

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SOCIOLINGUISTIC SURVEY ANALYSIS I – ASSESSING THE NEED AND POTENTIAL DEMAND FOR LITERACY IN KHUEN**

This chapter presents an analysis of the data relating to sociolinguistic issues collected on the sociolinguistic survey. Inferences are drawn from the data using the pre-determined methods and criteria outlined in Section 4.8. Before proceeding to a detailed analysis of the data, however, some information discovered on the survey about the survey sites is presented.

#### **5.1 Description of Survey Sites**

The purpose of the Knowledgeable Insider Questionnaire described in Section 4.4 was to gather information about the whole community, such as ethnic composition, village history and access to educational facilities. Examining this data gives an overview of each of the village communities and provides a context in which to interpret responses from individual subjects to the Individual Sociolinguistic Questionnaires. Special mention must be made of Yang Lorh village because it is noticeably different from the other villages in the sample.

##### **5.1.1 Yang Lorh village**

Yang Lorh is a very big village on the outskirts of Keng Tung. It has 119 houses and 743 inhabitants – the next largest village visited on the survey, viz., Murng Jem, has 90 houses and approximately 300 inhabitants. The subjects interviewed in Yang Lorh had difficulty distinguishing between Khuen and Shan – which they refer to as ‘Tai’. They generally identified themselves as ethnically Khuen but language shift (from Khuen to Shan) appears to be well advanced in the community. The fact that Khuen and Shan are closely related languages makes it more difficult to know for sure whether someone is speaking Khuen or Shan or

possibly some mixture of the two languages. This problem was compounded by the fact that the survey team used the name 'Tai-Khuen' to refer to Khuen people. The upshot of using this name was that of the two LRPs summoned to help with the wordlist, one was a mother tongue Tai [Shan] speaker and the other a mother tongue Khuen speaker. Although both men participated in the elicitation process, it was the Khuen speaker who was recorded. As far as the sociolinguistic questionnaires were concerned, responses to those questions that require a distinction to be made between Khuen and Shan were sometimes ambiguous and hence unusable. In such cases the responses from Yang Lorch subjects were not included in the analysis.

Yang Lorch appears to be quite different from the other villages both in terms of size and proximity to Keng Tung but also in the respect that language shift to Shan appears to be well advanced in the community. The village chief reported that everybody in the village could speak Shan well. To make sure the special features of Yang Lorch are not 'lost' in the process of aggregation with the other villages, for most of the questions on the sociolinguistic questionnaires the results for Yang Lorch are reported separately to the results for the other villages. For questions that do not require a distinction to be made between Khuen and Shan, for example the questions about proficiency in Burmese, Yang Lorch data is unambiguous but reported separately for another reason, namely that the proportion of villagers able to speak Burmese in Yang Lorch appears to be higher than in the villages in general. This is in keeping with the reported information that Yang Lorch is home to many well educated people.

### **5.1.2 Overview of village communities**

Examining the ethnic composition of the communities and any ways in which they are changing provides a context in which to interpret the responses of individuals in those communities. The numbers of houses belonging to different ethnic groups and the time since the different groups were established in the communities are laid out in Table 23.

Village name	Time since present community arrived	Number of houses					Time since non-Khuen inhabitants arrived
		Total	Khuen	Shan	Lue	Palaung	
Yang Lorh	long time	119	119				
Pa Jahm	20 yrs	69	69				
Wan Jorhn	> 200 yrs	31	31				
Yang Kway	long time	44	40			4	10 yrs
Wan Jay	> 100 yrs	37	37				
Wan Kahng	NA <sup>29</sup>	65	62		3		40 yrs
Murg Jem	> 70 yrs	90	89 <sup>30</sup>	1			NA
<b>Total</b>		<b>455</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	

Table 23 Ethnic composition of villages in sample

All seven villages are Khuen majority. By households 447/455 [98%] were identified as Khuen. This includes Yang Lorh where all 119 households were identified as Khuen by the village chief. In the light of the language shift demonstrated by the subjects who answered the Individual Sociolinguistic Questionnaire however, it seems that the village chief was referring to Khuen ethnic identity which does not equate with Khuen language use. If Yang Lorh is omitted then 328/336 [98%] of households are Khuen.

The subjects for the Knowledgeable Insider Questionnaires were generally not very confident of their knowledge of Khuen history. The answers reported in the second column of Table 23 are therefore to be interpreted as their best guesses. The general picture that emerges, however, is that the communities have been established for a long time – generally before the subjects were born. The one exception to this is Pa Jahm village whose inhabitants relocated from Wan Say, Wan Jan and Kay Yang around 20 years ago because those villages were troubled by robbers. Furthermore the small non-Khuen minorities are also established in the communities indicating that the composition of these communities is very stable.

<sup>29</sup> Question ‘Not Asked (NA)’ due to an oversight by the interviewer.

<sup>30</sup> Including one household where the husband is Khuen and the wife is Lue.

### 5.1.3 Age distribution and education of subjects

Although the design of the sample and the sample sites were determined in advance, when the survey was actually carried out extra information became available that is pertinent to the research issues and so is presented here.

Figure 40 depicts the age distribution of the 60 subjects from the 5 villages other than Yang Loh. The original sampling plan was deviated from slightly in that two 46-year old men were counted as being in the middle age group when the sampling took place. According to the original design, there should be 10 subjects in each age-gender category although this slight deviation can be easily accommodated in the analysis.

		Male (N=30)		Female (N=30)	
Age Ranges		Ages of subjects	Total	Ages of subjects	Total
15-30	15-20	20 20	10	15 17 20 20	10
	21-25	21 25		21 23 24 25	
	26-30	28 29 30 30 30 30		28 29	
31-45	31-35	34 35	8	34	10
	36-40	36 37 38		37 40	
	41-45	42 45 45		41 41 42 43 43 45 45	
46+	46-50	46 46 48 48 49	12	46 47 50	10
	51-55	52 54 55		52 55	
	56-60	57 60 60		60	
	61-65			65 60+	
	66-70			67 68	
	>70	78			

Figure 40 Age distribution of sample on sociolinguistic survey

Table 24 lists the number of years individuals spent in formal education broken down by village and gender. The entries are presented in increasing order. The presence of a school in a village does not guarantee that the subjects in the sample will have attended. For example Murng Jem has a school, but only one subject had spent time in formal education. Wan Kahng on the other hand does not have a school and this correlates with the total lack of formal education among the twelve subjects in the sample. Wan Jay also has no school but five of the twelve subjects spent time in formal education, typically in the neighbouring village of Wan Wo.

Wan Jorhn is not represented in Table 24 because no subjects answered Individual Sociolinguistic Questionnaires in that village and hence no data was collected regarding individual school attendance although from the Knowledgeable Insider Questionnaire completed in Wan Jorhn it is known that the village has no school.

Village	School in village	Gender	Years spent in formal education	Average time (mean)	Average time (median)
Yang Lorh	Yes	Male	0 0 0 0 5 7	2	0
		Female	0 0 7 8 8 12	5.83	7.5
Pa Jahm	Yes	Male	0 0 0 0 0 0	0	0
		Female	0 0 2 3 5 7	2.83	2.5
Yang Kway	Yes	Male	0 0 0 0 0 3	0.5	0
		Female	0 0 0 0 4 5	1.5	0
Murng Jem	Yes	Male	0 0 0 0 0 0	0	0
		Female	0 0 0 0 0 7	1.17	0
Wan Jay	No	Male	0 0 0 2 3 4	1.5	1
		Female	0 0 0 0 6 10	3.17	0
Wan Kahng	No	Male	0 0 0 0 0 0	0	0
		Female	0 0 0 0 0 0	0	0

Table 24 Years in formal education by village and gender

As can be seen from the entries in Table 24 women generally spend more time in formal education – only 6/36 [17%] of men spent any time at all in school. Note that men spend time living in the temple where they also learn literacy skills so that must be taken into consideration alongside the number of years of formal schooling. The big difference between these literacy-learning environments is the language – the schools teach Burmese whereas the temples teach Khuen. The mean time spent in school for all men is 0.67 years and the median is 0 years. For women the mean and median figures are 2.33 years and 0 years respectively.

The women in Yang Lorh have clearly spent the longest time in formal education. As for the men, they have the biggest mean time because the 2 men who went to school went for longer than the sum of the years the 3 men from Wan Jay.

Table 25 gives the breakdown of years in education by age and gender for the five villages other than Yang Lorh, namely Pa Jahm, Yang Kway, Wan Jay, Murng Jem and Wan Kahng. Within each age-gender category the entries represent the number of years in formal education in increasing order.

