CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 The term “Tedim Chin”

The name of the language under study is Tedim\(^1\) Chin\(^2\). It is a loconym which has developed into a language name and gradually the speakers also became identified with it. Tedim is the largest village in northern Chin state in Myanmar. A popular belief on how Tedim earned its name was that there was a pool on top of the hills that surrounded Tedim. It used to sparkle when the sun rays fall on it. As the name suggested, ‘Tedim’ is composed of two morphemes: tē meaning ‘glitter’ and dím meaning ‘full’. When these two morphemes combined together, due to the effect of tone sandhi, the mid tone of the first morpheme changes to high tone and the high tone of the second morpheme changes to mid thus resulting in tédīm as given below.

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tē+dím \rightarrow tédīm \text{ ‘Tedim’}
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Tedim is an expression for the sun’s reflection on the pond. So, it literally means ‘full of glitters’. This is how the name Tedim came about. In poetic language, it is called ‘dimtui’\(^3\). There is a regional variety called ‘Dim’ and the speakers are known as ‘Dimte’. This is not the same with Tedim though these two names are only metathesis of the two morphemes ‘te’ and ‘dim’.

Various researchers had written about their viewpoint on the evolution of Tedim language. Go (2004) has the notion that before the advent of colonialism, speakers of different dialectic groups such as Teizang, Saizang, Dim, Khuano, Vaiphei, Zou,

\(^1\)The graphemes ‘Tedim’ and ‘Tiddim’ are used to refer to the same thing. The spelling ‘Tedim’ is followed from the native speakers’ orthography and pronunciation whereas ‘Tiddim’ was used in the British record since colonial rule. The latter spelling is believed to be in use from the pronunciation of the Burmese guides during the British era.

\(^2\)Chin is a Burmese word which has an equivalent meaning with Kuki (a Bengali word). The terms ‘Chin’ and ‘Kuki’ are used to refer to the hill tribes who live in between Burma and the province of Assam and Bengal.

\(^3\)A village name is usually accompanied by the word tui ‘water’ in poetic language. Water and village, that is, khua leh tui, are an inseparable concepts in Tedim Chin.
Thadou, Sihzang, Hualngo, Phaileng, Khuangnung, Gangte, Guite, Losau and many others lived together in and around Tedim. Due to prolonged settlement and contact of these groups of people, a new language gradually evolved which was named after the village, Tedim. The Tedim language, thus, became the lingua franca of the northern Chin (Zo) tribes. It is for this reason that Tedim language is also called Zo pau/Zo kam meaning ‘Zo language’ and the Roman based orthography is referred to as Zo lai meaning ‘Zo literature’.

Dong (2014) proposes two contesting ideas on the origin of Tedim language. First, Tedim language evolved out of the prolonged interaction of different dialects- Teizang, Saizang, Khuano, Losau, Thadou, Guite etc., spoken in Tedim. Second, he also opines that the dialect having the strongest influence (which he refers to as ‘Losau’) over others in Tedim village has become the common language and later gets the status to be called the ‘Tedim language’.

Thang (2015) had briefly discussed about the position of Tedim language genealogy within the Sino-Tibetan language family, origin of the language name, its development as common language and the future of Tedim language. He further stated that Tedim is an egonymn and eoconymn. The language gradually originated with the constant contact among the early settlers in Tedim such as Saizang, Thadou, Vaiphei, Guite and Zou speakers. This has led to mixing and borrowing of speech forms among these languages.

The above writers had commonly mentioned about the origin of the language name which comes from the village name and the interaction of the various groups who had lived together for long period which brings about the formation of the new language Tedim.

The term ‘Tedim Chin’ was first used and popularised by the British colonial rulers as an administrative category. After the British annexation of the Chin Hills in the late nineteenth century, the hill tracts had been divided into three sub-divisions: Tedim, Falam and Haka. Hence, the people in each sub-divisions were referred to as Tedim.

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4 Name given to ourselves.
5 Name derived from place of settlement/village name.
6 It was not exactly known when “Tedim” came to be used in two forms; Tedim and Tiddim.
Chin, Falam Chin and Haka Chin respectively. Often spelled as ‘Tiddim’, a corrupt form of Tedim, ‘Tedim Chin’ thus became a standardised category for the people of the northern Chin Hills in colonial as well as missionary records. Interestingly, speakers of Tedim language in Manipur also called themselves Tedim Chin, albeit they are officially recognised as Sukte. Today, Zomi has become a more acceptable term to refer to the Tedim Chin and other related tribes of the Indo-Burma borderlands and the new dialect which evolved from Tedim has been popularly considered the common language of the Zomi.

