INTRODUCTION

Where's Morphology?

0.1. The Problem: General assumptions about morphology

We begin this introduction by the question 'Where's morphology?' and we would find a variety of answers running from 'just in the lexicon', through 'in the lexicon and the syntax', to 'everywhere'. At various times linguists have wondered that one of the key unresolved question in morphology is 'What is a word'? We can view the various answers to the question 'Where's morphology?' as implying answers to the question 'What is a word?' And the answer to that question turns out to have different answers at different levels of representation.

Thus, there are conflicting criteria for wordhood. Language consists of words. Such is the verdict of folk linguistics everywhere. Languages generally have an expression that means something like the English term 'word'. The range of meaning of the expression varies from language to language, often extending to quite large stretches of speech, but the notion of 'words' in the sense of the units of language that are listed in the dictionary, is widespread, quite possibly universal, in human speech communities. Many linguists have assumed that the 'word' in this sense is, in fact, a

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universal unit of language, definable within an accepted body of linguistic theory, and at various times in the history of linguistics serious attempts have been made to formulate such a definition.

During the period of American Structuralism, however, the word was de-emphasized as a linguistic unit in favor of the morpheme. The chief reasons for this de-emphasis were two: the structural and functional diversity of the word across languages and the general unstructured nature of the lexicon in comparison with grammar and phonology. Much attention was lavished on morpheme, which, as the minimum unit of meaning or the minimum unit of grammatical structure, was by definition universal, whereas the role of the word varied so much from one language to another that it was conceivable that in some languages the word could be almost or fully identical either with the morpheme or with the sentence. For instance, let us examine the following 'two-word' sentence in Tangkhul-Naga:

\[ i \text{ mc-va-kui-z} \text{ ot-p} \text{} \text{o} \text{m-} \text{n} \text{e} \text{n} \text{ao-} \text{n} \text{a} \text{i-k} \text{o} \text{c} \text{a} \text{n} \text{a-k} \text{o} \text{c} \text{i} \text{37} \text{7-k} \text{h} \text{t-mc-n} \text{c} \]

I \text{ NEG-go-round-walk-sit-play-want-real-INTSF-IND-COP}

which may be translated something like:

'I seriously don't want to go and keep on going/walking round and round just for fun'
Such a sentence in Tangkhul-Naga would seem strange, if not nonsense, to, say, an English speaker that the two-word sentence is to be translated into English in so many words. (Again, there is not always word-for-word or morpheme-for-morpheme correspondence between the source language and its translation). But such constructions are very common and quite natural to the speakers of Tangkhul-Naga (and other agglutinative languages). In the same way, the speakers of Tangkhul-Naga might consider the so-many-worded English translation as something strange or unnatural.

Studies of the 'word' as a 'minimal free form', the 'formative' (which was the successor to the morpheme), and the question of the phonological characteristics of lexical representation or the place(s) in the grammar where lexical insertion takes place, the semantic structure of words in connection with the elaboration of semantic theory, and even lexicography as the study of the properties of words and relations among them, all did not pay much attention to the morphemic structure of words. Many morphological theories/models have been advanced, but there are more conflicting criteria for wordhood.

0.1.1. Morphology and the lexicon

Word forms or phrases that does not conform to rules of form or interpretation must be memorized by the native speakers

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and therefore listed in the lexicon. By that notion, then, the lexicon is the repository for the idiosyncratic. But that is not what everyone means by the lexicon. For some, it is also the word formation component, on a par with any other component. Many continue to distinguish the dynamic lexicon as word formation component from the permanent/static lexicon which is not only the list for the idiosyncratic, but also the register of all existing words.

Listing whole words would account for the inheritance of irregularity by a derivative or inflectional element. An exclusively morpheme-based theory that does not recognize words stored in the lexicon has difficulty accounting for inheritance. And, there have been no good arguments against the listing of whole words. Even if it does allow the listing of all derived categories, for example, ci 'that' as a determiner, pronoun, quotative/complementizing verb, etc., this is not an insurmountable problem. One could invoke Walinska de Hackbeil's 'Root Identity' principle ((1986: 34): "If a Root R, is listed in the Root Lexicon with a set L of lexical properties, it may not be listed with a set M, and L ≠ M") to prevent the listing of derived categories. However, it is not clear that this is either necessary or desirable. Nevertheless, we can assume that (a) the output of productive word formation is subject to listing, and (b) productive word formation is a constant source of new

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lexically listed words. I will continue to assume, then, a lexicon of roots (word, stems and affixes) and words.