Age Ranges	Male (N=30)			Female (N=30)		
	Years in formal education	Average		Years in formal education	Average	
		mean	median		mean	median
15-30	0,0,0,0,0,0,0,2,3,3	0.8	0	0,0,0,0,3,4,5,6,7,10	3.5	3.5
31-45	0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0	0	0	0,0,0,0,0,0,0,2,5,7	1.4	0
46+	0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,4	0.33	0	0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0	0	0

Table 25 Years in formal education by age and gender

Only 1 out of 20 male subjects over 30 had been to formal school compared to 3 out of 10 in the 15-30 age group. 0 out of 10 females over 45 had been to school, compared to 3 out of 10 aged 31-45 and 6 out of 10 in the 15-30 age group. As mentioned above, men often receive their main literacy education in the temple during their time as a novice or monk. The time spent living in the temple therefore gives an indication of the amount of literacy education they have received. In Table 26 a breakdown of the time spent in the temple is given together with average values for various age ranges.

Age Ranges		Time spent in temple (years)	Average (mean)	Average (median)
15-30	15-20	7, 4	7.5	7
	21-25	5, 12		
	25-30	6, 8, 10, 11, 5, 7		
31-45	31-35	7, 8	5.9	6
	36-40	8, 2, 4		
	41-45	10, 5, 3		
46-60	46-50	6, 10, 12, 2, 9	6.5	6
	51-55	8, 5, 9		
	56-60	1, 5, 4		
>60	78	26	26	26
Whole range		including outlier	7.3	7
		omitting outlier	6.7	7

Table 26 Time spent in temple (males only)

One subject in Table 26 stands out – the 78-year old man who spent 26 years in the temple. The normal procedure for dealing such extreme values is to perform any analysis both including and omitting the extreme values. The final two rows of Table 26 show that while the mean value is affected by the extreme case, the median is not. The average values for the various age ranges suggest that the

younger generations are not spending any less time than in the temple. One might expect that due to the increased availability of government schools, younger generations would spend less time in the temple because they would not need to obtain their education there.

The age categories specified in the above analysis are somewhat arbitrary. Figure 41 plots time spent in a temple versus age for each individual male subject.

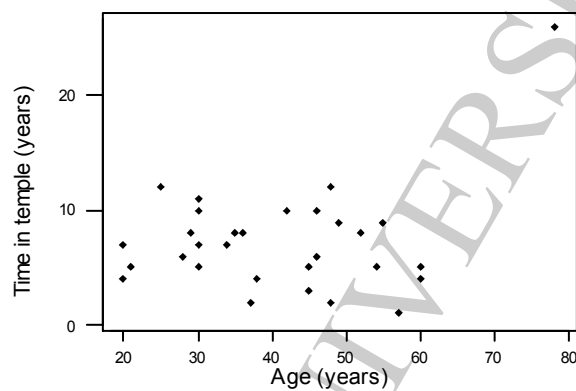


Figure 41 Plot of time spent in temple versus current age (males only)

The linear correlation coefficient is 0.28 ( $p=0.13$ ) indicating a weak positive relationship although statistically significant only at the 13% level. Looking at the plot it appears that the points are uniformly distributed apart from one extreme case of a 78-year old man who had spent 26 years in the temple. Since the linear correlation coefficient is susceptible to bias by extreme values (outliers), the normal procedure is to remove such cases from the data set and repeat the analysis. This leads to the plot in Figure 42.

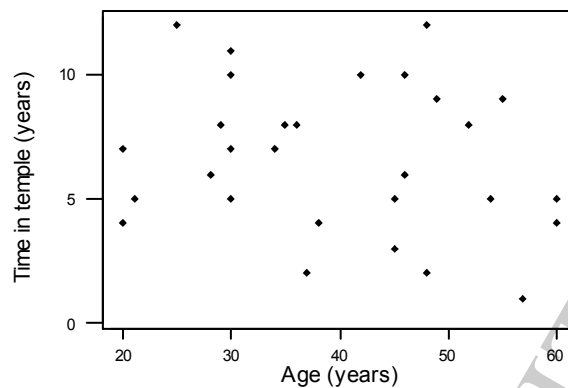


Figure 42 Plot of time spent in temple versus current age (omitting outlier)

The linear correlation coefficient of this data is  $-0.20$  ( $p=0.31$ ), i.e. a weak negative relationship. Since neither this result nor the previous one is statistically significant from zero at even the 10% level, there is no evidence of a relationship, positive or negative between age and the number of years spent in the temple. The time younger generations spend in the temple is thus on average no different to that spent by their forefathers.

Having outlined the demographic context of the research in the foregoing sections, the data will now be analysed using as a framework the goals and research questions laid out in Section 4.1. Such a structure allows for immediate application of the data analysis to answering the research question. In Sections 5.2-5.4 the information relating to research questions under Goal 1 is analysed and in Section 5.5 a summary and discussion of the findings are presented. In Section 5.6 the information relating to Goal 2 is analysed.

## 5.2 Khuen Speakers' Potential to Use Shan

There are three specific research questions aimed at assessing the potential for Khuen speakers to use Shan. All four aspects of bilingual ability, viz.



comprehension, speaking, reading and writing are studied as well as an examination of attitudes towards Shan people and the Shan language.

### 5.2.1 Potential to use Shan for oral communication

This section seeks to answer the following question:

**Research Question 1.1:** Do Khuen speakers master Shan adequately?

Before beginning to answer this question it must be acknowledged that no precise definition is offered of what constitutes ‘adequate mastery’. The question deliberately allows a broad interpretation to allow for a range of aspects to be considered. A summary of the responses to pertinent questions on the Individual Sociolinguistic Questionnaire will now be presented.

#### Q27 What languages do you speak now?

In response 12/60 [20%] listed Shan as one of the languages they speak. Responses from Yang Lorh village are omitted because of confusion there between Khuen and Shan. The breakdown of these 12 speakers by age and gender is presented in Table 27. There appear to be age differences in Shan acquisition, the youngest age group accounting for 8 out of 12 of the positive responses. Considering males and females separately, the differences between age groups for males are not significant ( $p=0.4740$ , Freeman-Halton test) whereas the differences for females are significant ( $p=0.0398$ , Freeman-Halton test).

		Age			Total
		15-30	31-45	46+	
Gender	Male	3	1	1	5
	Female	5	0	2	7
	Total	8	1	3	12

Table 27 Shan speakers by age and gender

#### Q28 Which language do you speak best?

Recall that the target population about which it is desired to make inferences is the population of adult Khuen speakers. One criterion for subject selection therefore

was the ability to speak Khuen. In response to Q28, 60/60 [100%] of the subjects outside of Yang Lorh said 'Khuen'. In other words all of the subjects not only speak Khuen, but it is the language they speak best. In Yang Lorh 6 subjects said 'Tai'; 4 said 'Khuen'; 2 said 'Tai-Khuen'. In other words outside of Yang Lorh nobody said that Shan is their best language. As will be seen from the responses to Q33 and Q34 in Section 5.5 below, Shan is generally not the language of use in most of the villages. Only in Yang Lorh is Shan used to any great extent.

### **Q35a Do you sometimes meet Shan people?**

In Yang Lorh 8/12 [67%] responded positively. In the other five villages 58/60 [97%] responded positively. Altogether 66/72 [92%] of the respondents said that they sometimes meet Shan people. This high positive response was to be expected given the proximity of the villages concerned to Keng Tung which is home to a large number of Shan people.

### **Q35b When you meet [a Shan person] which language do you use?**

The responses from those 66 subjects who do meet Shan people are presented in Table 28. The table shows that a large number of subjects viz. 55/58 [95%] (not including Yang Lorh residents) use their own language when speaking to Shan people. This indicates that a relatively high proportion of people who use Khuen as their main language understand Shan although they claim to not be able to speak Shan.

	<b>Each uses own language</b>	<b>Both use Shan</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yang Lorh</b>	5	3	8
<b>Five other villages</b>	55	3	58
<b>Total</b>	60	6	66

Table 28 Language used with Shan people

Q35b above does not give any indication of the kind of level at which Khuen speakers are typically trying to communicate in their interactions with Shan people. Q41-Q46 are designed to provide a rough evaluation of a subject's bilingual proficiency and go some way to probing this issue. The questions were

asked as a set for each Language of Wider Communication (LWC) in use in the area, namely Shan, Burmese and Lue. To avoid confusion, the language referred to in the question is made explicit in the question labels. For example when Q41 refers to Shan it is labelled Q S41 and when it refers to Burmese it is labelled Q B41. The questions were asked in order of increasing level of proficiency in the LWC in focus. As will be seen in Table 29, the number of subjects responding positively to successive questions generally decreases as one would expect. Because of the confusion between Shan and Khuen in Yang Lorh, only responses from the other five villages are presented here, i.e. results are reported for a total of 60 subjects – 30 men and 30 women. The positive responses to Q S41-Q S46, broken down by age and gender are presented in Table 29. The percentage figures in parentheses give the percentage of subjects who responded positively in each age-gender category.