1.2 Geographical Location of the Speakers
Tedim Chin speakers live in two countries, namely, India and Myanmar. In India, they are found mainly in Champhai district of Mizoram, and in Churachandpur and Chandel districts of Manipur. The major bulk of the speakers are predominantly found in the northern Chin state of Myanmar. The Tedim Chins were a part of the British administration of the Chin Hills, Lushai Hills and the princely state of Manipur during the colonial era. In the post-colonial period, the demarcation of an international boundary divided the Tedim Chins into two different nation states.

Figure 1 shows the location of Tedim Chin speakers in India and Myanmar.
With regard to the settlement of the Kuki-Chin people, Grierson (1904: 1) wrote:

The territory inhabited by the Kuki-Chin tribes extends from the Naga Hills in the north down into the Sandoway district of Burma in the South: from the Myittha river in the east, almost to the Bay of Bengal in the west. It is almost entirely filled by hills and mountain ridges, separated by deep valleys.

Figure 2 shows map of Manipur state. The study area which is located in Churachandpur sub-division in Churachandpur district is highlighted.
1.3 Number of Speakers

Lewis, Simons and Fennig (2016) recorded Tedim Chin speakers in India with a population of 155,000 and the population of Tedim speakers in Chin state (Myanmar) as 189,000 which is based on 1990 census. So, the total number of Tedim speakers is estimated to be 344,000. However, the Census of India (2011) listed a total of only 804 speakers with the name ‘Suhte’ in Manipur which is believed to be a misnomer. The

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7 Tedim Chin population (‘Suhte’ in the Census of India record) is perhaps misrepresented and a brief survey of its population has to be carried out in consultation with the speakers.
recent census report also provides religious based population showing Hindus, Muslims, Buddhist, Jains and Christians as their religion which is disputable.

1.4 The Tedim Chin People

This section is divided into three sub-sections: §1.4.1 discusses the ethnic affiliation of the Tedim Chin people. §1.4.2 deals with the social organisation and has different sub-sections on dress, religion, naming ceremony, marriage and inheritance. The two main festivals of Tedim Chin are briefly discussed in §1.4.2.6.

1.4.1 Ethnic Affiliation

Ethnologically, the Tedim Chin speakers believe that they belong to Zomi which comprises various ethnic groups speaking different dialects. People belonging to these ethnic groups have a common ancestry from “Zo” and have a culture which varies in some areas only. The language they speak also slightly differs in the vocabulary, tone and intonation. While studying on ethnicity, the case in India and Myanmar is different with regard to Tedim Chin. The Government of Myanmar officially recognised all the Kuki-Chin groups as “Chin”. On the contrary, in India, particularly in Manipur, there is no term or name which could officially designate the entire Kuki-Chin group. Various names such as Khul Union, Kuki, Zomi, Mizo etc. have contested to bring together this group of people but they could not succeed at all in their attempts. Instead, people segregated from other groups and identify themselves with several locational dialectal names (Suan 2011), clan names or terms given by others. Some of these names are Vaiphei, Simte, Hmar, Sukte (Tedim Chin), Thadou, Paite, Gangte, Zou, Mate, Thangkhal etc. In line with this, Kumar (2008: 4) remarks:

A peculiar tendency visible among the Kuki-Chin tribes of Mizoram and southern Manipur is that their clans claim of tribal status. They claim their dialects to be distinct languages ignoring the similarities between them.

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8 See §1.4.2.2 for more discussion on religion.
Burling (2007: 5) also stated:

In North-Eastern India, each tribe is presumed to have its own language, and each language is presumed to be spoken by just one tribe.

Till today, Kumar and Burling’s study on the situation in North-East India holds true for the ethnic and linguistic situation among the Kuki-Chin groups in Manipur. At present, the following nine tribes are affiliated to Zomi under the umbrella term ‘Zomi Council’ in Churachandpur district of Manipur: Vaiphei, Tedim Chin, Zou, Kom, Paite, Mate, Thangkhal, Gangte and Simte. They uphold that they are descendants of the same ancestor “Zo”.

Khai (1995: 89) wrote:

The Tedim speakers who call their chief Topa persistently claim that the term ‘Zo’ was the racial name of the Kuki-Chin people.

A folksong in Tedim is composed depicting the origin of mankind from a cave that is, Khul in Tedim. The folksong in Tedim goes like this:

Eiteng khawlkhawm a tuam omlo,
Khul a pian in kilelle’ng,
Tun sung khat a piang hi ngeingei e.

Tun sung khat a piang hi ngeingei e,
Suahpih sanggam laigui zawngkhawm hi ngeingei e.