A root can have a representation on many planes. For instances, an affix may have no phonological form on the segmental plane but may be linked to a tonal slot or timing slot on the skeletal core, in which case it is realized as tonal rising and vowel lengthening. Thus, consider the following examples:

(1) à-ca-kúm 'last year'
(2) à-cá-kúm 'the year before last year' (Tonal rising)
(3) à-cá:-kúm 'many years ago' (Vowel lengthening)

This approach substantially unifies ‘concatenative’ and ‘non-concatenative’ morphology.

We can now present a unit-size hierarchy which corresponds to a hierarchy of listedness as under:

**Listedness hierarchy**

(all) morphemes (affixes, roots and underived stems/word bases)

(most) derived stems

(many) derived words

(a number of) compounds

(some) phrases

(a few) sentences
Linguistic units in the above presented hierarchy increase in compositionality from top to bottom. A hierarchy of this type determines the degree to which derivatives can be made, that is, fewest based on frozen sentences, more based on phrases, and so on. It is also generally accepted that in agglutinative languages like Tangkhul-Naga, where words are more phrase-like or sentence-like, derived words have a higher degree of compositionality, requiring fewer of them to be listed.

0.1.2. Lexicalist and syntactic theories of morphology

The place of word formation has been the subject of much debate since the late 1950s. Early transformational grammarians continued the structuralist tradition of blurring the morphology/syntax division.

Chomsky (1970) saw an opposition between the 'transformationalist view' and the 'lexicalist view', which transferred to the lexicon proper the rules of derivation and compounding. In the lexicalist view, the rules of word formation are rules for generating words which may be stored in the dictionary. Halle (1973) sees the dictionary as a set of morphemes plus a set of word formation mechanisms: word formation occurs entirely within the lexicon. The growing importance of the lexicon and the debate on the state of word formation meant the steady reemergence of morphology as a separate area of study. In the 1970s and 1980s, important
works on morphology have been produced within the generative framework.

Recently, interest has grown in natural morphology and in lexical phonology and morphology, 'Lexical Phonology' for short. Natural morphology is an approach which looks for natural universals over a wide range of languages with regard to 'morphotactic' (the way morphemes are joined) and morphosyntactic tendencies. Lexical phonology regards the lexicon as the central component of grammar, which contains rules of word formation and phonology as well as the idiosyncratic properties of words and morphemes. The word formation rules of the morphology are paired with phonological rules at various levels or 'strata', and the output of each set of word formation rules is submitted to the phonological rules on the same stratum to produce a word. The lexicon is therefore the output of the morphological and phonological rules of the different strata put together.

Most recently, we have seen a bumper crop of new books on the foundations of morphological theory. Among the leading theorists are: Spencer (1991), McCarthy (1992), Matthews (1991), and Lieber (1992).

Spencer (1991) is an admirable comprehensive overview of research in generative morphology. He elucidates the special

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theoretical problems posed by nonconcatenative phenomena (for example, Semitic root-and-pattern morphology, reduplication, and morphophonemic tone alternations) surveying various autosegmental solutions that have been proposed for them. Such solutions have the paradoxical effect of bringing what seemed to be indisputable instances of processual morphology into the purview of morpheme-based conception of word structure. Spencer also provides an illuminating overview of the problems which clitics pose for any delineation of the boundaries among syntax, morphology and phonology. He examines mismatches between morphological structure and phonological or semantic structure. For Spencer, the only successful account of the full range of such mismatches will be one that countenances a paradigmatic dimension of word formation. Spencer concludes with the assumption that morphology is an autonomous component. Synthesizing several independent lines of reasoning, he proposes a composite model in which rules and principles of morphology function as well-formedness conditions applicable at more than one level of representation -- that is, applying not only to lexical representations but in at least some instances to syntactically or phonologically derived objects as well. The idea is an intriguing one, but the details (particularly concerning the limits of intercomponent interactions) remain to be work out.
McCarthy (1992)\(^5\) distinguishes five focal issues which Chomsky and Halle (in the late 60s and early 70s) brought to the fore -- (1) the contents of the lexicon, (2) productivity and semantic regularity in word formation, (3) the internal structure of words, (4) allomorphic variation, and (5) the inflection/derivation distinction -- and surveys the range of opinions which generative morphologists have subsequently taken on these issues. McCarthy examines recent investigations of the relation between morphological form and meaning. His approach is that of 'Natural Morphology' whose principles of 'naturalness' which, through the possible mediation of typological or system-specific factors, mold a language's morphology.