Q S41 is supposedly the task making least demand on the subject's proficiency in Shan. As can be seen from the table, 15/60 [25%] of the subjects claimed to be able to use Shan to buy something. Comparing the responses to Q S43a and Q S43b provide an insight into different areas of Shan proficiency. While a total of 14/60 [23%] responded positively to Q S43a indicating that they could understand something they overheard in Shan and re-tell it in Khuen, only 6/60 [10%] could understand and re-tell it in Shan. This indicates that people's comprehension of spoken Shan is better than their ability to speak Shan.

		Age Category			
		15-30	31-45	46+	Total
Q S41	<b>Can you buy something in Shan?</b>				
	Male	5 (50%)	1 (12%)	2 (17%)	8 (27%)
	Female	5 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	7 (23%)
	Total	10 (50%)	1 (6%)	4 (18%)	15 (25%)
Q S42	<b>Can you tell about your family in Shan?</b>				
	Male	4 (40%)	1 (12%)	1 (8%)	6 (20%)
	Female	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	5 (17%)
	Total	7 (35%)	1 (6%)	3 (14%)	11 (18%)
Q S43a	<b>If you hear people talking in Shan, can you retell it in Khuen?</b>				
	Male	5 (50%)	1 (12%)	1 (8%)	7 (23%)
	Female	5 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	7 (23%)
	Total	10 (50%)	1 (6%)	3 (14%)	14 (23%)
Q S43b	<b>If you hear people talking in Shan, can you retell it in Shan?</b>				
	Male	2 (20%)	1 (12%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)
	Female	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	3 (10%)
	Total	4 (20%)	1 (6%)	1 (5%)	6 (10%)
Q S44	<b>Could you use Shan to explain to a Shan speaker who does not speak Khuen how to do your job?</b>				
	Male	1 (10%)	1 (12%)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)
	Female	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	2 (7%)
	Total	2 (10%)	1 (6%)	1 (5%)	4 (7%)
Q S45	<b>Can you speak Shan as fast as a Shan person and still be understood?</b>				
	Total	0	0	0	0
Q S46	<b>Can you speak Shan as well as a Shan person?</b>				
	Total	0	0	0	0

Table 29 Q S41-S46 Bilingual proficiency evaluation – Shan

To return to the research question of interest in this section, namely whether or not Khuen speakers adequately master Shan, it appears that the majority have very limited proficiency in Shan. While an individual's ability to comprehend spoken Shan is generally higher than their speaking proficiency, only 15/60 [25%] of the subjects claimed to be able to perform the simplest communication task listed in the questionnaire, i.e. buying something using Shan. This prompts the conclusion that the majority of Khuen speakers would be unable to use Shan to perform common communication tasks in everyday life.

### 5.2.2 Attitudes to Shan

This section seeks to answer the following question:

**Research Question 1.2:** Do Khuen speakers have any negative attitudes that would inhibit their use of Shan for written or oral communication?

Since attitudes are not directly observable pertinent information is sought from which attitudes can be inferred. Q S49a attempts to elicit such information.

#### **Q S49a If your child married a Shan person, how would you feel?**

The responses to Q S49a are given in Table 30.

	Would allow	Would not allow	Don't know	Total
<b>Yang Lorh</b>	9 (90%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)
<b>Five other villages</b>	47 (81%)	10 (17%)	1 (2%)	58 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	56 (82%)	11 (16%)	1 (1%)	68 (100%)

Table 30 Q S49a If your child married a Shan person, how would you feel?

The percentage figures in parentheses show the number in a particular cell as a percentage of the total for that row. For some reason 2 subjects in Yang Lorh and 2 in the other villages were not asked Q S49. The proportion who would not allow such a marriage is noticeably higher in the villages other than Yang Lorh compared to Yang Lorh but this difference is not statistically significant ( $p=0.999$ , Fisher exact test). The most telling figure however is the 81% acceptance of such a marriage in the villages other than Yang Lorh indicating that most people would not have a strong adverse reaction to such close ties to Shan people. From this it is inferred that most people in the villages other than Yang Lorh (and for that matter in Yang Lorh also) do not have strong adverse feelings to Shan people.

Q S49b asked subjects to give a reason for their answer to Q S49a. Analysis of these reasons reveals greater differences between Yang Lorh subjects and the subjects from other villages than was apparent from the analysis of the responses to Q S49a. The first two data columns in Table 31 indicate that the reasons why

Yang Lorh residents would accept a Shan son- or daughter-in-law are different to subjects from other villages. The first category is at best neutral with respect to one's attitude to Shan people. The second category is positive in that Shan people are said to share the same customs as Khuen or even to be essentially the same ethnic group. The differences in Table 31 are statistically significant at the 0.5% level ( $p=0.005$ , Fisher exact test).

	<b>It's their choice / Can't control</b>	<b>Shan people / customs same as Khuen</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yang Lorh</b>	3 (33%)	6 (67%)	0 (0%)	9 (100%)
<b>Five other villages</b>	38 (81%)	6 (13%)	3 (6%)	47 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	41 (73%)	12 (21%)	3 (5%)	56 (100%)

Table 31 Q S49b Reasons for accepting a Shan son- or daughter-in-law

By categorising all the reasons in Table 31 into two categories it is possible to focus more on what the given reasons reveal about the subjects' attitudes to Shan people. The data is presented in Table 32. As with the Table 31 the values are statistically significant ( $p=0.0055$ , Fisher exact test) prompting the conclusion that a significantly greater percentage of Yang Lorh subjects feel a close affinity to Shan people than subjects from the other five villages.

	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yang Lorh</b>	3 (33%)	6 (67%)	9 (100%)
<b>Five other villages</b>	38 (83%)	8 (17%)	46 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	41 (75%)	14 (25%)	55 (100%)

Table 32 Q S49b Inferred attitudes to Shan people

Analysis of the reasons given by those who would not allow a marriage with a Shan person also provides insights. The reasons are given in Table 33.

	<b>Go away from own people or culture</b>	<b>Language differences</b>	<b>Love of own people</b>	<b>Expensive</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yang Lorh</b>	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
<b>Five other villages</b>	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	10 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	6 (55%)	2 (18%)	2 (18%)	1 (9%)	11 (100%)

Table 33 Q S49b Reasons for not accepting a Shan son- or daughter-in-law

Apart from the one subject who was concerned about the financial cost of a marriage with a Shan person, the reasons were mainly about preserving Khuen language and ethnic identity as separate from Shan. Q S54a asks subjects more directly about their attitudes to the Shan language.

#### Q S54a Would you like to speak Shan better?

The responses to this question are laid out in Table 34. Note that all Yang Lorch subjects who were asked responded positively. The other Yang Lorch subjects were not asked because they had said that they speak Shan as their main language already. The table shows that most people would like to speak Shan better.

	Yes	No	Total
<b>Yang Lorch</b>	6 (100%)	0 (0%)	6 (100%)
<b>Five other villages</b>	49 (82%)	11 (18%)	60 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	55 (83%)	11 (17%)	66 (100%)

Table 34 Q S54a Would you like to speak Shan better?

Further insights are provided by analysing the reasons why people would like to speak Shan better. These are laid out in Table 35 with more integrative<sup>31</sup> reasons towards the left and more instrumental reasons towards the right of the table.

	← Integrative		Instrumental→			
	Fosters good relationships / communication	Useful for travel / meeting Shan	Useful in community	A good thing to know	Useful for work / going to market	Total
<b>Yang Lorch</b>	1 (17%)	0 (0%)	3 (50%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)	6 (100%)
<b>Five other villages</b>	11 (23%)	4 (9%)	13 (28%)	12 (25%)	7 (15%)	47 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	12 (23%)	4 (8%)	16 (30%)	13 (25%)	8 (15%)	53 (100%)

Table 35 Q S54b Reasons for wanting to speak Shan better

In summarising the foregoing evidence relating to the attitudes Khuen speakers have towards Shan people and the Shan language, it appears that most Khuen

<sup>31</sup> The concepts 'integrative' and 'instrumental' are described in Section 3.3.4.

speakers do not hold strong anti-Shan sentiments. There is a general acceptance that being able to speak Shan (in addition to Khuen) has its benefits. However, while closer association with Shan people through intermarriage is acceptable to most, it is clearly less preferred than marriage within the Khuen community. Khuen ethnic identity is explored further in Section 5.7. Subjects' reported ability to read and/or write Shan is discussed in the following section.