The translation of the song is given as:

All of us together,
Being aliens never
Being born at Khul together
Are born of a single mother,

Being born of a single mother
We are brothers all together
Joined by navel cord forever
Burling (2007: 7) further stated that:

In conformity with their status as separate ‘tribes’, both the Kukis themselves and others who know them, usually speak of these groups as having distinct ‘languages’. Nevertheless, Kukis have assured me that they can all easily understand one another’s languages, so they are what linguists would call ‘dialects’.

1.4.2 Social Organisation

In this section, various socio-cultural practices of the Tedim Chin are discussed.

1.4.2.1 Dress

The main traditional dresses of the Tedim Chins are puanlaisan, tangeing, angki, puandum, khepphiau, nikvom, nikphei and Zonik. puanlaisan is a shawl worn by men. Tangeing is a highly valued traditional shawl which is worn only by men who achieve great feat by killing a tiger, lion, leopard, yak etc. during olden days. However, in the present context, this shawl is given to men who succeed and earn distinction in any field. Angki is worn by men. Puandum, khepphiau, nikvom, nikphei and Zonik are women’s traditional costumes.

1.4.2.2 Religion

Traditionally, the Tedim Chins are worshippers of spirit and unseen power. They are called ‘lawki’ in local name. While believing in numerous deities, they also believed in the existence of a Supreme Being. Tedim Chin cosmology thus comprised two-tiered. They offered sacrifices to the Gods which does good to mankind and those that harm man’s spirit are propitiated or appeased. The offering to the spirits is often called ‘Dawi Biakna’ in Tedim. The sacrificial and propitiatory rites are mainly divided into three: personal rite, household rite and communal rite. ‘Pu Sha biakna’ or ‘ancestor worship’ is one of the most important household rites.

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9This information on costumes was collected from the informants and through secondary sources.
From the late nineteenth century there had been remarkable changes in the beliefs and practices of the Tedim Chins, which had far reaching impact on the socio-religious and economic life of the people. This was largely due to the introduction of Christianity by the American Baptist missionaries and the emergence of an indigenous religious movement spearheaded by Pau Cin Hau, an ordinary man. Pau Cin Hau had visions about the Almighty God and many other revelations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. His teachings were based on his visions. While he strongly condemned sacrifices made to spirits and evils in social practices, he also tried to work in conformity with some of the traditional practices and adapted to it. Many people who were overburdened with costly ritual practices had been liberated through the teaching of Pau Cin Hau. On the other hand, Christian missionaries employed education and medical health as an important tool to spread the Christian message. While education opened the minds of the people, medical health healed their body. Gradually, other Christian denominations also expanded their mission among the Tedim Chins. Today, almost hundred percent of the population are professed Christian belonging to different denominations such as Baptist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Full Gospel, Adventist etc.

1.4.2.3 Naming ceremony

The tradition of naming a child is a very interesting feature of Tedim Chin community. This practice is common in other Kuki-Chin groups also. Names are not simply given to anyone by any person. It follows a certain pattern which is practiced by the society since time immemorial. The name of the first born child is given first and foremost by the paternal grandparents. After that other family members will get the chance of naming the other children of the family. According to traditional practices, the first baby boy would be named by the child’s paternal grandfather and the first baby girl by the

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10 The Pau Cin Hau movement in Chin Hills found its place in the Census of India 1931, see, J. J. Bennison, *Census of India 1931*, Vol.XI.

11 Christian Missions activities in Chin Hills are well recorded in details in two volumes in Robert G Johnson’s *History of the American Baptist Chin Mission*

12 Information on naming ceremony was gathered from informants through interviews, conversations and other secondary sources.
paternal grandmother. So, whether the baby is a boy or a girl, the paternal grandparents take the first opportunity to name their grandchildren. Then the name of the second baby boy and girl would be given by the maternal grandparents. While giving name, the last name of the name-giver becomes the first name of the new born baby. The last name of the name-giver is not usually used for endearment terms (Kamkhenthang 1988). Personal names are usually given by the name-giver based on his thoughts, wishes and experiences. Sometimes a name depicted the emotional state of the name-giver. It is also said that the child has the tendency to become like his/her name. So if a good name is given, the child will live a prosperous life and vice versa. A unique distinguishing feature of the Tedim Chin in Manipur from the other Kuki-Chin speakers is how their names are written. It usually has two to four syllables and each syllable is separated by spaces in written form while the other tribes combine together the names as a single word. The Tedim orthography follows that since each syllable has its own meaning, it is not necessary to club together the whole name of a person.