What morphology can contribute to general linguistic theory? McCarthy concludes that, in their eagerness to reduce morphological principles to independently needed principles of phonology or syntax, 'mainstream' generative morphologists have ignored those aspects of morphological structure having no ready analogue in the domain of syntax and phonology. Particularly glaring, here, are the lack of a consistent approach to allomorphy and the nearly total neglect of the lexical-semantic dimension of linguistic structure. McCarthy is optimistic about the possibility of uncovering morphological principles of Universal Grammar; but because the 'poverty of stimulus' argument is less

obviously applicable in the domain of morphology, he warns
that morphologists cannot follow syntacticians in pursuing
the 'single-language approach' to the discovery of
universals -- 'that in morphological theory-construction
there is no alternative to detailed comparison of a wide
variety of languages'.

Matthews (1991)\(^6\) distinguishes three logically separate
notions of 'word' -- word, word-form and lexeme. This
affords a clear conceptual distinction among inflection,
derivation, and compounding. Matthews distinguishes the
various senses in which 'morpheme' has come to be used and
explains the kinds of morphological systems that 'morpheme'
and 'allomorph' are best suited for describing. He
demonstrates that, by employing morphological metarules of a
particular sort, it is possible to capture the same kinds of
generalizations in a manner consistent with modern
assumption. Perhaps such an idea will stimulate further
inquiry into the structure of inflectional paradigms,
heretofore an aspect of morphological organization too often
dismissed as epiphenomenal. The validity of the traditional
distinction between morphology and syntax is addressed where
discussion inevitably centers on the notion 'word'. The
various logically independent characteristics of words are
examined, along with such complicating factors as clisis and
periphrasis. Matthews also presents an enlightening account

Cambridge: CUP.
of the morphological manifestations of iconicity on both the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic dimensions. Works of the natural morphologists loom large here.

Lieber (1992)\textsuperscript{7} is an interesting and worth-discussing work. She claims that the rules of word formation are just the rules of syntax, but applied to sub-word units. The work surveys phenomena at the interface of morphology and syntax, showing how word formation or inflection can sometimes involve units larger than words.

Lieber argues that principles of X-bar theory developed for syntax can be pressed into service for all productive word formation. This presupposes that words are comprised (exhaustively) of morphemes and that morphemes are lexical entries with subcategorization frames. Moreover, the head of a word is the derivational affix, which determines the syntactic category and other aspects of its structure. The base of affixation will then be a complement, a specifier, or a modifier. \textit{Ceteris paribus}, the order of morphemes in word formation is identical to word order in syntax. Thus, in a language with SVO word order a complement in, say, a deverbal compound will come after the stem, and in a SOV language it will precede the verb stem. In a language with prehead modifiers or specifiers, derivation in which the base modifies or specifies the affix will be right-headed.

(i.e. suffixation), whereas in a language with post-modifiers or post-specifiers we will find prefixation. Lieber also surveys phenomena such as circumfixing, conversion, apophony, reduplication, and root-and-pattern morphology, arguing that autosegmental phonology can handle most of these cases by reducing them to 'Item-and-Arrangement' morphology.

Lieber’s work represents an ambitious attempt to reduce morphology to syntax and phonology. For many readers, this may be seen as the death-knell of autonomous morphology. Here, we might feel justified in asking how the 'morphology-is-syntax' proposal would deal with straight-forward cases of, say, derivation and agglutination in Tangkhul-Naga which exhibit more interface between morphology and other components of grammar than between morphology and syntax, and word formation rules often going directly counter to syntactic structure. In many languages there are pronominal affixes which cross-reference subjects and objects. Often their order correlates with basic syntactic order, but not always.

I would argue for essentially the opposite of Lieber’s approach. Morphologists have no reason to fear imminent redundancy and replacement by syntacticians. Morphologists should establish domain-specific principles and, on the basis of these, determine how morphology interfaces with other grammatical components. After all, if we don’t look
for specifically morphological principles and they happen to be there, we will never find them.

To sum up, the models of morphology that have emerged over the recent years illustrate that much of the intellectual challenge posed by morphology for the linguistic theory-construction lies in the exploration of the interface between morphology and the rest of the grammar. Age-old questions concerning the nature of words are given novel interpretations, while at the same time, new phenomena are unearthed, which may well have gone unnoticed under the older perspective. This is precisely what we want of a vigorous and developing branch of study.