### 5.2.3 Potential to use Shan for written communication

This section seeks to answer the following question:

**Research Question 1.3:** What is the current literacy rate in Shan among Khuen speakers?

The numbers of positive responses for the questions relating to Shan literacy for the 60 subjects from villages other than Yang Lorh are presented in Table 36. Note that the responses to parts a and b of Q S55 are identical – in other words all of the subjects who could read were also able to write. The percentage figures in parentheses are the percentage of positive responses in that age-gender category.

		Age Category			Total
		15-30	31-45	46+	
Q S55a	Can you read Shan?				
	Male	4 (40%)	1 (12%)	1 (8%)	6 (20%)
	Female	0	0	0	0
	Total	4 (20%)	1 (6%)	4 (5%)	6 (10%)
Q S55b	Can you write Shan?				
	Male	4 (40%)	1 (12%)	1 (8%)	6 (20%)
	Female	0	0	0	0
	Total	4 (20%)	1 (6%)	4 (5%)	6 (10%)

Table 36 Q S55a & Q S55b Shan literacy proficiency

A subject is defined as 'literate' if they report that they can read and write. First the situation with male subjects is discussed since it is more complex than that for females. There are noticeable differences in the positive responses between different age categories in Table 36 although these are not significant ( $p=0.186$ , Freeman-Halton test). Note that in the absence of population data about the



relative proportions of the population in the three age categories used in the sample, the estimates of literacy rates for the three different age categories cannot be combined to get an overall estimate for the whole adult male population (i.e. ages 15 and above). Table 37 therefore presents point and interval estimates for the reported literacy rates separately for each of the three age categories.

	<b>15-30</b>	<b>31-45</b>	<b>46+</b>
<b>Point estimate of literacy rate</b>	40%	12.5%	8.33%
<b>95% Confidence interval for rate</b>	(16.82%, 68.73%)	(2.24%, 47.09%)	(1.49%, 35.38%)

Table 37 Estimates of Shan literacy rates (Males only)

The point estimates are the best estimate of the literacy rate available from the data. By definition the confidence intervals will on average contain the true value of the literacy rate in 95 out of 100 samples of the same size as that used to compute the point estimate for each age category. The width of the interval is inversely proportional to the size of the sample, i.e., the smaller the sample size, the wider the interval. So here the small sample sizes lead to wide intervals meaning that the true value for the rate could be quite different from the point estimate. Note however that the pattern of the rates is quite plausible. The point estimates show a downward trend with age, i.e. younger people are more likely to be literate in Shan than older people. This is what one would expect if, as appears to be the case, contact between Khuen speakers and Shan speakers has increased in recent decades.

As can be seen from Table 36, no female subjects claimed to be able to read or write Shan. Thus from this sample the best point estimate of the literacy rate among women outside of Yang Lorh is 0% in each age category. Furthermore, since the sample included the same number (i.e. 10) of subjects from each age category, the confidence intervals are also identical for each age category. Point and interval estimates for the three age groups are laid out in Table 38.

	<b>15-30</b>	<b>31-45</b>	<b>46+</b>
<b>Point estimate of literacy rate</b>	0%	0%	0%
<b>95% Confidence interval for rate</b>	(0%, 27.75%)	(0%, 27.75%)	(0%, 27.75%)

Table 38 Estimates of Shan literacy rates (Females only)

The estimates of the current literacy rates in Shan among Khuen speakers give a snapshot of the current ability to use Shan for written communication. Literacy proficiency in Shan among adult female Khuen speakers is practically non-existent. Literacy rates among males are markedly different between age groups, the highest being still only 40%. Notwithstanding the lack of precision in the estimates of literacy rates in this study, the conclusion must be that almost no adult females and a large majority of adult males are currently able to use Shan for written communication.

#### **5.2.4 Summary of evidence concerning potential to use Shan**

In this section the evidence of the previous three sections is drawn together to create an overall picture of Khuen speakers' potential to use Shan. The issue motivating this study was whether or not there is a need for a Khuen literacy programme or whether literacy in an LWC such as Shan was a viable alternative for Khuen speakers. Proficiency in understanding and speaking Shan is hugely beneficial for learning literacy skills in Shan. Given that only about 25% of males and females believe they could use Shan to carry out a simple communicative task such as buying something, it is not surprising that the current literacy rates in Shan are so low, even in the absence of negative attitudes towards Shan people and bilingualism in Shan. The lack of proficiency in oral Shan is likely to act as an impediment to the developing of Shan literacy skills.

#### **5.3 Khuen Speakers' Potential to Use Burmese**

There are three specific research questions aimed at assessing the potential for Khuen speakers to use Burmese. All four aspects of bilingual ability, viz. comprehension, speaking, reading and writing are studied as well as an examination of attitudes towards Burmese people and the Burmese language.

Burmese is the official language of education in government schools. Generally the wider the catchment area of the school population, the greater the number of

language groups represented in the school. In the Khuen villages visited, Khuen is the language of the vast majority of the pupils.

Four out of seven of the villages visited have a school. In general the survey team only collected demographic information for the villages that were part of the survey. However, more information was available on Kaht Taw village tract – the village tract in which Pa Jahm village is situated. Of the 23 villages in Kaht Taw village tract, five have primary schools and one has a high school – a total of six schools in all. It is to be expected that where access to government schools is greater, Burmese proficiency will be higher.

### 5.3.1 Potential to use Burmese for oral communication

This section seeks to answer the following question:

**Research Question 1.4:** Do Khuen speakers master Burmese adequately?

The numbers of subjects who listed Burmese as one of the languages they were currently able to speak are presented in Table 39. Note that because there is no confusion between Burmese and Khuen, responses from Yang Lorch subjects are unambiguous and therefore reported. They are reported separately however, so that any unusual pattern for Yang Lorch is not lost by being aggregated with the responses from all the other villages.

Village	Gender	15-30	31-45	46+	Total
Yang Lorch	Male	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)
	Female	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	4 (67%)
	Total	3 (75%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	5 (42%)
Villages other than Yang Lorch	Male	3 (30%)	1 (12%)	1 (8%)	5 (17%)
	Female	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	6 (20%)
	Total	8 (40%)	2 (11%)	1 (5%)	11 (18%)

Table 39 Q27 Burmese speakers by age and gender

It can be seen from Table 39 that the overall proportion of male subjects who can speak Burmese is the same in Yang Lorch as in the other villages. For female subjects however, the proportion is significantly higher in Yang Lorch than the other villages ( $p=0.039$ , Fisher exact test). There are significant differences

between the age groups for the non-Yang Loh female subjects ( $p=0.027$ , Freeman-Halton test). As one would expect due to the increased access to Burmese-medium education in recent decades, there is a downward trend with increasing age, i.e., the younger age groups are more likely to learn Burmese than older age groups. The data in Table 40 shed further light on the relationship between Burmese language acquisition and years spent in formal education.

Years of Formal Education	Currently speak Burmese	Currently do not speak Burmese	Percentage who currently speak Burmese
0	3	50	6
2	0	2	0
3	1	2	33
4	2	0	100
5	1	2	33
6	1	0	100
7	4	0	100
8	2	0	100
10	1	0	100
12	1	0	100

Table 40 Burmese Language Proficiency by Years of Formal Education

The data in Table 40 are depicted in Figure 43 and show a clear increase in the percentage of subjects who currently speak Burmese with the number of years spent in formal (Burmese-medium) education.

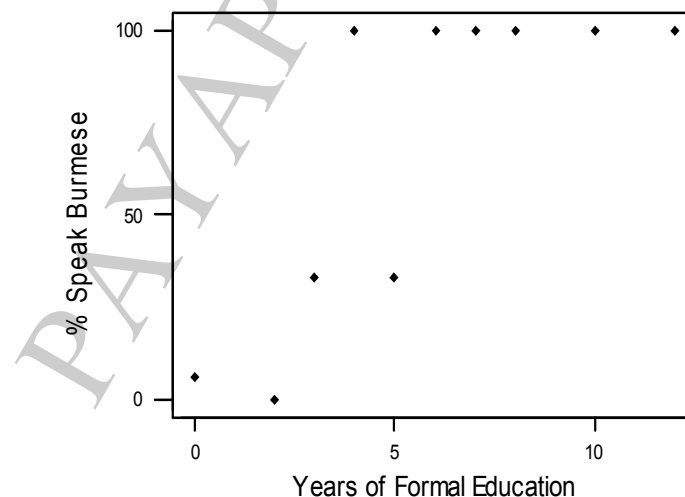


Figure 43 Burmese Proficiency by Years of Formal Education

The Spearman rank correlation coefficient between the two variables plotted in Figure 43 is 0.778 and is significant ( $p=0.008$ ). All of those subjects who spent 6 or more years in formal education claim to be able to speak Burmese. Those who spent 5 or less years in formal education present a more mixed picture although age might be a factor in that the older the subject is, the greater the chance that he or she has forgotten the Burmese learned in school.

