Tiddim Chin

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Introduction

Tiddim Chin (ISO639-3: ctd), also known as Tedim Chin, is a Tibeto-Burman language that is spoken in northeast India and west Myanmar. Phonologically, Tiddim Chin has three contrastive tones with relatively complex tone sandhi, as well as several intonation patterns. Morphologically, most of the verbs of the language, like those of other Kuki-Chin languages, possess two forms, referred to as forms I and II. This verb stem alternation cannot be linked to a single parameter of grammatical variation; however, it is conditioned by an interplay of various constructional distinctions. From a typological perspective, Tiddim Chin is a predicate final language: Its unmarked word order in an intransitive clause is SV, whereas in a transitive clause, it is AOV. It is an ergative–absolutive language. Grammatical relations are indicated by various enclitics in general.

1. The Language and Its Speakers

Genealogically, Tiddim Chin is a Tibeto-Burman language in the Kuki-Chin branch. It is mainly spoken in Chin State and Sagaing Region of Myanmar, as well as in Manipur and Mizoram of Northeast India, which Figure 1 illustrates. In the Tedim and Tonzang Townships of Chin State, Tiddim Chin is spoken as a lingua franca, thus often referred to as zou²pâu³ or zou²lài³, both of which mean “Chin language” in Tiddim Chin.

The total population of Tiddim Chin is...
Chin speakers is estimated by Grimes ed. (2000: 564) to be 344,100.

This paper focuses on colloquial Tiddim Chin, which is spoken in Myanmar. Many Tiddim Chin speakers in Myanmar also speak Burmese, the official language of Myanmar; therefore speakers borrow a number of words from Burmese.

Since the early 20th century, Tiddim Chin speakers have extensively adopted the roman orthography developed by the American priest Rev. Joseph Herbert Cope (1882–1932). It does not represent vowel length or tone; however, a long vowel is occasionally marked by vowel doubling. For more details about Tiddim Chin orthography, see Henderson (1965: 9-14).

Although Tiddim Chin is not officially taught in elementary or high schools, speakers learn to read and write the Tiddim Chin orthography at home and at local Christian churches. Furthermore, various sorts of Tiddim Chin books, magazines, and DVDs are currently sold at Christian book shops.

Tiddim Chin’s narrative and colloquial styles mainly differ in verb clause structure, as shown in (1) and (2), although both styles share the same phonological system, morphological process, and vocabulary. In this sense, the present study focuses on colloquial Tiddim Chin.

(1) sâŋ¹ ka¹ = ka²³ hi³
    school 1 = climb¹ cop¹
    “I went to school.” (narrative style)
(2) sâŋ¹ ka²³ =iŋ³
    school climb¹ =1SG.REAL
    “I went to school.” (colloquial style)

2. Phonology
2.1 Inventory of phonemes
Table 1 shows an inventory of consonant phonemes in Tiddim Chin. Any consonant except the glottal stop ʔ [ʔ] may occur in the syllable-initial position; however, fricatives, affricates, and aspirated and voiced stops do not occur in the syllable-final position. Note that stops are unreleased finally, and [kʰ] and [x] are free allophones of the phoneme x.
Table 1. Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>bilabial</th>
<th>labiodental</th>
<th>alveolar</th>
<th>alveolo-palatal</th>
<th>velar</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stop</td>
<td>p [p]</td>
<td>t [t]</td>
<td>k [k]</td>
<td>? [?]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pʰ [pʰ]</td>
<td>tʰ [tʰ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b [b]</td>
<td>d [d]</td>
<td>g [g]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affricate</td>
<td>c [ʨ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ch [ʨʰ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fricative</td>
<td>f [f]</td>
<td>s [s]</td>
<td>x [x ~ kʰ]</td>
<td>h [h]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v [v]</td>
<td>z [z]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nasal</td>
<td>m [m]</td>
<td>n [n]</td>
<td>η [ŋ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liquid</td>
<td>l [l]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lʰ [ɿ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The consonants f [f] (e.g., ʃi'ʃu “with buck teeth”) and cʰ [ʨʰ] (e.g., cʰem'cʰam² “bearded”) can be found only in ideophones. Although the consonant j [ʤ] is not phonemic, it occurs in some English loan words such as ja'pän² [ʤαpα:n] “Japan.”

Table 2 shows the simple vowels, or monophthongs of Tiddim Chin. Length is contrastive for all vowels, except [e] and [o]. In the table, long vowels are indicated in phonemic writing with a circumflex ^ above the vowel.

Table 2. Vowels (monophthongs)

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i [i], iː [iː]</td>
<td>u [u], ũ [uː]</td>
<td>e [e ~ ɛ], ê [eː]</td>
<td>o [o ~ ɔ], ô [ɔː]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a [ɑ], â [ɑː]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tiddim Chin also has diphthongs and triphthongs: iu [iʊ], ia [iɑ], ei [eɪ], êi [eːi], eu [eʊ], êu [eːʊ], ai [ai], âi [ɑːi], au [ɑʊ], âu [ɑːʊ], ou [ou], oï [oi], ōi [ɔːi], ui [uɪ], ūi [uːi], ua [uɑ], iæi [iæi], iæu [iæʊ], uai [uɑi], uau [uɑu], iæi [iæi], and uou [uʊʊ].

As shown in Table 3, Tiddim Chin has three distinctive tones: a rising tone, a level tone, and a falling tone. The pitch of each tone varies according to vowel length and the sonority of a syllable-final consonant.
Table 3. Tones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>long vowel</th>
<th>sonorant final</th>
<th>short vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rising tone</td>
<td>ā¹ [aː˦]</td>
<td>am¹ [am˦]</td>
<td>a¹ [a¹]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level tone</td>
<td>ā² [aː˧]</td>
<td>am² [am˧]</td>
<td>a² [a˧]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>falling tone</td>
<td>ā³ [aː˨]</td>
<td>am³ [am˨]</td>
<td>a³ [a˨]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Syllable structure

Tiddim Chin’s syllable structure can be reduced to (C1) (V1) v2 (V3) (C2) / T, where C1 represents an onset consonant, V represents a vowel, C2 represents a coda consonant, and T represents a tone. Each syllable consists of a vowel and may include an onset and a coda.

A majority of Tiddim Chin morphemes are phonologically monosyllabic (e.g., nê¹ “eat”), though a few show a disyllabic combination of two monosyllabic structures (e.g., paᵗâu³ “nervous”).

CV    mî¹  “person”    CVC    mit³  “eye”
CVV   tâi²  “run away”  CVVC   sial²  “mithan”
CVVV  nuai¹  “below”    CVVVC  suaiʔ³  “drawing”

2.3 Phonological rules

Subsections [1] through [3] describe how phonemes alternate with others when two morphemes converge in a word or a phrase.

[1] Long vowel shortening

A long monophthong in an open syllable is often shortened when another consonant follows in either a word or phrase. A level tone alternates with a rising tone if the long monophthong with the level tone is shortened, as shown in (3).