1.4.2.4 Marriage
There are both endogamous and exogamous marriages in Tedim Chin society. There is no restriction in marriage between different clans. After marriage, the bride comes to stay with the bridegroom’s family. Marriage is sometimes arranged between cousins, that is, marry aunt’s (father’s sister) son. Bride price is given by the bridegroom’s family to the bride’s family. It is usually paid in the form of puandum ‘women’s traditional shawl’ and some amount of money. Sometimes if both the parties are in good terms, it is not obligatory to give the bride price. In such cases, it is often said that the bridegroom’s family was forgiven to pay the bride price. Love marriage is also common nowadays. Holy matrimony, elopement etc. are different ways of getting married. Marriage is thought to last for a life time. However, divorce is also practiced in the society. In case of divorce, the father has to take responsibility for the children. The husband and wife can both remarry with someone if they find a suitable partner.
1.4.2.5 Inheritance

Being a patrilineal society, the father is the head of the family. The eldest son inherits the father’s property. He is also responsible for taking care of the parents. The other sons also get their own share from the father. In some families, even daughters are equally given their share out of the parental property. In case where there is no son in the family, the nearest male kin, who is responsible for looking after the family, can inherit the property. If any issue arises in a family, members of the bangkua/inndongta meaning ‘household council’ constituted by selected clansmen and married daughters and their families are responsible for dealing with it.

1.4.2.6 Festivals

There are two main “pawi” (a corrupt form of Burmese Pwi meaning festivals) for the Tedim Chin people. §1.4.2.6.1 describes Khuado pawi which is a common harvest festival celebrated by all the Kuki-Chin groups in different names like Chavang Kut, Chapchar Kut etc. The other festival of the Tedim Chin, Sialsawm pawi, is discussed in §1.4.2.6.2. It usually takes place in the beginning of the year.

1.4.2.6.1 Khuado Pawi

Khuado pawi is the biggest and one of the most popular cultural festivals. The celebration of this important festival is considered to have begun as early as 1400 A.D\textsuperscript{13}. It is derived from the Tedim language- khua meaning village and do meaning resist/battle. Khuado is also being celebrated as Kut and Chavang Kut respectively in Manipur and Mizoram. It is also celebrated as an occasion to commemorate the arrival of the harvest and in the meantime, marks the beginning of a new year. So, it is also known as Harvest festival or Kumkhen pawi.

The term ‘khua’ literally represents the unseen forces. It is an occasion to fight against those forces. According to Hatzaw (2000: 112), there was a man who was told in his dream to worship an unseen figure. So, he asked how he would call the name if he has to worship it; call me “Khuazing Khuavak” literally meaning “dark and light” and

\textsuperscript{13} Information on festivals is obtained from https://zo-lengthe.blogspot.in/2008/12/khuado-pawi-2008-harvest-festival-of-zo.html?m=0 and http://tedimchin.in/2017/10/03/khuado-pawi/
worship me by bringing sacrifices. So, the man worshipped with animals and birds and even made human sacrifices which does not stop death from the village. Then they stop worshipping the unseen forces and inturn fought with it. Khuado thus signifies vanquish over the evil spirit. Usually held for two to three days at the house of the local priest or Chief in the month of September/October depending on the arrival of harvest, it is consummated by the killing of two or three cattles (preferably pigs) with a generous distribution of Zu (traditional wine). Old and youth, lad and lass would then join arm-in-arm and form a circular band to perform a traditional dance locally called Lamvui kaihna. This is usually interspersed by a spectacular solo performance at its centre by a veteran with a brandish of the sword.

1.4.2.6.2 Sialsawm Pawi

Sialsawm pawi is also a very important community festival of the Tedim Chins. Unlike Khuado pawi, which is being celebrated after the harvest, Sialsawm pawi usually falls in the month of April after the sowing of seeds. Slash and burn cultivation being the main subsistence of the people, good sprouting of seeds greatly depends on good rains. The people, therefore, offer sacrifices to the unseen forces which, they believe, controls even the rain under the leadership of the village priest. Pigs and cows, where mithun is also used in rare cases, are killed as sacrificial offering in order to appease the unseen forces. On the second day, villagers go out for hunting wild animals. The hunted animals will be eaten up as a communal feast, associated with the drinking of Zu, which is called Lawm Annek. Sialsawm pawi, thus, marks the beginning of the year and in fact, a festival to pray for a good year.