Q B41-Q B46 were designed to provide a rough evaluation of a subject's bilingual proficiency. The questions were asked in order of increasing level of proficiency in Burmese. As will be seen, the number of subjects responding positively to successive questions generally decreases as one would expect. Because of the differences between Yang Loh and the other villages reported above, and for comparability with the previous analysis of Shan bilingual proficiency, only responses from the other five villages are presented here, i.e. results are reported for a total of 60 subjects – 30 men and 30 women. The positive responses to Q B41-Q B46, broken down by age and gender are presented in Table 41. The percentage figures in parentheses give the percentage of subjects who responded positively in each age-gender category.

		Age Category			
		15-30	31-45	46+	Total
<b>Q B41</b>	<b>Can you buy something in Burmese?</b>				
	<b>Male</b>	4 (40%)	1 (12%)	1 (8%)	6 (25%)
	<b>Female</b>	6 (60%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	10 (17%)
	<b>Total</b>	10 (50%)	3 (17%)	3 (14%)	16 (27%)
<b>Q B42</b>	<b>Can you tell about your family in Burmese?</b>				
	<b>Male</b>	2 (40%)	1 (12%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)
	<b>Female</b>	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	5 (17%)
	<b>Total</b>	5 (35%)	3 (15%)	0 (0%)	8 (13%)
<b>Q B43a</b>	<b>If you hear people talking in Burmese, can you retell it in Khuen?</b>				
	<b>Male</b>	2 (10%)	1 (12%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)
	<b>Female</b>	4 (20%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	6 (20%)
	<b>Total</b>	6 (15%)	3 (17%)	0 (0%)	9 (15%)
<b>Q B43b</b>	<b>If you hear people talking in Burmese, can you retell it in Burmese?</b>				
	<b>Male</b>	1 (10%)	1 (12%)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)
	<b>Female</b>	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	5 (17%)
	<b>Total</b>	4 (20%)	3 (17%)	0 (0%)	7 (12%)
<b>Q B44</b>	<b>Could you use Burmese to explain to a Burmese speaker who does not speak Khuen how to do your job?</b>				
	<b>Male</b>	1 (10%)	1 (12%)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)
	<b>Female</b>	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	4 (13%)
	<b>Total</b>	3 (15%)	3 (17%)	0 (0%)	6 (10%)
<b>Q B45</b>	<b>Can you speak Burmese as fast as a Burmese person and still be understood?</b>				
	<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Q B46</b>	<b>Can you speak Burmese as well as a Burmese person?</b>				
	<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	0

Table 41 Q B41-B46 Bilingual proficiency evaluation – Burmese

Q B41 is supposedly the task making least demand on the subject's proficiency in Burmese. As can be seen from Table 41, 16/60 [27%] of the subjects claimed to be able to use Burmese to buy something. Comparing the responses to Q B43a and Q B43b provides insight into different areas of Burmese proficiency. While a total of 9/60 [15%] responded positively to Q B43a, indicating that they could understand something they overheard in Burmese and re-tell it in Khuen only 7/60 [12%] could understand and re-tell it in Burmese. This indicates that people's

comprehension of spoken Burmese is slightly better than their ability to speak Burmese. Recall that the respective figures for Shan from the analysis in Section 5.2.1 were 14/60 [23%] for Q S43a and 6/60 [10%] for Q S43b. This suggests that those Khuen speakers who learn Burmese learn it more thoroughly than those who learn Shan. This is what one would expect if, as appears to be the case, Burmese is learned in a formal school setting where both comprehension and speaking would be required. Shan on the other hand is probably learned in an informal setting where speaking skills are less exercised (and hence less developed) than comprehension skills.

To return to the research question of interest in this section, namely whether or not Khuen speakers adequately master Burmese, it must be said that the majority appear to have very limited proficiency in Burmese. Proficiency is strongly correlated with the time spent in formal education as one would expect. While an individual's ability to comprehend spoken Burmese is generally higher than their speaking proficiency, only 27% of subjects claimed to be able to perform the simplest communication task listed in the questionnaire, i.e. to buy something using Burmese. This leads to the conclusion that the majority of Khuen speakers would be unable to use Burmese to perform common communication tasks in everyday life.

### **5.3.2 Attitudes to Burmese**

This section seeks to answer the following question:

**Research Question 1.5:** Do Khuen speakers have any negative attitudes that would inhibit their use of Burmese for written or oral communication?

The following question attempts to gain insight into Khuen speakers' attitudes to Burmese while avoiding the potential problems associated with asking subjects direct questions about their attitudes.

**Q B54a Would you like to speak Burmese better?**

The positive responses to Q B54a are given in Table 42 and show that most people would like to speak Burmese better.

	Yes	No	Total
<b>Yang Lorch</b>	12 (100%)	0 (0%)	12 (100%)
<b>Five other villages</b>	51 (85%)	9 (15%)	60 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	63 (88%)	9 (12%)	72 (100%)

Table 42 Q B54a Would you like to speak Burmese better?

Note that all of the Yang Lorch subjects responded positively. The difference between the proportions of positive responses from Yang Lorch and the other five villages are not significant ( $p=0.1737$ , Fisher exact test). Further insights are provided by analysing the reasons why people would like to speak Burmese better. These are laid out in Table 43 with more integrative reasons towards the left and more instrumental reasons towards the right. Note that not all of the subjects gave a reason why they would like to speak Burmese better so the total number of responses to Q B54b (62) is less than the total number of responses to Q b54a (72).

	←Integrative		Instrumental→			Total
	Fosters good relationships / communication	Useful for meeting non Khuen-speakers	Useful in offices	Useful for business	Useful for education / opportunities	
<b>Yang Lorch</b>	7 (58%)	4 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	12 (100%)
<b>Five other villages</b>	15 (30%)	32 (64%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	50 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	22 (35%)	36 (58%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	2 (3%)	62 (100%)

Table 43 Q B54b Reasons for wanting to speak Burmese better

The largest single category, i.e., ‘Useful for meeting non Khuen-speakers’ cannot be clearly interpreted as either integrative or instrumental. The second largest category, i.e., ‘Fosters good relationships/communication’ is best interpreted as integrative which means that at least 22/62 [35%] of the responses are positive about association with Burmese speakers. The Burmese speakers that subjects most often encounter might be members of ethnic minorities who use Burmese as



an LWC so this data does not allow for inferences to be drawn concerning attitudes of Khuen speakers towards ethnic Bamar<sup>32</sup> people.

While the foregoing evidence does not amount to an in depth study of the attitudes of Khuen speakers to Burmese, it does show that there is a broad acceptance that being able to speak Burmese has its benefits. The reasons cited centre on the use of Burmese as a general language of wider communication for the country as a whole.

### 5.3.3 Potential to use Burmese for written communication

This section seeks to answer the following question:

**Research Question 1.6:** What is the current literacy rate in Burmese among Khuen speakers?

The numbers of positive responses to the questions relating to literacy ability in Burmese are presented in Table 44.

Village	Q B55a Can you read Burmese?			Q B55b Can you write Burmese?		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Yang Lorh	2	4	6	2	4	6
Pa Jahm	2	2	4	2	2	4
Yang Kway	2	1	3	2	1	3
Wan Jay	2	2	4	1	2	3
Wan Kahng	0	0	0	0	0	0
Murng Jem	0	1	1	0	1	1
Total	8	10	18	7	10	17

Table 44 Q B55a & Q B55b Burmese literacy proficiency by village and gender

A literate person is defined as someone who reports that they can read and write. Since some subjects reported that they could read but could not write, the figures in the part of Table 44 relating to writing will determine the number of literate subjects. Although Yang Lorh village is not significantly different from say Pa Jahm ( $p>0.410$ , log-linear analysis) for the sake of consistency in this thesis Yang

<sup>32</sup> Often referred to simply as 'Burmese', the Bamar are the dominant ethnic group in Myanmar. Their mother tongue is Burmese.

Lorh is kept separate from the other varieties in considering the literacy rate in Burmese. Pooling the five villages other than Yang Lorh it is found that there is no significant difference between numbers of literate male and female subjects ( $p=0.5$ , Fisher exact test).

Table 45 shows the numbers of literate subjects in each age-gender category. The percentage figures in parentheses give the percentage of literate subjects in each category. Separate Freeman-Halton tests were performed for all four village-gender combinations. The differences across age groups were not significant for any village-gender combination ( $p>0.1220$ ).

