Chapter 2
Methodology

This research includes the analysis of relevant literature and the collection of Lemi Chin language data which will then be analyzed in light of the conclusions drawn from the literature review.

2.1 Literature Review

While there is no clear consensus on the description and analysis of minor syllables, there is ample literature related to the topic.

(a) Extensive literature research will be done on the topic of minor syllables, with a focus on Southeast Asian languages. Minor syllables have been written about using a wide variety of terms, so literature resources were found by searching for published research containing any of these related terms.

(b) A wide overview of the use of the term 'minor syllable' and other similar terms will be presented and the definitions of such terms will be defined and compared.

(c) In order to analyze minor syllables as a prosodic feature, various topics regarding syllable structure will be covered including weight, stress, and other prosodic features.

Library and on-line resources were used to access sources.

2.2 Data Collection

The Lemi language data for this study was gathered in May-August 2007, and November-December 2008. The collection took place in Yangon, where it was possible to meet with several Lemi people who were currently in Yangon either for work or educational reasons.

2.2.1 Wordlist Preparation

A wordlist of 1,615 words was used to collect the Lemi Chin data. This wordlist is a combination of the SIL Mainland Southeast Asia (MSEA) 449 item wordlist adapted from the SIL MSEA 436 item wordlist for use with Tibeto-Burman languages, and the 1,700 SIL Comparative African Wordlist (Snider & Robert 2006). Both wordlists were translated into Burmese to aid communication during the collection process.[2]

2.2.2 Selection of Speakers

The wordlist was collected from four mother tongue Lemi Chin speakers. Effort was made to collect wordlists from speakers of both genders and from a variety of ages, as well as people from different villages, as much as was possible within the constraints of only being able to collect data from the location of Yangon. As a result, the four language resources persons (LRPs) who helped provide data were three men, ages 26, 34, and 50 years old, and one woman, who was 25 years old.

More detailed background information on all four speakers is available in the following table.

Table (3) Background Information on Lemi Chin LRPs

Speaker:	LRP 1	LRP 2	LRP 3	LRP 4
Date Data Collected:	May-Aug 2007 & Nov-Dec 2008	May-Aug 2007 & Nov-Dec 2008	Nov 2008	Nov 2008
Gender:	Male	Male	Female	Male
Age:	50 yrs (in 2007)	34 yrs (in 2007)	25 yrs (in 2008)	26 yrs (in 2008)
Birthplace:	Soeni Kanawng Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State	Kayek Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State	Krensü Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State	Wading Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State

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[2] My thanks to Khu Shee, the late Paulette Hopple, and James Wayesha who helped translate this wordlist into Burmese. James Wayesha also helped to select which words from the 1,700 list to use for elicitation.

Speaker:	LRP 1	LRP 2	LRP 3	LRP 4
Childhood Home:	Soeni Kanawng Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State	Kayek Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State	Krensü Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State	Wading Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State
Other Places Lived:	Has lived in Yangon since University, but travels often to Lemi home area	Saizang Village, Tedim Township, Chin State, for 4 years (1996-2000)	Sami Village, Paletwa township (during high school); Mizoram India for one year; school near Mandalay for 4 yrs	Yangon – last five yrs (in school)
Currently Lives in:	Yangon	Lives in Yangon since 2003 to present, but often travels to Lemi home area	Krensü Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State	Legu (Yangon)
First Language:	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi
Other Languages Spoken:	Burmese, Rakhine, Khumi, English	Burmese, Rakhine, Khumi, Tedim, English	Burmese, Rakhine, Khumi, Mizo/Lushai, Tedim	Burmese, Rakhine, English
Father's Birthplace:	Soeni Kanawng Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State	Kayek Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State	Soeni, Kanawng Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State	Wading Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State
Father's Ethnicity:	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi
Father's First Langauge:	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi
Language Used with Father:	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi

Speaker:	LRP 1	LRP 2	LRP 3	LRP 4
Mother's Birthplace:	Soeni Kanawng Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State	Kayek Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State	Laeding Kong Village	Wading Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State
Mother's Ethnicity:	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi
Mother's First Language:	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi
Language Used with Mother:	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi
Language Parents Use with Each Other:	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi	Lemi
Spouse's First Language:	Lemi	Lemi	N/A	N/A
Language Spoken with Spouse:	Lemi	Lemi	N/A	N/A

2.2.3 Recording Procedures and Phonological Analysis

The mediating language was primarily English, which was aided by the previous translation of the wordlist into Burmese. Each speaker repeated the elicited item three times with pauses in between each pronunciation. All the data was recorded digitally and a rough transcription was made at the time of elicitation.

Data from all speakers was transcribed and analyzed, supported by the software programs Speech Analyzer[3] and Phonology Assistant[4] to help organize and sort the data. There are no significant dialect differences between the four speakers, and for the phonological analysis it was necessary to select one speaker in order to more accurately compare and contrast phonemes. The phonological data provided in

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[3] SIL 2007 Version 3.0

[4] SIL 2008 Version 3.0.1

Chapter 5 and Appendixes 1 and 2 are primarily based on data from LRP 2, but the analysis is accurate for all four speakers.

2.2.4 Limitations

As all data was collected orally, all entries are presented in one string, though in many cases each entry may really be composed of two or more words.   All errors in transcription are the fault of the researcher.

2.3 Methodology of Minor Syllable Analysis

After the available literature on minor syllables and syllable structure was reviewed, a phonological analysis of Lemi Chin major syllables was conducted.   Minor syllable features in Lemi Chin were then compared with major syllable features, followed by an interpretation in the light of the insights gained from the literature review.