1.5 Linguistic environment, Language status and Language use

Tedim Chin is spoken in the environment of other Kuki-Chin languages in Manipur. Mutually intelligible languages within the same language sub-group such as Thadou, Vaiphei, Gangte, Zou etc. are spoken alongside Tedim Chin. So the Tedim Chin speakers sometimes retain their language when interacting with other speech communities or sometimes if the other person does not understand him/her well, mixing
of speech form happens in conversation. Till date, the language is continually preserved eventhough Tedim speakers are found in small pockets especially in Manipur and in Mizoram. This may be attributed to the use of common literature which is reflected in the Holy Bible, hymn books and newsletters published by the church literature bodies and distributed across three regions- Manipur, Mizoram and Myanmar.

According to Tedim Chin’s traditional belief, there was a written language available to them since time immemorial. However, the script that was written on a leather was supposedly snatched and carried away by a dog. In the late nineteenth century, a socio-religious reformer, Pau Cin Hau, devised a script in accordance with what he claimed to be a revelation from god. Though there was no mention of the new script in the 1911 and 1921 Census of India reports, the original characters, comprising 1,050 characters, were reduced into 21 consonants and 7 vowels plus tonal signs in 1931. The script was employed in the translation of The Sermon on the Mount by Pau Cin Hau, with the help of Thang Cin Kham from Tonzang. The invention of script earned him the name Laipianpa (the script-creator). This script is not commonly learnt and used by the present generation. The followers of Pau Cin Hau religion who are few in number still preserve it.

In colonial and missionary records, Tedim Chin was also sometimes referred to as ‘Kam Hau dialect’. This was due to the fact that one of the rulers of Tedim before the advent of the British was a Sukte chief, Kam Hau whose reign was felt beyond the northern boundaries of Chin Hills. Kam Hau not only became a paramount ruler over more than one hundred villages, he was also able to establish his name in such a way that his subjects were known to others as ‘Kam Hau’ people. Interestingly, the Tedim dialect which was popularly used in Tedim also came to be known after the name of the ruler. The Census of India 1931 recorded Sukte to represent the northern Chin tribes, except Sihzang (Khai 1995: 14). The Sukte, Kam Hau and Tedim Chin people should not, therefore, be construed as different people though they were earlier referred to by these names. They are one and the same people. Today, they are better known as Tedim Chin or Zomi. They traced a common origin to Ciimnuai village in northern Chin Hills.

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1.6 Linguistic Classification

Tedim Chin forms one among the Kuki-Chin group which occupies a vast stretch of land extending from Burma to the Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh. The Kuki-Chins speak different dialects and were known by various names. The Indians called them ‘Kuki’ and the Burmese called them as ‘Chin’ (Khai 1995). Chin means ‘ally or comrade’. Kuki and Chin were not native to the people and initially they do not identify themselves with it. Bradley (1997) rightly says, “Names for these Kuki-Chin groups are much more numerous than distinct languages”. Grierson (1904) says that the term ‘Kuki-Chin’ is purely conventional as there is no cover term to include all of it.

Grierson (1904: 2) divided Kuki into Old Kuki and New Kuki. In his words, he described the term “Kuki” as “more especially, used to denote the various tribes which have successively been driven from the Lushai and Chin Hills into the surrounding country to the north and south. The tribes which first emigrated from Lushai land like Cachar, the Rangkhols and the Betes with their off-shoots are generally distinguished as Old Kuki; while it has become customary to use the term New Kuki to denote the Thadou, the Jangshens and their off-shoots. These latter tribes had driven the so called Old Kukis out of Lushai land and were afterwards themselves driven out by the Lusheis”.

Zo is commonly believed and accepted to be the ancestor and the name that rightly encompasses all the Kuki-Chin people. Thus, collocation occurs with Zo such as Zomi ‘Zo people’, Zo gam ‘Zo land’, Zo lai ‘Zo literature’, Zo pau ‘Zo language’, Zo nik ‘Zo traditional wrap around’, Zo inn ‘Zo house’ etc. Kuki, Chin, Zomi and Mizo are names accepted in different places of settlement which is used for referring to the same ethnic group. Zomi is the preferred name for the Tedims (Tiddims) and Mizo for the Lushais where the common word *mi* in both names means ‘man or people’.

In the late nineteenth century, based largely on ethno-linguistic distinctiveness, colonial rulers broadly divided the people of Chin Hills into three groups: Tedim Chin, Falam Chin and Haka Chin. Since then, these terms had been used by both colonial writers and missionaries in the official accounts.
Grierson (1904) classifies Kuki-Chin languages into two main groups: Meithei and Kuki-Chin languages proper. The Kuki-Chin proper is further divided into four groups –

(i) Northern group (Thado, Sokte, Siyin, Ralte, Paite)
(ii) Central group (Tashon, Lai, Lakher, Lushei, Banjogi, Pankhu)
(iii) Old Kuki (Rangkhol, Bete, Hallam, Langrong, Aimol, Anal, Chiru, Hiroi-Lamgang, Kolren, Kom, Purum, Mhar, Cha)
(iv) Southern group (Chinme, Welaung, Chinbok, Yindu, Chinbon, Khyang or Sho, Khami).