Village	Gender	Age Category			Total
		15-30	31-45	46+	
Yang Lorh	Male	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (33%)
	Female	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	4 (67%)
	Total	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	6 (50%)
Villages other than Yang Lorh	Male	3 (30%)	1 (12%)	1 (8%)	5 (17%)
	Female	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	6 (20%)
	Total	7 (35%)	3 (17%)	1 (5%)	11 (18%)

Table 45 Literacy proficiency in Burmese by age and gender

The entries in Table 46 give point and interval estimates for the literacy rates for each age-gender category for the (combined) five villages other than Yang Lorh.

Gender	Estimate	15-30	31-45	46+
Male	Point estimate	30%	12.5%	8.33%
	95% Confidence interval	(10.78%, 60.32%)	(2.24%, 47.09%)	(1.49%, 35.38%)
Female	Point estimate	40%	20%	0%
	95% Confidence interval	(16.82%, 68.73%)	(5.67%, 50.98%)	(0%, 27.75%)

Table 46 Burmese literacy rates by age and gender

As noted with the estimates for Shan literacy in Section 5.2.3 the wide confidence intervals are a consequence of the small sample size for each age-gender category. The point estimates show a downward trend with age, i.e. younger people are more likely to be literate in Burmese than older people. This is what one would expect given the link between a subject's age and the number of years spent in formal (Burmese medium) education.

### **5.3.4 Summary of evidence concerning potential to use Burmese**

In this section the evidence of the previous three sections is combined to attempt to draw a more general picture of Khuen speakers' potential to use Burmese. The issue motivating this study was whether or not there is a need for a Khuen literacy programme or whether literacy in an LWC such as Burmese was a viable alternative for Khuen speakers. Proficiency in understanding and speaking Burmese is hugely beneficial for learning literacy skills in Burmese. Given that only about 27% of males and females believe they could use Burmese to carry out a simple communicative task such as buying something, it is not surprising that the current literacy rates in Burmese are so low, even in the absence of negative attitudes towards bilingualism in Burmese. The lack of proficiency in oral Burmese is likely to act as an impediment to the developing of Burmese literacy skills.

### **5.4 Khuen Speakers' Potential to Use Lue**

There are three specific research questions aimed at assessing the potential for Khuen speakers to use Lue. All four aspects of bilingual ability, viz. comprehension, speaking, reading and writing are studied as well as an examination of attitudes towards Lue people and the Lue language.

#### **5.4.1 Potential to use Lue for oral communication**

This section seeks to answer the following question:

**Research Question 1.7:** Do Khuen speakers master Lue adequately?

None of the subjects listed Lue as one of the languages that they currently speak. It is thus not used as a language of wider communication in the areas covered by the survey although it is expected that further away from Keng Tung, as one approaches areas reportedly dominated by Lue speakers, proficiency in Lue by mother-tongue speakers of other languages, including Khuen, would increase. When the survey was originally designed, it was hoped that some areas including

Lue communities could be included in the sample, but in the end time constraints ruled this out.

The following questions explore what, if any, contact there is between Khuen and Lue people, as well as what happens when a Khuen person meets a Lue person.

### **Q36a Do you sometimes meet Lue people?**

The numbers of positive responses by age and gender for the five villages other than Yang Lorch are laid out in Table 47. The percentage figures in parentheses give the percentage of positive responses in that particular age-gender category.

		Age			Total
		15-30	31-45	46+	
Gender	Male	4 (40%)	8 (100%)	9 (75%)	21 (70%)
	Female	6 (60%)	7 (70%)	10 (100%)	23 (77%)
	Total	10 (50%)	15 (83%)	19 (86%)	44 (73%)

Table 47 Q36a Do you sometimes meet Lue people?

The figures show an increasing trend with age, in other words, older people appear to have greater contact with Lue people than younger people. The differences are significant for males ( $p=0.0175$ , Freeman-Halton test) but not for females ( $p=0.1512$ , Freeman-Halton test). Further insight is gained by the follow-up Q36b.

### **Q36b When you meet, which language do you use?**

Of the 44 subjects who do meet Lue, 42 [95%] responded that when they meet each uses their own language, i.e., the Khuen speaker speaks Khuen while the Lue speaker speaks Lue but they nevertheless manage to communicate. This indicates that although they do not speak it, a relatively high proportion of Khuen understand Lue. One subject [2%] reported that both she and the Lue person speak Shan when they meet. One further subject [2%] did not specify which language(s) she uses when she meets a Lue person.

To summarise the evidence relating to Research Question 1.7, it is clear that Lue is generally not used by the Khuen speakers in the sample, although many have at

least occasional contact with Lue people and manage to communicate with each interlocutor using their own language.

#### **5.4.2 Attitudes to Lue**

This section seeks to answer the following question:

**Research Question 1.8:** Do Khuen speakers have any negative attitudes that would inhibit their use of Lue for written or oral communication?

Since Lue is not used as an LWC in the areas covered by the survey, the questions on the Individual Sociolinguistic Questionnaire designed to answer this research question were not asked. This therefore remains an open question.

#### **5.4.3 Potential to use Lue for written communication**

This section seeks to answer the following question:

**Research Question 1.9:** What is the current literacy rate in Lue among Khuen speakers?

Since Lue is not used as an LWC in the areas covered by the survey, the questions on the Individual Sociolinguistic Questionnaire designed to answer this research question were not asked. This therefore remains an open question. However given the ability of Khuen speakers to comprehend Lue, as shown by the responses to Q36b together with the close connections between Khuen and Lue orthographies, the question of ‘transfer’ from one language and script to the other remains an important one.

#### **5.4.4 Summary of evidence concerning potential to use Lue**

Lue is not used as an LWC in the villages included in this sample and so the evidence collected is meagre. About all that can be said from the responses to the Individual Sociolinguistic Questionnaire is that many Khuen speakers appear to be able to comprehend Lue sufficiently for those occasions when they meet Lue

people. The evidence gives no indication however about the level of interaction so the general area of the potential of Khuen speakers to use Lue remains open.

## **5.5 Summary of Findings Relating to Goal 1**

Before proceeding to analyse the data relating to Goal 2, it is appropriate to gather together the findings to all the research questions that fall under Goal 1: Assess the need for literacy in Khuen. The approach to assessing the need for literacy in Khuen was based on the study of the potential of Khuen speakers to use national and regional LWCs in both oral and written form. The rationale of this approach was that the greater the potential to use alternative languages, the less need there is for literacy in Khuen, and vice versa. As described in Section 5.4.4 Lue is not used as an LWC in the villages in the survey so for those speakers it does not appear to be a ready alternative. In Sections 5.5.1-5.5.3 respectively the other two LWCs, namely Shan and Burmese, will be compared with respect to the potential of Khuen speakers to use the oral form of the LWC; Khuen speakers' attitudes towards the LWC and its speakers; and the potential of Khuen speakers to use the written form of the LWC.

### **5.5.1 Potential to use oral form of LWCs**

Oral communication involves both comprehension and speaking. As one might expect, subjects demonstrated greater proficiency in comprehension of Shan and Burmese than in speaking. The proportions of subjects who reported that they could buy something in Shan, i.e. 15/60 [25%] was very similar to the proportion for Burmese, i.e. 16/60 [27%]. It should be noted that there was a substantial overlap of these two groups with 11 subjects reporting that they could use Burmese or Shan to buy something. The implication of this overlap is that 40/60 [67%] of subjects are unable to use anything but Khuen for the simplest communication task listed in the questionnaire.

### 5.5.2 Attitudes to LWCs

There is general acceptance that bilingualism in Shan or Burmese is beneficial. Reasons cited for wanting to speak Burmese better revolve around its use as a general LWC in the country as a whole while reasons cited for wanting to speak Shan better are relatively evenly distributed between instrumental and integrative categories indicating a closer affinity with Shan language and people than Burmese.

### 5.5.3 Potential to use written form of LWCs

For ease of comparison the point estimates of literacy rates among Khuen speakers in Shan and Burmese are presented in Table 48.

LWC	Gender	15-30	31-45	46+
Shan	Male	40%	12.5%	8.33%
	Female	0%	0%	0%
Burmese	Male	30%	12.5%	8.33%
	Female	40%	20%	0%

Table 48 Point estimates of literacy rates in Shan and Burmese by age and gender

The literacy rates in Shan and Burmese showed variation in age and gender. For male subjects the general trend was for literacy rates in both languages to decrease with age. For Burmese, this pattern is explained by the corresponding trend for older subjects to have spent less time in formal (Burmese-medium) education than their younger counterparts. For Shan the pattern is explained by the corresponding trend for younger subjects to have had more contact with Shan language and literature, either through travel or due to the increased number of Shan speakers in the region in recent decades.