0.2. Scope and orientation of the study

This research, more importantly, is about to bring Tangkhul-Naga word formation into the mainstream of linguistic discussion -- documenting the various word formation processes. Since no scientific or exhaustive research has been done in this language in any area, let alone word formation, I have to employ my own expertise relying much on the large-but-not-so-coherent works on word formation in other languages. It is my hope that this research will help redefine the notions such as 'word', 'phonological word', 'morpheme', 'formative', and so on.

This research is concerned with word formation in an 'independent model' (a synthesis of models, in other words).
I have not strictly followed any particular morphological theory or model. This is partly because at the moment, the study of word formation is in a state of flux, and there is no one body of accepted doctrine on the subject, so that, often, researchers are compelled to make up their own theory and procedures as they go along. And, as the present study is more or less exploratory in nature, I have more or less followed a 'morpheme-based descriptive' model of word formation with an attempt to list all the affixes (derivative and inflectional) and as many morphemes as possible in compounding and reduplication. In part, the decision not to strictly follow any particular model or theory has been motivated by my personal interests. Another reason for such decision is that Tangkhul-Naga is an agglutinative tone language in which various typical structures and word forms are widespread, and no single theory or model advanced so far is capable of accounting for all the numerous peculiar features. One could hardly imagine, for instance, the existence of structures in Tangkhul-Naga such as compounding of two plural markers with two classifiers in a single 'word'; 'concrete nouns' taking the nominalizer or formative affix, and so on.

A variety of specialists have interest in word formation, and I hope that this research will prove useful to phonologists, syntacticians, historical linguists, descriptive linguists, and others whose main interests lie
outside morphological theory as such. In addition, psycholinguists and computer scientists working on language processing would find this research relates to their concerns. Finally, it is my hope that this research cover many key theoretical issues confronting contemporary linguists with an interest in word formation.

0.3. The place of Tangkhul-Naga in the Tibeto-Burman family of languages

The language of the present study is simply known by the ethnic name 'Tangkhul-Naga'. 'Tangkhul', phonemically /təŋkʰul/, belongs to the Naga sub-group of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages.

Dr. Grierson (1903), in the Report of the Linguistic Survey of India, assigned each of the Naga languages a definite place in the family of Tibeto-Burman languages. According to him, between Angami-Naga and the Bodo languages there is a group, which he calls the Naga-Bodo group, bridging over the difference between the characteristic features of the two forms of speech, and similarly, between Angami-Naga and the Kuki languages there is another group which he calls the Naga-Kuki group.

The Naga-Bodo group, according to Grierson, 'consists of two main languages, viz., Mikir ... and Kachcha Naga ... Subordinate languages closely akin to but not dialects, of,
Kachcha Naga, are Kabui Naga and Khoirao Naga ... As might be expected, the Bodo languages with which they show the most important points of kinship is the eastern one -- Chutiya; while Angami and Lhota are the two Naga tongues to which they are most closely allied. It must, however, be confessed that in regard to Kabui and Khorao the classification is somewhat arbitrary, for, though they have undoubted connection with the Bodo languages, they also show many points of contact with Kuki ones ... The Naga-Kuki subgroup includes Sopvoma or Mao-Naga, Maram, Miyangkhang, Kwoireng or Liyang, Luhupa or Luppa language, viz., Tangkhul and Maring. The language of the Mao Naga most nearly approaches the true Naga languages. Of these it possesses the closest resemblance to Kezhama ... Indeed, Sopvoma is so closely connected with all the languages of the Western subgroup (in which are included Angami, Sema, Rengma and Kezhama) that it might with equal propriety be classed as belonging to it as to the Naga-Kuki one. These three languages (Sopvoma, Tangkhul and Maring) exhibit a regular gradation in the change of speech. Sopvoma is most nearly connected with the Western Naga languages, and Maring with the Kuki ones, while Tangkhul occupies an intermediate position. 8