(3) ni² “day” + pi⁷ “AUG” → ni/pi⁷ “week” (i [i:] → i [i])

[niː]       [piː]  [niːpiː]
As shown in (4) and (5) below, the open diphthong *ua* or *ia* often alternates with the corresponding monophthong *o* [ɔ] or *e* [ɛ] if another consonant follows it in either a word or a phrase. A level tone alternates with a rising tone if the diphthong with the level tone is monophthongized, as shown in (4).

(4) *gua*³ “bamboo” + *tuai*³ “child” → *go¹tuai*³ “bamboo shoot” (*ua* [ua] → *o* [ɔ])

(5) *pia*¹ “give” + *xin³ “finish” → *pe¹xin³ “gave” (*ia* [ia] → *e* [ɛ])

[3] Tone sandhi
Tone sandhi often occurs when each tone converges in a word or a phrase. Immediately after a rising pitch, either a subsequent rising tone shifts to a higher level pitch as in (6), or the subsequent falling tone shifts to a high-falling pitch as in (7). As shown in (8), the monophthong syllable ending with either a glottal stop ? or a close consonant shifts its falling tone to a rising tone if preceded by a level tone. A syllable with a falling tone is generally uttered at a rather high pitch if another consonant follows it in either a word or a phrase. A level tone alternates its falling tone with a rising tone if the vowel is shortened or monophthongized, as in (10).

(6) *sik*¹ “steel” + *kèu*¹ “spoon” → *sik¹kèu*¹ “steel spoon”

(7) *mài*¹ “face” + *zàp³ “fanned” → *mài¹zàp³ “fan”

(8) *köl³gam² “Myanmar” + *a²i “LOC” → *köl³gam² a²i “in Myanmar”

(9) *kam² “mouth” + *pàu³ “spoken” → *kam²pàu³ “language”

(10) *pai* “go” + *tà¹ “PRF” + *diŋ¹ “PURP” → *pai¹tà¹diŋ¹ “be about to go”
2.4 Prosody

In polar questions, an interrogative marker is uttered at a high pitch as shown in (11).

(11) \(vok³-sa¹-me³\) \(na³= ne¹ =dia²\)

[vok³-sa¹-me³\ na¹ ne¹ dia¹ ]

pork-meat-curry \(2= \) eat\(¹ =\)PURP.Q

“Will you eat pork curry?”

As shown in (12), if a clause ends with the single subordinator \(=in²\) or \(=â²\), or the enclitic pronoun \(=in²te²\) (3SG.IRR), the preceding level tone syllable, as well as the conjunction or enclitic pronouns, is often uttered at a high pitch.

(12) \(sum³\ zon³² + xual³ zin¹ \rightarrow sum² zon² =â² xual³ zin¹\)

[sum³ zon³ ] [xual³ zin¹ ] [sum² zon² =a:¹ xual³ zin¹ ]

money search\(¹ \) abroad travel\(¹ \) money search\(¹ =\)CONJN abroad travel\(¹ \)

“to travel in order to find money”

2.5 Morpho-phonological process

Figure 2 illustrates that genitive case in Tiddim Chin is indicated by tonal alternation or the optional genitive marker \(=i\) (§7.4).

![Figure 2. Tonal alternation as a genitive marker (revised from Henderson 1965)](image)

For instance, the genitive form of a personal name \(lian³\) (falling tone) “Lian” is \(lian²\) (level tone), “Lian’s” as illustrated in (13).

(13) \(lian²\) \(nai²\) “Lian’s watch”

PN.GEN watch

As shown in (14) and (15), some locational nouns, such as \(tuy¹ \) “above,” \(nuai¹ \) “below,” \(sun² \) “inside,” and \(kiaŋ² \) “in the vicinity of” alternate their tones with falling tones to indicate locative case.
3. Word Classes

3.1 Words, affixes, and clitics

Each morpheme can be categorized as either a free or bound morpheme. Bound morphemes can be further subdivided into clitics and affixes. Affixes syntactically differ from clitics in that no other element can be inserted between a host and an affix. In other words, clitics function on a phrasal or clausal level, whereas affixes function on a word level. This paper defines both free morphemes and clitics as words. Words can be categorized into the following five major classes: verbals (§3.2), nominals (§3.3), adverbs (§3.4), particles (§3.5), and interjections (§3.6).

3.2 Verbals

Verbals are distinguished from all other word classes in that each verbal word has two verb stem forms, which are referred to as forms I and II, and can be followed by enclitic pronouns or verb modifying particles indicating tense, aspect, or mood (e.g., =keι¹ NEG).

Verbal words can be divided into two types according to their morpheme types: [1] verbs (i.e., free morphemes) and [2] auxiliary verbs (i.e., clitics). They do not inflect for person, number, tense, aspect, or mood.

[1] Verbs

Among verbals, free morphemes are referred to as verbs. A verb can be modified by an auxiliary verb or a verb modifying particle; either of which principally functions as a tense, aspect, or mood marker. A few verbs have morphological pairs of intransitive-transitive verbs distinguished by aspiration (e.g., pûk¹ “to fall” vs. pʰûk¹ “to fell”) or by verb stem alternation (e.g., tâŋ² “to be bright” (form I) vs. tán³ “to brighten” (form II)).

[2] Auxiliary verbs

Clitics belonging to verbals are referred to as auxiliary verbs. An auxiliary verb
always follows another verb. Auxiliary verbs are marked in boldface in examples (16) and (17).

(16) \textit{a'maʔ³ kei¹ =sāŋ¹ =IN² tāi³ hāt¹ zō¹}
\begin{align*}
3SG & \quad 1SG =\text{than} =\text{CONJ} \quad \text{run¹} \quad \text{powerful¹} \quad \text{more¹} \\
\end{align*}
“He runs faster than I.”

(17) \textit{kei¹ a'maʔ³ =toʔ³ pai² xol¹ xôm¹ nuam¹ lou³}
\begin{align*}
1SG & \quad 3SG =\text{COM} \quad \text{go¹} \quad \text{in advance¹} \quad \text{altogether¹} \quad \text{desire¹} \quad \text{NEG¹} \\
\end{align*}
“I do not want to go together with him in advance.”

3.3 Nominals
Nominals serve as arguments of a verb (i.e., subjects or objects) and can be encliticized by case markers. Nominals can also serve as heads of NPs and be modified by noun modifying particles. The majority of nominals are either monosyllabic or disyllabic words except for compound nouns. Nominals can be divided into two types according to their morpheme types: nouns (free morphemes) and bound nouns (clitics).

[1] Nouns
Nouns do not inflect for gender, number, or case, except for free personal pronouns. As described in §7.4, cases are usually marked by enclitics. The following subsections briefly explain three functional features found in nouns: numerals and two kinds of pronouns.