Literacy rates for female subjects display a similar decreasing trend with age in Burmese whereas in Shan not a single female subject in any age group claimed to be literate. The great discrepancy in Shan literacy rates between males and females could possibly be due to males encountering Shan religious texts during their time in the temple but further research is needed to clarify this. What is clear

from both sets of literacy rates is that the majority of subjects are not literate in either Shan or Burmese. As with oral proficiency, most subjects who claimed to be literate in Shan also claimed to be literate in Burmese. The implication of this is that 47/60 [78%] of subjects are neither literate in Shan nor in Burmese.

## **5.6 Conclusions Relating to Goal 1**

The issue motivating this study was whether or not there is a need for a Khuen literacy programme or whether literacy in an LWC such as Shan or Burmese was a viable alternative for Khuen speakers. Proficiency in understanding and speaking the LWC – or any language for that matter – is hugely beneficial for learning literacy skills in that language. Given that only about 25% of subjects believe they could use Shan to carry out a simple communicative task such as buying something, it is not surprising that the current literacy rates in Shan are so low, even in the absence of negative attitudes towards Shan people and bilingualism in Shan. A similar situation pertains for Burmese: 27% claimed to be able to use Burmese to buy something. The lack of proficiency in oral communication in Shan and Burmese appears to be a major impediment to the developing of literacy skills in these languages. Since 40/60 [67%] of subjects claim not to be able to use either Shan or Burmese to perform simple communicative tasks such as buying something, for a large majority of subjects Khuen literacy is the only practical option.

## **5.7 Khuen Speakers' Use of Oral and Written Khuen**

This section provides an assessment of the current situation vis a vis use of Khuen language. First Khuen language vitality is assessed and then the attitudes of Khuen speakers to their language and people. Finally estimates of current literacy rates in Khuen are computed for each age-gender category defined.

### **5.7.1 Khuen language vitality**

This section seeks to answer the following question:



**Research Question 2.1:** Does it appear likely that Khuen will continue to be spoken by future generations?

For the most part the following discussion will be about the five villages other than Yang Lorh, because of the confusion between Khuen and Shan in that village. All 60 subjects reported that Khuen was the language they speak best and the language they learned first as a child. The entries in Table 49 relate to language use in the ‘family’ domain, that is, within the subject’s own home and with family or friends. The percentage figures in parentheses give the numbers of positive responses as percentages of the row totals. The different row totals are mainly due to the fact that not all subjects had a spouse, children or grandchildren.

Interlocutor(s)	Khuen	Tai-Khuen <sup>33</sup>	Other	Total
Parents	59 (98%)	1 (2%)	–	60 (100%)
Grandparents	59 (98%)	1 (2%)	–	60 (100%)
Siblings	59 (98%)	1 (2%)	–	60 (100%)
Spouse	46 (98%)	1 (2%)	–	47 (100%)
Children	44 (98%)	1 (2%)	–	45 (100%)
Grandchildren	18 (95%)	1 (5%)	–	19 (100%)
Friends	53 (91%)	1 (2%)	Khuen; Shan; Burmese 2 (3%) Khuen & Shan 1 (2%) Khuen & Burmese 1 (2%)	58 (100%)

Table 49 Language use in family domain

The percentages in the second column show that the vast majority of subjects use Khuen in their own homes, particularly when speaking to family members. The ‘Friends’ row shows that some people have friends with whom they cannot converse in Khuen and hence use Shan and/or Burmese. All in all, Khuen is the dominant language in the family domain.

The entries in Table 50 show language use outside of the home between Khuen speakers and a broad range of interlocutors in a range of social settings. The percentage figures in parentheses are percentages of the row totals.

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<sup>33</sup> This column basically exists for a single subject, whose mother was ‘Tai-Khuen’ and father Khuen. She said that she speaks Tai-Khuen with all types of interlocutors. It is not clear whether she speaks Khuen on some occasions and Shan on other occasions or whether the language she speaks is a hybrid of Khuen and Shan or whether she thinks of Khuen as a type of Shan.

Interlocutor(s)	Khuen	Tai-Khuen	Other	Total
Parents	58 (98%)	1 (2%)	–	59 (100%)
Grandparents	58 (98%)	1 (2%)	–	59 (100%)
Siblings	58 (98%)	1 (2%)	–	59 (100%)
Spouse	45 (98%)	1 (2%)	–	46 (100%)
Children	43 (98%)	1 (2%)	–	44 (100%)
Grandchildren	20 (95%)	1 (5%)	–	21 (100%)
Friends	56 (93%)	1 (2%)	Khuen; Shan; Burmese 2 (3%) Khuen & Burmese 1 (2%)	60 (100%)
Co-workers	56 (93%)	1 (2%)	Khuen; Shan; Burmese 1 (2%) Shan 2 (3%)	60 (100%)
Government worker	54 (90%)	1 (2%)	Khuen & Burmese 3 (5%) Khuen & Shan 2 (3%)	60 (100%)
Market	55 (92%)	1 (2%)	Khuen; Shan; Burmese 1 (2%) Khuen & Burmese 1 (2%) Khuen & Shan 1 (2%) Shan 1 (2%)	60 (100%)
Funeral	58 (97%)	1 (2%)	Khuen & Shan 1 (2%)	60 (100%)
Village meeting	59 (98%)	1 (2%)	–	60 (100%)
Temple	59 (98%)	1 (2%)	–	60 (100%)

Table 50 Language use outside of home

As with the family domain described in Table 49, Khuen is the dominant language used outside of the home. Even with government workers Khuen is reportedly used by 90% of the subjects. The multiple languages listed in the ‘Other’ column show that different languages are used depending on the language spoken by the other interlocutor.

As well as the current usage in the community, it is of interest what language is being passed on to the next generation. 60/60 [100%] of the subjects reported that parents teach Khuen to their children and 59/59 [100%] reported that Khuen is the first language children speak. Also 60/60 [100%] reported that Khuen is the language children use when they play together. Subjects were also asked to imagine the situation in the future by Q58.

**Q58 Twenty years from now, do you think the Khuen children from this village will be speaking Khuen?**

In response to Q58 56/60 [93%] said ‘Yes’. 1/60 [2%] said ‘Yes, but in lower numbers’; 3/60 [5%] said ‘No’. Of these one (a female subject aged 53) felt that

children already do not speak Khuen very well because they are starting to speak Burmese and Thai. The other two (a male subject aged 30 and a female subject aged 20) thought that children would speak Burmese in 20 years' time. Notwithstanding these negative responses, the vast majority of subjects felt that Khuen would still be the language learned by children in 20 years' time.

The evidence presented in this section indicates that Khuen has strong language vitality. The language is used by the overwhelming majority in the family domain as well as other domains of necessity such as village meetings and in religious contexts. Khuen is also being passed on by the overwhelming majority to the next generation who use Khuen when playing together. The high levels of these indicators of linguistic vitality demonstrate that Khuen is likely to continue being passed on to future generations.

### **5.7.2 Khuen language attitudes**

This section seeks to make inferences about Khuen people's attitudes to their language via their attitudes to Khuen culture in general and their attitude to literacy in Khuen.

#### **5.7.2.1 Attitude to Khuen culture**

This section seeks to answer the following question:

**Research Question 2.2:** Do Khuen speakers have positive attitudes towards Khuen culture?

Since language is a major element of culture, attitudes of Khuen people to Khuen culture and ethnic identity in general can be taken to reflect something of their attitudes towards Khuen language. Khuen ethnic identity was investigated by Q38.

**Q38 Do you think of yourself first as Burmese, Shan, Lue, Khuen, Plang, Wa, Palaung or something else?**

In response to Q38 60/60 [100%] of the subjects from villages other than Yang Lorh think of themselves first and foremost as Khuen. In order to probe what Khuen people consider to be essentially Khuen, subjects were asked Q37.

### **Q37 How are Khuen customs distinct?**

The responses to Q37 are laid out in Table 51. Some subjects specified more than one distinctive Khuen custom so the total number of things specified (78) is greater than the number of subjects (60). The figures in parentheses give the cell frequencies as a percentage of the row total.

<b>Dress</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Feasts</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Calendar</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Music &amp; Dance</b>	<b>Total</b>
34 (44%)	16 (21%)	8 (10%)	7 (9%)	6 (8%)	5 (6%)	2 (3%)	78 (100%)

Table 51 Q37 Distinctive Khuen customs

The entries in the table show that Khuen cultural dress and language are the two most cited distinctive aspects of Khuen culture. The perceived importance of Khuen customs was further probed by Q39.

### **Q39 What customs of being Khuen would you like to see your children continue?**

The responses to Q39 are laid out in Table 52. Some subjects specified more than one distinctive Khuen custom so the total number of things specified (69) is greater than the number of subjects (60). The categories in Table 52 were devised to pool individual responses. Some responses were more specific than others. The response 'general way of life' for example, is so broad that it overlaps with all of the other categories of response.