Grimes (1996) listed 38 Chin languages spoken in Myanmar. They are Asho, Bawm, Cho, Dai, Fannai, Falam, Gangte, Hakha (Baungshe), Hualngo, Khimi, Khualsim, Khumi, Khyo (Hyo), Laizo, Lente, Lushai, Kaang, Mara (Lakher), Matu, Mizo, Mindat, Mun, Ngawn, Ngente, Paite, Saizang, Senthang, Shongshe, Siyin, Taishon, Tedim, Teizang, Thado, Thawr, Zahau, Zo, Zokhua and Zotung.

Matisoff (1972, 2009) made four main divisions of the Kuki-Naga languages namely Central Kuki (incl. Lushei, Lai or Haka, Lakher), Northern Kuki (incl. Thado and Siyin), Old Kuki (incl. Bete, Rangkhol, Anal, Lamgang, Purum, Aimol, Kyaw) and Southern Kuki (incl. Sho, Yawdwin, Chinbok, Khami). In Matisoff’s language grouping, Tedim is not listed but it can be placed under the Northern Kuki along with Thadou and Siyin as these are related languages.

Grimes (1996) classifies the Chin language into the Northern Chin consisting of Ralte, Yos, Gangte, Siyin, Paite, Tedim, Thado, and Zome; the Central Chin consisting of Haka, Baungshe, Thangthlang, Zokhua, Shonshe, Senthang, Tawr, Bawm, Lushai, Darlong, Aimol, Hmal, Mara, Purim, Falam, Zanniat, Tashon, Khualsim, Zahau, Lente, Ngawn, Beite, and Chiru; and the Southern Chin group consisting of Asho, Chinbon, Daa, Zotung, Mun, Khumi, Cho and Mindat.

According to Bradley’s (1997) classification, Thado, Siyin, Paite, Vuite, Sukte, and Kam Hau belong to Northern Chin group; Hualngo (Mizo), Falam, Laizo, Zahao, Taisun, Ngawn, Zaniat, Hakha, Zophei, Lawtu, Lailen, Senthang, and Tawr belong to Central Chin group; and Zolamnai, Welaung, Matu, M’kang, Ng’men, Nitu, Hngizung, Utpu, Chinbok and Asho belong to Southern Chin group.

Figure 3 shows the classification of Tedim Chin in the greater Sino-Tibetan family. Tedim Chin is a Tibeto-Burman language classified under the northern Kuki-Chin sub-group.
Lewis, Simons and Fennig (2016) grouped together all the related Kuki-Chin languages in one sub-group. It is given with a detailed list of languages. This language classification is relevant for Tedim Chin language and is adopted for this thesis.

1.7 Previous Works on Tedim Chin

The earlier works on Tedim Chin language do not provide a complete description of the grammar. However, the contribution of the linguists and non-linguists for their work on
Tedim Chin language and literature is worth mentioning. Grierson (1904: 72) included a small section on Tedim Chin which was recorded as ‘Sokte (to be correctly spelled Sukte)’ in the Linguistic Survey of India. No language sample was given for Sokte. In the present scenario, although ‘Sokte/Sukte’ is still used in the Government of India’s record to refer to the Tedim Chin, this term is not often used for other purposes. The study on Tedim Chin language did not receive much attention from linguists prior to the 1960’s. Henderson (1963) made a comparative study on the lexical phonology of Tedim Chin and Teizang. Teizang, a closely related dialect with Tedim, was spoken by the chief’s clan during the reign of the Sukte chiefs. Henderson (1965) published a book on the grammatical analysis of Tedim Chin which is a turning point in the history of Tedim Chin linguistics. This work is one of the outcomes of the Chin Hills linguistics tour in 1954 jointly taken up by Prof. Gordon H. Luce (Rangoon University), Dr. Theodore Stern (University of Oregon) and Prof. Eugenie J.A Henderson (SOAS, University of London). Henderson had mentioned about two forms of Tedim language- the narrative (literary) style and colloquial (speaking) style. This grammar is based on two folk stories in the narrative style. Her analyses of all the sentences show the classification of syllables, words, figures and phrases. However, as she admits it, she could not give a detailed description of the language due to limited data.