(a) Numerals
Numerals in Tiddim Chin are based on the decimal system.

\begin{align*}
\text{xat}^4 \text{“one,” } & \text{niʔ² “two,” } \text{tʰum² “three,” } \text{lî² “four,” } \text{gâ² “five,” } \text{guk³ “six,” } \text{sa'giʔ³ “seven,” } \\
\text{giat}^1 \text{“eight,” } & \text{kua³ “nine,” } \text{and } \text{sôm³ “ten”}
\end{align*}

Multiples of ten greater than twenty are expressed as shown below: \text{sôm³+niʔ² “twenty,” sôm³+tʰum² “thirty,” sôm³+lî² “forty,” sôm³+gâ² “fifty,” sôm³+guk³ “sixty,” sôm³+sa'giʔ³ “seventy,” sôm³+giat¹ “eighty,” sôm³+kua³ “ninety.”} Cardinal numbers greater than a hundred are \text{zâ³ “hundred,” tûl³ “thousand,” tʰén³ “ten thousand,” sāŋ¹ “hundred thousand,” őn¹ “million,” am¹ “ten million,” and mak³ “billion.”}
“hundred million.” For numerals greater than sôm³ “ten,” the conjunction =leʔ³ “and” is often inserted between each numerical position as illustrated in (18).

(18) tūl¹ =leʔ³ za¹+kua¹ =leʔ³ sôm³+giat¹ =leʔ³ xat¹
thousand =CONJ hundred+nine =CONJ ten+eight =CONJ one

“1,981”

Ordinal numbers are expressed by adding the prefix a- and the noun modifying particle =nâ² to the numeral, as in a¹-xat¹ =nâ² “first” and a¹-niʔ² =nâ² “second”.

(b) Demonstrative pronouns
There are four demonstrative pronouns: hiʔ¹ (proximal), tua² (distal), and hua² or hia² (far distal). The pronoun hiʔ¹ refers to proximal objects or contexts expressed by the speaker, whereas the pronoun tua² refers to distal objects or contexts, that are typically located nearer to the speaker’s speech partner. The pronoun hua² refers to far distal objects or contexts and, is also used when the speaker is in the process of recollection.

(c) Personal pronouns
Personal pronouns distinguish two quantities: singular and plural. Exclusive and inclusive are distinguished for the first-person plural. Genders (i.e., masculine and feminine) are not distinguished. Personal pronouns inflect for number and case; thus Table 4 shows only absolutive, ergative or genitive forms. Other cases are indicated by case markers (§7.4).
Table 4. Free personal pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SG</th>
<th>GEN</th>
<th>SG</th>
<th>GEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>kei¹</td>
<td>kei³</td>
<td>kou³</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>naŋ¹</td>
<td>naŋ³</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>a'ma²</td>
<td>a'ma³</td>
<td>a'mâ³</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[2] Bound nouns

Some nominals do not appear without modifiers and are referred to as bound nouns. Most bound nouns indicate location (e.g., tuy¹ “above,” nuai¹ “below,” and kiaŋ³ “around,” etc.) and require modifiers such as genitive-marked NPs and proclitic pronouns.

3.4 Adverbs

An adverb modifies a VP or a whole sentence by postposing or preposing it to a VP. Some adverbs are unique in their forms, such as fossilized reduplication (e.g., koi¹koi¹ “here and there,” zia²zia³³ “loudly,” dial¹dial¹ “fluttering movement”) and semi-reduplication (e.g., tin¹ten¹ “holding something firmly,” til¹til¹ “humble and modest,” gin¹gen¹ “being thin”), neither of which can be morphologically analyzed any further. As in (19), both reduplicated and semi-reduplicated adverbs often follow VPs. See Henderson (1965: 57) and Bhaskararao (1989) for more details.

(19) na¹ = up³ =nå² lën³ tin¹ten¹ =in³
     2= believe³ =NA hold¹ tight =IMP
     “Hold your belief tight.”

3.5 Particles

A particle is a clitic that precedes or follows a phrase. Particles can be divided into seven types: (a) case markers generally indicating a type of case by encliticizing them to an NP; (b) noun modifying particles following an NP, thus indicating its specific number, place, or time; (c) verb-modifying particles following a VP, thus indicating tense, aspect, or mood; (d) conjunctions connecting two words, phrases,
and clauses (e.g., =â³, =in³, =le³, etc.); (e) adverbial particles following either an NP or a VP and modifying a predicate; (f) final particles occurring at the end of a sentence, thus indicating pragmatic effect; and (g) clitic pronouns. Clitic pronouns can be further divided into proclitic and enclitic pronouns. A proclitic pronoun’s tone is determined by the subsequent tone.

Table 5. Proclitic pronouns

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ka¹/²/³ = i¹/²/³ = (PL.INCL)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>na¹/²/³ =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>a¹/²/³ =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To indicate plural proclitic pronouns, the plural marker =u³ follows the NP, e.g., ka³ nî³ =u³ “our mother”. Enclitic pronouns are formally distinguished by mood, either realis or irrealis (see Table 6). The realis form describes the actual occurrence, whether past or ongoing, whereas the irrealis form describes the desire, necessity, or futurity of some event. Henderson (1965: 109) has stated that in Tiddim Chin, the use of enclitic pronouns is perhaps the most characteristic mark of colloquial style.

Table 6. Enclitic pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Realis Mood (REAL)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Irrealis Mood (IRR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SG</td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>SG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>=iŋ³</td>
<td>=uŋ³ (EXCL)</td>
<td>=nǐ³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>=hâŋ³ (INCL)</td>
<td>=nî³</td>
<td>=nî³ (INCL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>=te²³ / cin³</td>
<td>=u²³te²³ / u²³cin³</td>
<td>=ni²³te²³ / ni²³cin³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>u²³</td>
<td>in²³te²³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 Interjections

Interjections do not have any grammatical relation to any other words, for they express the speaker’s emotions (e.g., ka³lai³ sai³ “Oh my!”, ui³ “Ugh!”, môk³ô³ “How pity it is!,” etc.) and reactions (e.g., hé³ “Yes.” hôi³ “Oh, yes.” hôi³ “What?” ô³
“All right,” etc.

4. Morphology
4.1 Overview (affixation, compounding, reduplication)
Affixation and compounding are productive derivational processes, whereas reduplication is rarely used as a derivational process.

4.2 Nominal morphology
[1] Affixation to nouns
Tiddim Chin has various suffixes to derive one noun from another: 
- *tal*² (masculine suffix) as in *vok³-tal²* (pig-MAS) “hog,” 
- *pi*¹ (feminine suffix) as in *āk²-pi¹* (chicken-FEM) “hen,” 
- *lā²* (a suffix indicating adolescence) as in *sia³-lā²* (mithan-young) “young mithan,” etc.

[2] Compounding
As illustrated in Table 7, there are three types of compound nouns in Tiddim Chin. If the preceding noun is the subject of the following verb, the form I verb stem occurs, as shown in (21). However, as shown in (22), the form II verb stem occurs if the preceding noun is the object of the subsequent verb:

Table 7. Compound noun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Noun + Noun</th>
<th>Noun + Verb (Form I)</th>
<th>Noun + Verb (Form II)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><em>ha³-zā³</em></td>
<td><em>mi¹-hai¹</em></td>
<td><em>kōŋ¹-gâk³</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tooth-medicine</td>
<td>person-crazy¹</td>
<td>waist-tighten²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“toothpaste”</td>
<td>“idiot”</td>
<td>“belt”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[3] Reduplication
Some interrogative words, such as *baŋ³* “what” and *kua¹* “who,” are reduplicated, and may be translated to English as “whatever” and “whoever,” respectively, as shown in (23) and (24):
(23) baŋ³+baŋ³ na¹= si³ =zön³ =in² ki³- lôm² =teʔ²
   “Whatever you wear, it suits you.”