Figure 1. Classification of the Tibeto-Burman Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN INDIA</th>
<th>IN MYANMAR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Anal</td>
<td>16. Phom</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Angami</td>
<td>17. Pochuri</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Ao</td>
<td>18. Poumai</td>
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<td>4. Chakhesang</td>
<td>19. Puimei</td>
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<td>5. Chang</td>
<td>20. Rengma</td>
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<td>6. Kharam</td>
<td>21. Rongmei*</td>
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<td>7. Khiamnag*</td>
<td>22. Sangtam</td>
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<td>10. Liangmei*</td>
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<td>14. Namsik</td>
<td>29. Zemi*</td>
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<td>15. Nocte</td>
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<td>30. Dikhiri</td>
<td>31. Hemi</td>
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<td>33. Hlangan*</td>
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<td>34. Leinung</td>
<td>35. Makhori</td>
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<td>36. Pangmi</td>
<td>37. Pangaw*</td>
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<td>38. Phellungri</td>
<td>39. Pyengoo*</td>
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<td>40. Rangpan</td>
<td>41. Shangpuri</td>
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<td>42. Tsaplo</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\* Speakers living both in India and Myanmar (Burma).
* Also collectively called 'Zeliangrong'; earlier known as 'Kacha' Nagas (\* 'forest dwellers', from Angami kach 'forest').
*DISTRIBUTION OF MAJOR NAGA LANGUAGES IN MANIPUR AND NAGALAND

<table>
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<td>ZEMI</td>
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*This is only a guide map and has nothing to do with exactness
MANIPUR
ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS 1991 (PROVISIONAL)

STATE CAPITAL
DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS
THE RESEARCHER'S VILLAGE
Thus, according to Grierson, we have languages connected with typical Naga dialects, with Kuki elements, the influence of which gradually diminishes as we recede from the area occupied by Kuki tribes. We have languages related in part to Bodo dialects, in part to Naga dialects, while containing Kuki elements. Grierson's classification is claimed to have based on morphological analysis. However, we find his classification rather arbitrary and superficial.

His use of the terms 'the true Naga languages' is also not clear. In fact, there are some non-Naga tribes included in the Naga group (for whatever reason), and their difference is quite evident not only from their customs but also from their languages (especially in morphological structures).

A.E. Gait (1906), in "History of Assam", states that 'with the exception of Khasi the numerous non-Aryan dialects of Assam, all belong to the Tibeto-Chinese and mainly to its Tibeto-Burman sub-family. The dialects of this sub-family which are current in Assam belong, in the main, to three groups, viz. Naga spoken in, and east of, the Naga Hills; Kuki-Chin spoken in Manipur, Cachar and the Lushai Hills.

Konow (1909), in "The Tibeto-Burman Family", made a more comprehensive study of the sub-family and finds the Naga languages as a distinct group having not much connections, as Grierson claims, with the Bodo and Kuki-Chin languages.
0.4. Geographical and demographic distribution

Tangkhul-Naga is spoken by all the Tangkhuls numbering about 1,50,000⁹. The Tangkhuls occupy the entire Ukhrul District of Manipur -- a hilly terrain spreading over 1823 sq. miles, and the adjacent borderline of Myanmar. There are some 220 Tangkhul villages and about 20 Kuki villages in Ukhrul District.

Ukhrul District is bounded in the north by the Mao Hills of Manipur and Nagaland (inhabited by the speakers of Paumei, Mao, Maram, Angami, Chakheshang, etc.); in the west and south-west by the Sadar Hills and Imphal Valley of Manipur (inhabited by the speakers of Mao, Paumei, Thangal, Maram, and Mitei); in the south by the Imphal Valley and Chandel District (inhabited by the speakers of Mitei, Andro, Makeng, Maring, Anal, Chiru, Kom, Paite, Thadou, Lamkang, and Mayon-Monsang); and in the east by the Kabo Valley of Myanmar (Burma) (inhabited by the speakers of Burmese Kuki, Kachin, Somra, Haimi, Hlangan, Rangpan, and Tsaplaw).

About 20% of the Tangkhul population are scattered, outside Ukhrul District, in the surrounding areas in Manipur, Nagaland and north-west Burma. Sizable portion of Tangkhul speakers is found in Kohima and Dimapur Valley in Nagaland. Important 'colonies' with major Tangkhul concentration in Imphal -- the capital of Manipur State -- are Tangkhul

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⁹ Census of India (Provisional) 1991 shows that the population of Ukhrul District, Manipur (India), is 1,09,275.
Avenue, Nagaram, Dewlaland, Mantri Pukhri, Chingmeirong, and Checkon.

Tangkhul is the second largest Naga tribe, next to Konyak tribe of Nagaland and Myanmar, in terms of number of speakers. There are some 40 Naga tribes which are spread over (1) the entire state of Nagaland; (2) the Ukhrul District, Senapati District, Chandel District, Tengnoupal District, Tamenglong District, and Sadar Hills of Manipur; (3) the states of Assam, Tripura, and Arunachal Pradesh; (4) the Kabo Valley and along the Indo-Myanmar border in Myanmar; and (5) the southernmost part of Yunan Province of China.