Hillard (1974) discussed the verb morphology of some Chin languages including Tedim Chin. Twang and Thang (1975) had done a detailed study on vocabularies, along with their pronunciation and different grammatical categories and functions in Tedim. This work is useful for the native speakers as well as Tedim Chin language learners or enthusiasts although it is not based on systematic linguistic rules. Henderson (1976) wrote a paper on the morphological features of some Tibeto-Burman languages basing the data mainly from Tedim Chin. Solnit (1979) tried to reconstruct the Tibeto-Burman proto form *r in Tedim and Lushai. Bhaskararao (1989) investigated the chiming of adverbs which has similar function with reduplication in Tedim Chin. Twang and Thang (1992), two non-linguists native speakers, wrote a brief sketch on tonemes and different grammatical categories of Tedim Chin. This work is partially a prescriptive grammar as the authors used spellings of some words in their corrected forms. However, data is not
uniformly represented as it is sometimes presented in its orthographic form and also in phonetic transcription. It often creates confusion to the readers. Ostapirat (1998) traced the historical development of tones in Tedim Chin.

Thang (2001) had done a commendable study on phonological reconstruction of Chin languages from six selected languages-Tedim, Mizo, Hakha, Mara, Khumi and Kaang in which these languages are taken as a representative language from the sub-group they belong. This work aimed to bring out a new sub-grouping for the Chin languages. Thang (2002) examined the process and interaction of metaphors and metonymy in Tedim Chin “heart” idioms. Loffler (2002) worked on the tones of the final stops in Chin languages.

Cing (2011) discussed about Tedim Chin language in relation to the society and linguistic environment context with a brief linguistic description. Pappuswamy, Longmailai, Cing and Joshi (2011) investigated the nature and occurrences of classifiers in six Tibeto-Burman languages from two sub-groups, Tedim Chin, Thadou and Mizo from Kuki-Chin and Dimasa, Garo and Rabha from the Bodo-Garo sub-groups. They found out that Kuki-Chin languages including Tedim Chin have noun classifiers but no numeral classifier and Bodo-Garo groups have numeral classifiers. They also looked into the morphosyntactic properties of the classifiers in various environments. Otsuka (2011) analysed Tedim Chin verbs based on two types of predicates. Though his data is based on Tedim spoken in Myanmar, there is not much variation with the language data collected for this study.

Cing and Temsunungsang (2012) discussed verb stem alternation in Tedim Chin with reference to tone. Cing (2013) described gender assignment in Tedim Chin. It was found that animates take gender markers nu ‘feminine’ and pa ‘masculine’ whereas inanimates are not assigned gender. Cing (2014) brought to light the grammatical function of tone in Tedim Chin. One of the important functions is that tone marks for possession. Cing (2015) discussed the structure and types of reduplication in Tedim Chin. This work revisited ‘chiming of adverb’ and the author claimed that it is a partial reduplication of adverb. Cing (2015) investigated the syntactic structures of adjectives and also its verb-like nature. Longmailai and Cing (2015) made a comparative study of
some of the phonological features in Dimasa and Tedim Chin and sorted out the similarities and differences among the two languages. Recent online publication of Lewis, Simons and Fennig (2016) typologically classified Tedim Chin as an SOV language.

The Tedim Chin language was reduced into a Roman based orthography by Joseph Herbert Cope. In 1913, he published Chin Primer in Tedim which became the earliest published book in Tedim Chin. The Gospel of Matthew was translated in 1914. The New Testament was also translated in 1932. Later on, in 1977\(^{15}\) the complete Holy Bible “Lai Siangtho” including both the Old Testament (Thuciam Lui) and the New Testament (Thuciam Thak) was translated (Go 2004: 32). A hymn book “Tedim Labu” with tonic solfa is available for use in the church. The Holy Bible and the song books are both revised and published from time to time.

1.8 Previous Works on related Languages
This section includes earlier works done on languages from the Kuki-Chin sub-groups. Shaha (1884) had written a basic grammar of Lushai (Mizo) language incorporating popular songs and translated fables of Aesop. The language data is marked with tone but not transcribed. Grierson (1904) has recorded a number of languages in the Linguistic Survey of India including the languages from northern Kuki-Chin sub-groups such as Thadou, Siyin (Sizang), Ralte and Paite among others which are closely related to Tedim Chin. These languages are briefly described with language sample given for most of the languages. Weidert (1975) carried out a detailed work on Lushai phonology using generative approach. Chhangte (1989) gives a preliminary description of Mizo syntax.