(24) kua³+kua³ a¹= hi³ =zön³ =â² nâi² xa² =môk¹ ka¹= hi³ =vê²
   “I accidentally fell in love with whoever she is.”

Aside from the interrogative words described above, nominals are rarely reduplicated. Some personal names are fully or partially reduplicated to form corresponding nicknames. For example, the boy’s name xâi² can be fully reduplicated to make his nickname xâi²xâi², whereas the girl’s name vuŋ² can be partially reduplicated to make her nickname vu⁻¹-vuŋ².

4.3 Verbal morphology
4.3.1 Form I and form II

Each verb has two alternating stems, form I and form II, whose usage depends on grammatical context. This peculiar verb stem alternation is common to almost all Kuki-Chin languages but is not linked in any simple way to a single parameter of grammatical variation, such as tense, aspect, or mood. A form I verb generally occurs in unmarked conclusive clauses, whereas a form II verb often occurs in marked clauses, such as certain transitive or subordinate clauses.

Some verbs alternate either a single final phoneme (see (25) and (26)) or a tone (see (27)), whereas other verbs alternate both as in (28). Some other verbs, however, have formally homophonous forms I and II, as seen in (29).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form I</th>
<th>Form II</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(25) ciâm¹</td>
<td>ciap¹</td>
<td>“to taste”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(26) nê¹</td>
<td>nêk¹</td>
<td>“to eat”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(27) pai²</td>
<td>pai³</td>
<td>“to go”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(28) sam¹</td>
<td>sap³</td>
<td>“to call”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(29) hoîʔ³</td>
<td>hoîʔ³</td>
<td>“to be good”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Syntactically, this verb stem alternation in Tiddim Chin may have some
relevance to transitivization, nominalization, and adverbialization, each of which is described below.

[1] Transitivization

Table 8 shows that some verbs have morphological pairs of intransitive-transitive verbs derived by verb stem alternation. This morphological process is no longer productive, yet the form II verb stem occurs if attached to certain transitivizing suffixes, such as -sak³ (substitutive or benefactive), -pi³ (comitative), and -san³ (relinquitive). This will be described further in § 7.8.

Table 8. Transitivity and verb stems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Form I</th>
<th>Form II</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dim¹</td>
<td>dim³</td>
<td>“to be full”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dim¹</td>
<td>dip³</td>
<td>“to fill”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[2] Nominalization

In Tiddim Chin, no nominalizer is necessary to nominalize a verb as shown in (30).

(30) ka¹ = dôn³ nop³ =pên² niαn²+tâi¹ a¹ = hi³ =vê²
1= drink³ desire³ =TOP tea+water 3= COP¹ =FIN
“What I want to drink is tea.”


In a compound verb (§4.3.2 [2]), if the second verb occurs in form II, then the first word functions adverbially: no³-tâi³ (fast¹-run²) “to run fast,” nâi¹-et³ (close¹-watch²) “to watch closely,” tôŋ³-om³ (corner-exist²) “to exist at the corner,” tʰûk¹-xum¹ (sour¹-sweet²) “to be sour-sweet,” etc.

4.3.2 Derivation process

[1] Affixation

Several verb prefixes can attach to form I verb stems in the unmarked clause, including ki², a middle voice prefix functioning as an impersonal, reflexive, or
reciprocal marker; \( na'\), indicating an event that takes place without either of the speech participants; \( va'\), indicating the direction away from the speech participants; and \( o\'), indicating the direction toward the speech participants. Certain transitivizing suffixes, such as -\( sak\) (substitutive or benefactive), -\( pi\)' (comitative) and -\( san\) (relinquitive), can attach to form II verbs.

[2] Compounding
Table 9 shows Tiddim Chin’s three types of verbal compounding.

Table 9. Compound verbs

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Verb (Form I) + Verb (Form I)</td>
<td>( \text{di}y'\text{xia}^1) stand(^1)-fell(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“to depart”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Verb (Form I) + Verb (Form II)</td>
<td>( \text{s=an}^2\text{=dian}^3) high(^1)-jump(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“to jump high”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Noun + Verb (Form I)</td>
<td>( \text{lam}^1\text{-d=an}^1) road-other(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“to be surprised”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[3] Reduplication
A verb can be reduplicated to express continuous or habitual action, as seen in (34). Though it is a nonproductive process, some verbs are adverbialized by reduplication, as seen in (35).

(34) \( \text{li}\text{an'pi}^1\) \( \text{i}^2\text{mu}^2\text{-m\=u}^2\)
    \( \text{PN} \text{RDP:sleep}^1 \)
    “Lianpi is always sleeping.”

(35) \( a'm\=a^2\) \( \text{k\=o}^3\text{+p\=au}^3\)
    \( \text{3SG} \text{Myanmar+language RDP:little}^1 \text{=only speak}^1 \text{can}^1 \)
    “He can speak Myanmar language only a little.”

4.4 Class-changing derivation
Within the narrow limits of this study’s data, only one apparent class-changing process has been found: the nominal suffix -\( v\=ai\) functions as a verbalizer, as seen in \( p\=a'sal^1\text{-v\=ai}^1\) (male-VBLZ) “to be manly”.
5. Syntax

5.1 Basic clause structure and word order
Tiddim Chin is a predicate-final language. The unmarked word order is SV in an intransitive clause and AOV in a transitive clause, as shown in (36) and (37), respectively. During discourse, however, elements of little importance tend to be omitted. As in (38), the copula verb hi³ is used in copula clauses; its unmarked word order is SCV.

(36) zu'sā¹ tāi²
    mouse run¹
    “A mouse runs.” (Intransitive clause: SV)

(37) lian³ =in³ an¹ nè³
    PN =ERG meal eat¹
    “Lian ate meal.” (Transitive clause: AOV)

(38) lian³ =pên² sāŋ¹+nāu²paŋ¹ hi³
    PN =TOP school+child COP¹
    “Lian is a student.” (Copula clause: SCV)

5.2 Noun phrases
The basic structure of an NP is illustrated below. The head noun appears in boldface.

(DEM) (proclitic pronoun) (N.GEN or ABS) N (V) (noun modifier) (NUM) case marker

A demonstrative, a proclitic pronoun, or a genitive noun may precede a head noun as a modifier, whereas a verb, a noun modifier, or a numeral may follow a head noun in an unmarked construction, as shown in (39), where the head noun appears in boldface.

(DEM) proclitic pronoun N.GEN N verb NUM case marker

(39) tua² ka¹= nú³ pāk² san² xat³ =to²³
    DEM 1= mother.GEN flower red¹ one =COM
    “with that one red flower of my mother’s” (elicited example)
5.3 Verb phrases
In colloquial Tiddim Chin, a verb can be a predicate without any other element, though verbs are often accompanied by modifiers. The structure of a verb phrase can be schematized as in (40) where the main verb appears in boldface.