0.5. An overview of grammatical studies on Tangkhul-Naga

The Tibeto-Burman sub-family of languages (to which Tangkhul-Naga belongs) is of considerable interest to the linguists and cultural historians of the Himalayas and has been the subject of large but mostly unproven hypothesis. Till the 1940s, the great majority of the Tibeto-Burmic-Naga language were unwritten. Many of them are spoken in regions difficult to access.

We do not have evidence to prove that Tangkhul-Naga was ever widely employed till the early 20th century. Today's Standardized Tangkhul came into existence only at the close of the 19th century with arrival of the Britishers. The Britishers set up their administrative headquarters at
Ukhrul village and created the Ukhrul Sub-Division comprising of nearly all the Tangkhul villages. The administrators and the missionaries then had chosen the dialect of Ukhrul village for compiling, writing and translation of short vocabularies, biblical books and school texts, and, in due course, made it the standard or common language of all the Tangkhuls. Today, the Tangkhul lexicon is comprised of the various village dialects in which the Ukhrul dialect occupies the largest portion.

The study of Tangkhul-Naga was initiated by Rev. Fr. N. Brown in 1837 with publication of three short vocabularies entitled 'North Tangkhul', 'Central Tangkhul' and 'South Tangkhul'. For decades and decades, most of the lexical surveys, grammatical notations and elementary books were compiled by missionaries in the aim of helping ecclesiastic newcomers to start more easily with their jobs, and above all, to provide Holy Scriptures to new converts. In 1918, Rev. Fr. W. Pettigrew brought about the Tangkhul-Naga Grammar and Dictionary.

Though these pioneering works are of much value, they are not linguistically sophisticated. For instance, Arokianathan’s short discussion is, if not a distorted one, full of discrepancies. His analysis is, perhaps, based on wrong data and information.

0.6. So broken a linguistic landscape: Multilingualism.

Apart from the 'common' or 'standardized' language, the Tangkhuls speak various dialects -- each village has its own dialect named after the village. The fragmentation of the linguistic situation among the Tangkhul-Nagas is so deep that nobody can really say how many inter-village dialects are there. (To my estimation, there are more than 150 inter-village dialects). The intelligibility among the village dialects varies according to the distance between them. Farther the village, the more is the unintelligibility.

Although the concentration of the Tangkhul-Nagas in the entire Ukhrul District was more, each village was on "head-hunting" war with the other. Constant attacks from the neighboring villages made their life uncertain and let them to seclusion. This seclusion, I think, is the main reason for the gradual development of the village dialects. Their conscious efforts for using and inventing secret codes due to fear of war with other villages added to the diversity, in due course, between the village dialects.
The Tangkhuls are bilingual in Mitei (or Manipuri) -- the official language of Manipur State; and 'Nagamese' or 'Naga Pidgin' which is the lingua franca of Nagaland State. They communicate, in Manipur, with speakers of Mitei and other tribes in Mitei. They use 'Nagamese' or English in communicating with the speakers of the various Naga tribes in Nagaland.

Inside the village, one interesting phenomenon is the use of both 'standardized' Tangkhul and the village dialect interchangeably in various contexts. Before the advent of the 'standard' Tangkhul, speakers of the neighboring villages communicated with one another using each own's dialect. And till today we find many elderly people doing the same. Such type of communication is dying out with the younger generation. Inside the village, people use only standard Tangkhul in the Church -- read the Bible and sing hymnals in standard Tangkhul. It is also the medium of instruction in schools. However, both the standard and village dialect are used, as the occasion demands, in both formal and informal speeches -- in meetings, festivals, entertainments, and so on. Surprisingly, all 'prayers', be it of an individual, a family, or larger groups, are said in standard Tangkhul. In other words, every Tangkhul speaker who can speak standard Tangkhul prays to God in standard Tangkhul.
0.7. Methodology.

Since Tangkhul-Naga is my mother tongue, I have primarily utilized my native speaker's intuitions. In other words, this research employs 'First Language' approach or mentalist approach and inductive methodology -- trying to account for the native speaker-hearer's competence. The source of data is the contemporary forms of usage of the language as is reflected in the literary works and formal and informal speeches. Data have been collected and cross-checked as much as possible from informants through questionnaires, interviews and observations. My judgments are verified, not only with the village dialects of Tangkhul-Naga but also with other Naga and Kuki-Chin languages. In essence, I have approached the various theories and models as the research demands.