Abbi (1990) investigated reduplication in South Asian languages stating examples from Kuki-Chin languages such as Thadou, Gangte, Paite, Taizang (Teizang) and few others like Meitei, Kabui and Lahuli. Singh (1999) surveyed the concept of tense and aspect in Kuki-Chin languages and concluded that aspect is the dominant category. Hartmann (2008) had written a descriptive grammar of Daai Chin, a southern Chin

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\(^{15}\) Rev. (Late) Kam Khaw Thang named the Tedim Holy Bible published in 1977 as “Indian version” and the 1983 publication as “Myanmar version”.

language. After Henderson’s (1965) work on Tedim Chin, this study on Daai Chin is considered to be the most detailed grammar of a Chin language till date.

Haokip (2008) described the phonological structure of Thadou. In 2009, he gave a description of Kuki-Chin noun morphology from six languages- Thadou, Vaiphei, Gangte, Paite, Simte and Zou. Sarangthem and Madhubala (2011) identified the sound segments of Sizang, a Kuki-Chin language closely related to Tedim Chin. Bedell (2011) did a comparative study on Lai and Mizo causatives. Subbarao (2012) provided a syntactic description of South Asian languages from four language families namely, Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman and tried to relate to the current syntactic theories. In this work, Kuki-Chin languages such as Hmar, Mizo and Thadou data are also included to support some of the theoretical claims. Haokip (2012) discussed negation in Thadou and provides three types of sentence constructions-declarative, imperative and interrogative for their occurrences. Haokip (2014) dealt with three types of word formation processes- affixation, compounding and reduplication in Thadou.

1.9 Methodology

The language variety chosen for the present study is the standard Tedim spoken in Manipur. The data are collected mainly from Tangnuam, Lanva and New Lamka in Churachandpur as there is no significant variation in the speech patterns of the informants. The researcher used a descriptive typological approach based on both qualitative and quantitative methods. Primary data are obtained through extensive fieldwork via: direct elicitation, participant observation, naturally occurring speech that includes conversation, stories, songs and public dialogues from native speakers (including the researcher). Since a one-to-one elicitation oftentimes does not produce naturally occurring speech, a discourse-centered approach (Sherzer 1987) to data collection was adopted in order to understand how and for what purposes the Tedim speakers use their language in their day-to-day lives. Spoken genres such as folklores, conversations, monologues, dialogues, group discussion are recorded, annotated and computerized for grammatical analysis of the language. Linguistic softwares such as
SIL FieldWorks and PRAAT are used for lexical, phonological, morpho-syntactic and other grammatical analysis. Secondary data are also collected from journals, books, articles and other related resources from different sources. Zoom H2 and H4 Handy recorders are used for recording data on tones, folk narratives and other supplementary data for this thesis.

1.10 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into 8 chapters which is summarised below.

Chapter 1 gives an introduction to the language, speakers and society. It has sections on geographical distribution, number of speakers and ethnic affiliation. It also discusses social organisation regarding various socio-cultural practices prevalent in the society. The earlier works on Tedim Chin and related languages by both linguists and non-linguists are also included.

Chapter 2 describes the phonology and phonological processes of Tedim Chin. It is broadly divided into segmental and suprasegmental phonology. Segmental phonology starts with phoneme inventories followed by their distribution, phonotactics and various phonological processes. Suprasegmental phonology describes the tonal system of Tedim Chin. It discusses lexical and grammatical tone and focuses on the types of tones, minimal pairs, tones and vowel length. Orthographic representation alongwith phonemic notations used in this study is also described at length.

Chapter 3 presents nouns and the noun phrase in Tedim Chin. It includes pronoun and its types, types of nouns based on morphological and semantic classification, nominal categories such as person, number, gender and case; classifiers and quantifiers are also examined. Pre-head and post-head nominal modifiers, noun phrase complex such as nominalization and relativization; noun phrase co-ordination forms the latter part of this chapter.

Chapter 4 describes adjectives and its sub types in Tedim Chin. It discusses semantic classification of adjectives, degrees of comparison, noun-like and verb-like grammatical behaviour of adjectives, predicative and attributive adjectives.
Chapter 5 discusses verbs and the verb phrase in Tedim Chin. It also looks into verb stem alternation in different constructions. Verbal categories like aspect and mood and modality are also discussed in detail.

Chapter 6 describes the grammatical relations namely subject, object and oblique object. The chapter also includes valency and valence changing operators such as causatives, applicatives, reflexives, reciprocals and passives.

Chapter 7 gives an overview of the constituent order. It also includes various syntactic processes such as nominalization, relativization, verb serialization and clause chaining.

Chapter 8 presents summary and findings of the study.