(proclitic pronoun) \( \text{V} \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{(auxiliary verb)} \\ \text{(verb modifier)} \\ \text{(adverb)} \end{array} \right\} \) (enclitic pronoun)

\( \text{V} \)  adverb  auxiliary verb  verb modifier  enclitic pronoun

(40) \( t'\text{uak}^2 \)  \( \text{kêi}'\text{kai}^2 \)  \( \text{zou}' \)  \( =\text{kei}' \)  \( =\text{uŋ}^3 \)
bear\(^1\)  endurably  able\(^1\)  =NEG  =1PL.REAL

“We are not able to bear it endurably.”

6. Grammatical Relations (i.e., Subject and Object)
Grammatical subjects agree with clitic pronouns in person and number, as shown in (41).

(41) \( \text{za}^\text{ŋ}^2 \) \( \text{kô}^\text{ŋ}^2 \)  \( =\text{a}'\text{ʔ}^1 \)  \( \text{ka}' \text{n}^3 \)  \( a'\text{ma}^\text{ʔ}^3 \)  \( \text{mu}^3 \)  \( =\text{ŋe}'\text{i}^1 \)  \( =\text{iŋ}'^3 \)
\( \text{PN} \)  =LOC  1SG.ERG  3SG  see\(^1\)  =ever  =1SG.REAL

‘I have seen her in Yangon.’

Meanwhile, as in (42), an object can be identified morpho-syntactically by the prefix \( oŋ'- \), which affixes to a verb if the patient or recipient is a speech-act participant in the transitive clause:

(42) \( \text{za}^\text{ŋ}'\text{kon}^3 \)  \( =\text{a}'\text{ʔ}^1 \)  \( a'm\text{an}'^3 \)  \( \text{ŋaŋ}' \)  \( oŋ'-\text{mû}^3 \)
\( \text{PN} \)  =LOC  3SG.ERG  2SG  DIR-  see\(^1\)

“He saw you in Yangon.”

Semantically, an agent, an experiencer, and the like (i.e., agent-like argument) are prototypical subjects, whereas a patient, a causee, a recipient, and the like (i.e., patient-like argument) tend to be objects.
7. Functional Categories

7.1 Interrogative sentences

Interrogative sentences can be categorized as either polar or content questions. In an interrogative sentence, the purposive particle =dìŋ³ indicates irrealis mood, whereas the auxiliary verb lou³ indicates negative mood. The prosodic feature of interrogative sentences is discussed in §2.4.

[1] Polar questions

The expected answer to a polar question is the equivalent of either “yes” or “no”. To express a polar question, one of the interrogative markers =mô³, =na¹, =tam¹, =dia², =diam², =a², or =am² needs to be used. =mô³ can be directly attached to a VP, but the others follow VPs with proclitic pronouns. The interrogative marker =a² or =am² must follow the copula verb hî³. The particle =dia² or =diam² is used to indicate an interrogative sentence in the irrealis mood.

(43) a¹ma² PN ja²pån² =a²l pai³ =kîk³ =dîŋ³ =mô³
   3SG PN =LOC go¹ =ITER =PUR =Q
   “Is he going to Japan again?”

(44) sàŋ¹ na¹ = ka² PN =na¹
   school 2= climb¹ =Q
   “Do you go to school?”

(45) lùn³boï³ PN =in³ volt³-så³  a³= ne¹ t³ei³ hi³ =a³
   PN =ERG pig-meat 3= eat¹ can¹ COP¹ =Q
   “Can Lunboih eat pork?”

The interrogative markers =am², =diam² and =tam² are used in both direct and indirect questions, as shown in (46), whereas the other interrogative markers tend to be used in direct questions.

(46) volt³+så³ PN = na³ ne¹ t³ei³ hi³ ?=a² / =am² t³ei³ =ken¹
   pig-meat 2= eat¹ can¹ COP¹ =Q know¹ =NEG.1SG.REAL
   “I don’t know whether you can eat pork.”
[2] Content questions
Content questions contain one of the interrogative words: bang³ “what,” koi¹ “where,” kua¹ “who,” and cik³ “when.” In content questions, an interrogative marker is not necessary (as seen in (47)), though an interrogative marker =a² or =am² is occasionally used. Example (48) shows that the copula verb hi³ and the interrogative marker =a² or =am² can be omitted.

(47) koʔ¹ pai² =diŋ¹
   where.LOC go¹ =PURP
   “Where are you going?”

(48) bang³ sêm³ a¹ = (hi³ =a²)
   what do¹ 3= COP¹ =Q
   “What did he do?”

Polar questions with speculated answers have been referred to as “biased questions” by Sadock and Zwicky (1985). The structure of the predicate in the biased question is similar to that of the predicate in the content question as in (49).

(49) vok¹+sâ¹ ne¹ têi³ a¹ = hi³ =a²
   pig+meat eat¹ can¹ 3= COP¹ =Q
   “He can eat pork, can’t he?”

7.2 Imperatives
As shown in (50), the imperative marker =in³, =ou³, =vê² or =sin³ follows a VP to indicate singular imperative mood, whereas attaching =un¹, =vuou¹, =vê³vua² or =sin³ =u² to a VP indicates plural imperative mood as shown in (51). Note that =sin³ is always uttered at a high pitch. Imperative markers can be omitted when authoritatively commanding somebody. For negative imperative mood, the negative marker =kei¹ or =da² is used, as seen in (52).

(50) niany²+tûi¹ dôn² { =in³ / =ou³ / =vê² / =sin³ }
   tea+water drink¹ =IMP =IMP =IMP =IMP
   “Drink tea!”
(51) bôŋ²+nôi¹ dön² { =un³ /=vuou³ /=vê³vua² /=sin³ =u²³ }  
cow+milk say¹ =PL.IMP =PL.IMP =PL.IMP =IMP =PL  
“Drink milk, guys!”

(52) zû² dön² { =ken³ /=kei¹ =ou¹ /=kei¹ =vê² /=kei¹ =sin³ }  
liquor drink¹ =NEG.IMP =NEG =IMP =NEG =IMP =NEG =IMP  
“Don’t drink liquor!”

7.3 Equation, proper inclusion, location, possession
As shown in (53) and (54), the verb hî³ is used as a copula to express equation or proper inclusion.

(53) a’mâ²¹ =pên² ka¹= pâ¹ hî³  
3SG =TOP l= father COP¹  
“He is my father.”

(54) nu¹+cîn¹ =pên sau¹+sia¹+nû¹ hî³  
aunt¹+PN =TOP school+teacher.GEN+woman COP¹  
“Aunty Cin is a school teacher.”

A verb om¹ “exist” is used in unmarked locational clauses, as shown in (55).

(55) ka³¹ =tâ¹ =tê¹ te’dim² =a²¹ om¹  
l= son =PL PN =LOC exist¹  
“My sons are at Tiddim.”

As shown in (56) and (57), there are two ways to express possession. The verb om¹ “exist” expresses not only existence but also possession:

(56) ken¹ môʔtô² xat¹ nei³  
1SG.ERG car one have¹  
“I have a car.”

