*sŭːa* *ŋiŋ* *zǒː* *hûː*
this **day** **3**=**play.I**=**[gongs]**=**ABS** loud.I more be
Lit. 'we toward give ∅ than this day they play ∅ 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 *ɛ̌ːi-hoŋ* 'we' (indirect object, marked by the cislocative). The Stem II verb *pîːak* '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 *tŭm* '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 *=sâk* and nine instances occur with the comitative applicative construction with the enclitic *=pûi:*.

A benefactive applicative construction is reviewed in (100).

(100) *pŭ:.zǎ:.do:=in.na* [*â:=tuk-kîl-a:k-ŋû:*]$_{OO}$ *tɔ̂:*
Pu Za Do=ERG 3.POSS=hair.knot-lock.E-chicken-bone with
[*â:=nau* *tʰi:p* *pân.ĭn* *â:*]$_{OO}$ *hɔ̂l-lup=sâk* *a:*
3.POSS=child fontanel from at drive.II-sleep.II=BEN 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: *pŭ:.zǎ:.do:* (ergative subject). There are two oblique arguments *a:k-ŋû:* 'chicken bone', which occurs with the postposition *tɔ̂:* 'with', and *â:=nau.tʰi:p* 'their child's fontanel', which occurs with the postposition *pân.in â:* '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 *â:=nau* 'their child' has been brought out of the oblique argument contained in the postpositional phrase *â:=nau.tʰi:p pân.ĭn* '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 *=pûiː*, which is attached to the Stem II form of the verb. An example is shown in (101).

(101) *a=lɔai* *liăt* *pĭa* *aː* *a=lɔm-nŭː* ***tɛ̂n=pûiː*** *hîː*
3.POSS=buffalo eight give.I NF 3.POSS=friend-FEM **marry.II=COM** 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-nŭː* '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

Ground	Construction	Process	Semantic use
Foreground	Applicative	Nominalization/ Complementization	Participant promoted to core argument
Setting	Adverbial	Nominalization	Event identified as background through nominalization
Collateral	Purposive	Nominalization	Event brought into background through nominalization

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.

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