(57) kei³ kian² =a²¹ môʔtô² xat¹ om¹  
1SG.GEN place =LOC car one exist¹  
“I have a car. / There is a car at my place.”
7.4 Case
Case on nouns is represented mainly by enclitics; genitive and locative cases are also indicated by tonal alternation (§2.5). Absolutive case is realized as zero-forms. Data show nine morphological cases in Tiddim Chin: =Ø for absolutive (i.e., intransitive subject, object, and subject of a copula verb); =in¹ for ergative (i.e., transitive subject); =i² for genitive (i.e., possessor); =to² for comitative (i.e., company, ways, and means); =in² for instrumental (i.e., ways and means as well as instrument); either =a² or =â² for locative (i.e., location of existence or action, as well as goal); =don¹ for terminative (i.e., terminal point of time or location); =pan¹ for ablative (i.e., starting point in time or location); =sây¹ for comparative (i.e., object for comparison).

7.5 Noun class (Gender)
There are no noun classes in Tiddim Chin.

7.6 Person
A directional prefix on⁴-, which generally indicates a deictic spatial direction or a change of state involving the speech-act participant, also functions as a kind of inverse marker in transitive clauses. The directional prefix on⁴- must be attached to a verb if a patient or recipient is a speech-act participant, as shown in (58) and (59).

(58) lian³ =in¹ kei¹ on⁴- mû³
PN =ERG 1SG DIR- see¹
“Lian saw me.”

(59) na¹= vok⁴+man³ on⁴- pe¹ =kei¹ =niy¹
2= pig+price DIR- give¹ =NEG =1SG.IRR
“I won’t pay you the money for your pig!”

Proclitic pronouns primarily indicate either possessors (as described in §3.5) or subjects of nominalized or relativized clauses, as in (60):

(60) tua² mou²⁴ a¹= nêk¹ ken¹ mû³ =iy³
DEM snack 3= eatii 1SG.ERG see¹ =1SG.REAL
“I saw him eating the snack.”
As shown in (61), the enclitic pronoun follows the VP to mark the subject.

(61) \((\text{ken}³) \text{tay}³\text{máî}² \text{tum}² \text{lei}¹ =\text{in}³\)
1SG.ERG cucumber three buy¹ =1SG.REAL
“I bought three cucumbers.”

7.7 Number
Number as an obligatory category does not exist in Tiddim Chin. In other words, one form can designate either a single or plural reference. To specify plurality, the optional plural marker \(=tè³\) or \(=\text{tey}²\) needs to be postposed to a NP, such as \(\text{lài}³\text{bû}² =tè³\) (book =PL) or \(\text{lài}³\text{bû}² =\text{tey}²\) (book =PL) “books.”

7.8 Valence-changing
7.8.1 Valence-increasing operations
As shown in (62)b, causatives are expressed by attaching the particle \(=\text{sak}³\) to a form I verb stem.

(62) a. \(\text{kei}¹ \text{zum}³ =\text{a}²\text{i}³ \text{pai}²\)
1SG office =LOC go¹
“I go to the office.”

b. \(\text{nu}³\text{hâu}³ =\text{in}³ \text{kei}¹ \text{zum}³ =\text{a}²\text{i}³ \text{ön}¹\text{-} \text{pai}² =\text{sak}³\)
\(\text{aunt}+\text{PN} =\text{ERG} 1\text{SG} \text{office} =\text{LOC} \text{DIR} - \text{go}¹ =\text{CAUS}\)
“Aunty Hau made me go to the office.”

As shown in (63) to (65), the transitivizing suffixes \(-\text{sak}³\) (substitutive or benefactive), \(-\text{pi}²\) (comitative), and \(-\text{san}³\) (relinquitive) must be attached to a form II verb. In a relinquutive construction, the agent argument performs an activity leaving the patient behind.

(63) a. \(\text{nu}³\text{hâu}³ =\text{in}³ \text{me}²\text{bôl}²\)
\(\text{aunt}+\text{PN} =\text{ERG} \text{curry} \text{make}¹\)
“Aunty Hau made a curry.”
b. \( n^u+h^u =i^3 \quad l^i n^3 \quad m^e^2 \quad b^o^l^i \quad -s^a^k^i \)
\( a^u n^t^+P^N \quad =E^R^G \quad P^N \quad c^u r^y \quad m^a^k^e^2 \quad -T^R^V^Z \)
“Aunty Hau made a curry for Lian.” (benefactive)

(64) a. \( k^e^i \quad v^a^k^l^i \)
\( 1^g^S^G \quad g^o^u^t^l^i \)
“I went out.”

b. \( k^e^n^3 \quad a^'m^a^2^3 \quad v^a^k^3 \quad -p^i^2^3 \)
\( 1^g^S^G.E^R^G \quad 3^g^S^G \quad g^o^u^t^l^i^2 \quad -T^R^V^Z \)
“I went out along with him.” (comitative)

(65) a. \( n^u^l^+c^i^y^2 \quad t^a^i^2 \)
\( a^u n^t^+P^N \quad r^u^l^i \)
“Aunty Cing ran away.”

b. \( n^u^l^+c^i^y^2 \quad =i^3 \quad l^i n^3 \quad t^a^i^2 \quad -s^a^n^2 \)
\( a^u n^t^+P^N \quad =E^R^G \quad P^N \quad r^u^l^i^2 \quad -T^R^V^Z \)
“Aunty Cing ran away leaving Lian behind.” (relinquitive)

7.8.2 Valence-decreasing operation
As shown in (66) to (68), the verbal prefix \( k^i^l^2 \) indicates middle voice and thus functions as an impersonal, reciprocal, or reflexive marker.

(66) \( k^a^p^l^i \quad k^i^3 \_ \quad t^a^t^3 \)
\( P^N \quad M^D^L^2^\_ \quad k^i^l^i \)
“Someone killed Kap.” (impersonal)

(67) \( k^e^i^l \quad a^'m^a^2^3 \quad =t^o^2^3 \quad k^i^3 \_ \quad l^a^i^l^i \)
\( 1^g^S^G \quad 3^g^S^G \quad =C^O^M \quad M^D^L^2^\_ \quad f^i^g^h^t^l^i \)
“I argued with him.” (reciprocal)

(68) \( n^a^y^l \quad =l^e^2^3 \quad n^a^y^l \quad k^i^3 \_ \quad d^a^l^1 \quad =o^u^3 \)
\( 2^g^S^G \quad =C^O^N^J^N \quad 2^g^S^G \quad M^D^L^2 \_ \quad p^r^o^t^e^c^t^l^i \quad =I^M^P \)
“Protect yourself.” (reflexive)

7.9 Negation
Negation is expressed by attaching one of three negative markers: the verb modifying particles \( =k^e^i^l^ \) and \( =d^a^2^3 \), or the negative auxiliary verb \( l^o^u^3 \). A
co-occurrence restriction holds in which an enclitic pronoun cannot follow the negative auxiliary verb *lou³* in a main clause; this is demonstrated in (70). Also, the negative particle =*da³* occurs only in clauses indicating the speaker’s intentions or in imperative sentences.

(69) *kou³ tei³ nuam¹ { =kei¹ / =da³ } =uŋ³*

1PL know¹ desire¹ =NEG =1PL.REAL

“We don’t want to know.”

(70) *kou³ tei³ nuam¹ lou³ (*=uŋ³)*

1PL know¹ desire¹ NEG¹ =1PL.REAL

“We don’t want to know.”

7.10 Tense, aspect, and mood

There is a major, formal distinction between irrealis and realis moods. On the one hand, realis mood is indicated either by using the realis form of an enclitic pronoun as in (71) or by zero marking as in (72). On the other hand, irrealis mood is expressed by either using the irrealis form of an enclitic pronoun, as shown in (73), or by using the purposive particle =*dĩŋ¹* as in (74). The other kinds of mood, tense, and aspect are marked by verb-modifying particles such as the perfective marker =*ta³*, the iterative marker =*kįk¹*, the continuative marker =*lai²*, and the near future marker =*dek³*.

(71) *kou³ vâk¹ =uŋ³*

1PL go out¹ =1PL.REAL

“We went out.”

(72) *kou³ vâk¹*

1PL go out¹ =1PL.REAL

“We went out.”

(73) *kou³ vâk¹ =nûŋ³*

1PL go out¹ =1PL.IRR

“We will go out.”

(74) *kou³ vâk¹ =dĩŋ¹*

1PL go out¹ =PURP

“We will go out.”

7.11 Information structure (topic and focus)

Topic is typically expressed either by using the topic marker =*pẽn²* or by changing the word order. The unmarked word order of a transitive clause is AOV, though as shown in (75), OAV order also occurs in marked clauses in which O is topicalized. Focus constructions such as pseudo-cleft sentences can also occur as in (76):
(75) $\text{tua}^2 \text{ mou}^3 = \text{pen}^2 \text{ lian}^3 = \text{in}^4 \text{ ne}^1 \text{ xin}^3$
DEM snack $=$TOP PN $=$ERG eat$^1$ finish$^1$
“As for that snack, Lian has eaten it.”

(76) $\text{ken}^4 \text{ ka}^3 = \text{vuak}^1 = \text{pen}^2 \text{ a'ma}^2 \text{ a}^4 = \text{hi}^3 = \text{ve}^2$
1SG.ERG 1$=$ beat$^H$ $=$TOP 3SG 3$=$ COP$^C$ $=$MOD
“It is him that I beat up.”

8. Clause Combining

8.1 Overview of clause combining
Tiddim Chin uses two major types of clause combinations: coordination and subordination. Some conjunctions and noun-modifying particles can function as subordinators.

8.2 Coordination
In coordination two clauses of equal grammatical status are combined. As shown in (77), inserting the conjunction $=\text{in}^3$ between two clauses often indicates coordination:

(77) $\text{tū'lāi}^2 =\text{tak}^1 \text{ lian}^3 = \text{in}^3 \text{ lài}^3 \text{ sim}^2 = \text{in}^3 \text{ a}^3 = \text{nūn}^3 \text{ an}^1$
\text{huan}!
present time $=$just PN $=$ERG letter $=$ERG meal $=$read$^H$ $=$CONJ 3$=$ mother.ERG meal
cook$^C$
“Now, Lian is reading a book, and his mother is cooking meal.”

8.3 Subordination
1.1.1. Complement clauses
A complement clause corresponds to the subject or object of the verb in another larger clause. As shown in (78), noun clauses are embedded within another clause and are generally indicated either by attaching (a) a proclitic pronoun or (b) a genitive NP to a form II verb as its subject. The proclitic pronoun indicating a third person can be omitted if unnecessary.
(78) a. hiʔ1 pân³ tua² mouʔ³ (a³=) nêk¹ ken³ mú³ =ŋ³
   DEM man.ERG DEM snack 3= eat¹l 1SG.ERG see¹ =1SG.REAL
b. hiʔ1 pâ³ tua² mouʔ³ nêk¹ ken³ mú³ =ŋ³
   DEM man.GEN DEM snack eat¹l 1SG.ERG see¹ =1SG.REAL
   “I saw this man eating that snack.”

As in (79) and (80), either cî³ “to say” or sâ³ “to think, to feel” directly follows
a clause without any subordinator or alternating the verb stem.

(79) ken³ lou¹ =bek¹ koi¹- lei¹ ci³
   1SG.ERG field =only 1.DIR- buy¹ say¹
   “I only bought a field, he said.”

(80) a’mâ³ hiʔ1 meʔ³ =pên³ nel² sâ³
   3SG.ERG DEM curry =TOP greasy¹ think¹
   “He thought this curry is greasy.”

If a matrix verb is a speech-act verb describing either internal or external
speech (e.g., gên¹ “speak,” don³ “ask,” ki’ciam³ “promise,” tân’y’kou³ “declare,” zâ¹
“hear,” t’ei³ “know,” um³ “believe,” lam’en¹ “hope,” xen’sat¹ “decide,” ŋâi²’sun³
“consider,” p’ôk¹ “realize,” and tel¹ “understand” etc.), the conjunction =in² or =â²
functions as a complementizer as in (81). Irrealis mood is indicated with the
purposive particle =dîŋ¹, as seen in (82). The conjunction is often omitted.

(81) lian’nou¹ =in³ huai’kim² ŋâi² =in³ t’ei³ =ŋ³
   PN =ERG PN love¹ =CONJN know¹ =1SG.REAL
   “I know that Lianno loves Huaikim.”

(82) ja’pân² =a²¹ nà’sèm³ =dîŋ¹ (=in²) xen²’sat¹ =ŋ³
   PN =LOC work¹ =PURP =CONJN decide¹ =1SG.REAL
   “I decided that I would work in Japan.”

8.3.1 Relative clauses
Tiddim Chin does not require any relativizers to indicate relative clauses. The
relative clause precedes or follows the head NP. If the subject is relativized, then
form I is selected for the verb stem in the relative clause, as shown in (83) and (84).

(83) lian³ =in¹ lái’bû¹ a³= sa?³ =pian¹ xat³ sim²
PN =ERG book 3= thick¹ =rather one read¹
“Lian is reading a book which is rather thick.”

(84) xuai² a²= zon³ zon³ a³= nû¹ =zon³ tua² xuai² =in³ de³?
bee 3= search¹ search¹ 3= mother =also DEM bee =ERG sting¹
“The bee also stung a mother who had searched for the bee.”

Conversely, form II is chosen for the verb stem in the relative clause if a non-subject, such as an object, is relativized, as shown in (85) and (86). The subject of the relative clause appears in the form of a genitive-marked NP, or a proclitic pronoun accompanied by an optional ergative NP.

(85) { na¹= / naŋ³ } me²³ nêk¹ a³= lim² hî³ =a³
2= 2SG.GEN curry eatⅡ 3= tastyⅠ COPⅠ =Q
“Is the curry that you tasted good?”

(86) lian² pa²ñák³ huai’nû³ xuî³ =in³ tén³ -pi³?
P.N.GEN likeⅡ PN PN =ERG marryⅡ -COM
“Khup married Huainu, whom Lian liked.”

If the other type of oblique NP is relativized, then the noun modifying particle =nà² follows the form II verb stem. As shown in (87), the relative clause precedes the head noun in this case.

(87) zan³kôn³ =a³? { ei³ / i³= } pai³ =nà² mô³ñ³²
PN =LOC I.PL.INCL.GEN / I.PL.INCL goⅡ =NA car
oŋ²- ki³- le²² =kîk¹
DIR- MDL- turn¹ =again
“The car by which we went to Yangon turned back here.”

8.3.2 Adverbial clauses
Adverbial clauses are indicated by either a single subordinator or by a combination
of subordinators. Subordinators can be classified either as noun-modifying particles or as conjunctions. Syntactically, there are two major types of adverbial clauses in Tiddim Chin. Some adverbial clauses employ form I verb stems for their predicates, whereas others employ form II.

[1] Form I verbs
In some adverbial clauses with clause-final subordinators such as =in² (purposes and sequential actions, among others), =â² (purposes and sequential actions, among others), =le?³ (conditions), =ta’le?³ (concessives), and =na’pi³ (concessives), the form I verb stem may be used, as shown in (88):

(88) a’ma²⁹ zon² =in² pai³ =iy³
   3SG search¹ =CONJN go¹ =1SG.REAL
   “I went to look for him.” (purpose)

An enclitic pronoun is required after the subordinators =le?³ (conditionals), =ta’le?³ (concessives), and =na’pi³ (concessives). The subordinator =le?³ and the enclitic pronoun =iy³ are fused to =lê³ŋ³, as shown in (89). An enclitic is occasionally followed by a subordinator =â² to express a reason clause, as in (90).

(89) kei¹ nag¹ hi³ =lê³ŋ³ tua¹ nú¹ =to²³ pai³ xôm³ =niy¹
   1SG 2SG COP¹ =CONJN.1SG DEM.GEN woman =COM go¹ together¹ =1SG.IRR
   “If I were you, I’d go with the woman.”
   (=le?³ <CONJN> +=iy¹ <1SG.REAL> → =lê³ŋ³)
(90) lâ³ hân’ciam² =iy³ =â² ka¹= lâ³ŋ² on² ka¹= hi³ =vê²
   letter exert¹ =1SG.REAL =CONJN 1= letter pass¹ 1= COP¹
   =MOD
   “As I studied hard, I passed an exam.”

[2] Form II verbs
If either conjunction =in² or =â² directly follows a predicate verb in form II with a proclitic pronoun, the clause expresses a sequential action as shown in (91). Some noun modifying particles also function as subordinators, such as =le?³ (conditionals), =ciay¹ (reason, time), =hân¹ (adversative, reason), =man¹ (reason), =kôm²
(simultaneous action), and =teʔ² ("thereafter"). These subordinators may follow a form II verb stem as in (92). As in (93), a subordinator =ciay³ or =hâŋ³ occasionally alternates its tone with =ciay³ or =hâŋ³ without either conjunction =â² or =in²:

(91) zîŋ'saŋ² ka¹= tʰo²= â² xua² vâk² =tâ¹
morning 1= arise ii =CONJ weather lighten i =PFV
“When I got up in the morning, the sun had already risen.” (sequential action)

(92) zaŋ’kɔŋ³ na¹= tun³ =ciay⁴ =in² tʰû¹ on⁴- ŋa⁴= sak⁴ =ou³
PN 2= arrive ii =time =CONJN matter DIR- get i =CAUS =IMP
“Please let me know when you arrive at Yangon.” (time)

(93) hiʔ³ lâi³ sim² ka¹ hiʔ³ =hâŋ³ ka²= luŋ² lût¹ =kei¹
DEM letter read i l= COP ii =but 1= heart enter i =NEG
“I read this book; however, I was not interested in it.” (adversative)

9. Text: “Peng Lam leh a sial” (Peng Lam and his mithan)

ni¹=daŋ¹ =lâi² =in² peŋ²lam¹ a¹= ki⁵- ci³ pa’sal¹ xat³ om¹
day+other¹ =around =CONJN PN 3= MDL- say i male one exist i
once upon a time a man called Peng Lam exists
“Once upon a time, there was a man called Peng Lam.”

tua² peŋ²lam¹ gam² lak¹ =aʔ³ vâk¹ kôi’kôi¹
DEM PN jungle inside =LOC walk out¹ here and there
that Peng Lam in the jungle walked here and there
“Peng Lam was walking here and there in the jungle.”

a¹= vâk³ =nâ² =aʔ¹ a³= to¹+van² bèl²+sia¹ xat³ mù³
3= walk out ii =NA =LOC 3= bottom+hollow¹ pot+broken¹ one find i
at the place where he walked one broken pot with a hole in the bottom found
“He found a broken pot with a hole in the bottom.”

Tua² bèl³+sia¹ a³= in¹ =a³³ cia³³ -pi³³

DEM pot+broken¹ 3= house =LOC return³³ -COM

that broken pot to his house returned with

“He returned home with the broken pot.”

[5] Inn a tun ciangin, a nu a lah leh,

in¹ a¹= tun³ =ciän¹ =in³ a³= nú¹ a¹= la³³ =le³³

house 3= arrive³³ =TIME =CONJN 3= mother 3= show³³ =CONJN

when he arrived when he showed it to his mother

a nu in tua beel+sia deih lo-in tai.

a³= nú¹ =in³ tua bèl³+sia¹ deï³³ lou³ =in² táï³

3= mother =ERG DEM pot broken¹ like³ NEG =CONJN scold³

his mother didn’t like the broken pot and scolded him

“When he arrived home, and showed it to his mother, his mother didn’t like the broken pot, so she scolded him.”


peŋ³lam¹ =zon³ lou¹ =a³³ a¹= pai³ =le³³ sial² xat³ mu³ =le'u³le'u³

PN =also field =LOC 3= go³³ =CONJN mithan one find³ again

Peng Lam also at the field when he went a mithan found again

“Peng Lam went out again and found a mithan in the field.”


lam¹ -pi³ =a³³ tua² sial² =in³ èk³ tʰâ³

road -AUG =LOC DEM mithan =ERG feces defecate¹

on the big road that mithan defecated

“On the big road, the mithan defecated.”


tua² a¹= hi³³ =man³ =in² peŋ³lam¹ =in³ hi³³ sial² =zon³ a³³= tô³

DEM 3= COP³³ =cause =CONJN PN =ERG DEM mithan =also 3= bottom

because of that Peng Lam this mithan also his bottom
“Because of that, Peng Lam said, ‘The mithan’s bottom has a hole, too, so my mother won’t like it.’ He killed it.”

“He killed it, and returned home with only its thigh, taken from inside the body.”

“While returning home, he broke wind on the big road.”
“It was so stinky that Peng Lam smelt a very bad smell.”

“However, he didn’t realize that it was his fart, and he thought it was the mithan’s.”

“Mithan, it hasn’t been much time since I killed you! ”

“Why do you smell bad?”
c^3 i=in\textsuperscript{2} tua\textsuperscript{3} sial\textsuperscript{1} p^\textsuperscript{3}ei\textsuperscript{3} pâi\textsuperscript{3}
say\textsuperscript{1} =CONJN DEM mithan.GEN thigh throw.away\textsuperscript{3}
said and that mithan’s thigh threw away
“he said, and threw away the mithan’s thigh.”

References

Abbreviation