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Traditions</b>	<b>General way of life</b>	<b>Dress</b>	<b>Farming</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Total</b>
31 (45%)	14 (20%)	10 (14%)	6 (9%)	4 (6%)	4 (6%)	69 (100%)

Table 52 Q39 Khuen customs to be preserved

The pre-eminence of religion among the categories in Table 52 is in contrast to the previous table where religion did not feature at all. This may be interpreted as showing that although there are no Buddhist religious practices that are considered distinctively Khuen, Buddhism is a very prominent component of Khuen culture. The fact that every male subject in the sample had spent time as a novice in a temple and gained a basic education including literacy in Khuen shows something of the practical importance of the Buddhist religion in Khuen village communities.

Comparing Table 51 with Table 52 there is an apparent difference in the relative importance of language. Khuen language is specified as distinctive in 16/78 [21%] of the responses to Q37, whereas only 4/69 [6%] of the responses to Q39 specify Khuen language as a Khuen custom they wish to be preserved by future generations. Taken at face value this would imply that Khuen speaking parents do not see it important to pass on Khuen language to their children. This would however conflict with the fact that 100% of the subjects reported that Khuen parents are indeed passing on Khuen to their children. The following interpretation is therefore preferred: the majority of Khuen speakers take the use of Khuen language as an integral part of life in a Khuen community and do not consciously consider it as a custom that can be changed.

The evidence relating to Khuen cultural identity presented above shows that Khuen people feel a strong sense of cultural identity as Khuen. Furthermore they are able to specify various values and aspects of their way of life that they wish to be preserved by their children. This indicates that Khuen people have positive attitudes towards their culture which in turn leads to the inference that Khuen people have positive attitudes towards Khuen language.

#### **5.7.2.2 Attitude to Khuen literacy**

This section seeks to answer the following question:

**Research Question 2.3:** Do Khuen speakers have positive attitudes towards Khuen literacy?

To provide insight into this area of Khuen speakers' attitudes, subjects were asked the following question:

**Q57c Do you see any advantage in being able to read and write Khuen?**

In response 30/30 [100%] of male subjects and 27/27 [100%] of female subjects<sup>34</sup> responded positively to this question. Further insight is gained by studying the advantages of being literate in Khuen cited by the subjects. These are laid out in Table 53 with more integrative responses towards the left and more instrumental responses towards the right. Some subjects named more than one advantage so the number of responses (60) is greater than the number of subjects offering a response (57). The numbers in parentheses give the cell frequencies as a percentage of the corresponding row total.

Gender	←Integrative			Instrumental→		Total
	Read Buddhist Scripture	Useful in society	Read invitations	Communicate better	Information / Education	
Male	8 (25%)	4 (12%)	5 (16%)	9 (28%)	6 (19%)	32 (100%)
Female	3 (11%)	2 (7%)	10 (36%)	4 (14%)	9 (32%)	28 (100%)
Total	11 (18%)	6 (10%)	15 (25%)	13 (22%)	15 (25%)	60 (100%)

Table 53 Q57d Advantages of being literate in Khuen

The high levels of positive response show literacy in Khuen to be highly valued in Khuen society. Furthermore the wide range of advantages specified shows that use of written materials in Khuen is important in various areas of everyday life in Khuen communities. The inference is that Khuen speakers have strongly positive attitudes to Khuen literacy.

<sup>34</sup> Due to an oversight, three female subjects were not asked this question.

### 5.7.3 Khuen literacy

This section seeks to answer the following question:

**Research Question 2.4:** What is the current literacy rate in Khuen among Khuen speakers?

Table 54 presents the positive responses relating to Khuen literacy ability for the five villages other than Yang Lorh. The percentage figures in parentheses give the percentage of positive responses for a particular age-gender category.

		Age Category			
		15-30	31-45	46+	Total
Q 57a	Can you read Khuen?				
	Male	10 (100%)	8 (100%)	11 (92%)	29 (97%)
	Female	7 (70%)	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	17 (57%)
	Total	17 (85%)	13 (72%)	16 (73%)	46 (77%)
Q 57b	Can you write Khuen?				
	Male	10 (100%)	8 (100%)	11 (92%)	29 (97%)
	Female	5 (50%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	14 (47%)
	Total	15 (75%)	12 (67%)	16 (73%)	43 (72%)

Table 54 Q57a & Q57b Khuen literacy proficiency

Only one male subject reported that he could not read or write Khuen. This was despite spending 5 years in a Khuen temple where he read Khuen literature. Presumably his age, i.e. 60, was the main factor in this and that he had forgotten what he had once learned. The general picture for male subjects is that they are literate in Khuen. This is not surprising given that all of the men in the sample had spent time in the temple, as discussed in Section 5.1. When questioned about what literature they read while in the temple, 28/30 (93%) reported 'Khuen'; 1 (3%) reported 'Khuen, Burmese & Shan'; and 1 (3%) reported 'Khuen and Shan'.

Table 55 shows the numbers of literate females by village and age category, i.e., those who reported that they can read and write in Khuen.

Village	Literacy class in village	Age Category			Total
		15-30	31-45	46+	
Pa Jahm	Yes	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	3 (50%)
Yang Kway	Yes	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	4 (67%)
Wan Jay	Yes	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	3 (50%)
Wan Kahng	No	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (17%)
Murng Jem	Yes	1 (50%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (50%)
Total		5 (50%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	14 (47%)

Table 55 Khuen literacy by village and age (females only)

There is some variation from village to village, notably Wan Kahng which has only one lady who claims to be literate. It is worth noting in this regard that Wan Kahng is the only village not to have a literacy class during the school long summer vacation.

Table 56 gives point and interval estimates for the literacy rates for each age-gender category for the (combined) five villages other than Yang Loh.

Gender	Estimate	15-30	31-45	46+
Male	Point estimate	100%	100%	91.67%
	95% Confidence interval	(72.25%, 100%)	(67.56%, 100%)	(64.62%, 98.51%)
Female	Point estimate	50%	40%	50%
	95% Confidence interval	(23.66%, 76.34%)	(16.82%, 68.73%)	(23.66%, 76.34%)

Table 56 Khuen literacy rates by age and gender

The high literacy rates for male subjects are plausible in light of the fact that all male subjects spent time in a Khuen temple where all reported reading Khuen literature. Even though it is not possible to compute a precise estimate of the population literacy rate because the proportions in the different age categories in the population as a whole are not available, it can easily be seen that such an estimate must be at least as big as the lowest literacy rate for a sub-group. Thus any estimate of adult male literacy rate computed from the present data must be at least 91.67%. The rates for female subjects are noticeably lower than for male subjects and appear not to vary with age. In view of the fact that females have much less opportunity to learn Khuen literacy than their male counterparts, the rates are surprisingly high. This topic will be discussed further in Chapter 8 when reported literacy rates will be compared with tested rates.



## **5.8 Summary of Findings Relating to Goal 2**

The answers to research questions 2.1-2.4 presented in Sections 5.7.1-5.7.3 each contribute towards the goal of assessing the potential demand for literacy in Khuen. The evidence of strong language vitality indicates that Khuen is likely to be spoken by future generations, i.e., the mother tongue of future generations will be Khuen. This means that in future generations there is likely to be a significant population for whom Khuen is the most natural language of literacy.

Strong positive attitudes towards Khuen language are inferred from the overwhelmingly high percentage of parents who pass on Khuen to their children. Attitudes are also inferred from attitudes towards Khuen culture, since Khuen language is part of Khuen culture. The evidence indicates that Khuen people feel a strong sense of cultural identity as Khuen. Furthermore they are able to specify various values and aspects of their way of life that they wish to be preserved by their children. This indicates that Khuen people have positive attitudes towards their culture which in turn leads to the inference that Khuen people have positive attitudes towards Khuen language

Attitudes towards literacy in Khuen were unanimously positive. The reasons for this are apparent from examining the list of benefits of Khuen literacy cited by subjects. The wide range of benefits specified shows that use of written materials in Khuen is important in various areas of everyday life of Khuen communities

Current literacy rates in Khuen show variation between males and females. Only 1/30 [3%] of male subjects said they were not literate and even he reported that during his 5 years in the temple he had read Khuen literature so it is likely that he was once literate but has not maintained his literacy skills in the years since he left the temple. The extremely high rates for men are plausible in view of the fact that all men spent at least some time living in the temple as a monk or novice, with the median time being 7 years. Literacy rates for females were much lower than those of males reflecting the fact that women have much less opportunity to study

Khuen literacy. Nevertheless the rates for females are remarkably high for a minority language that is not taught in the formal education system.

## **5.9 Conclusions Relating to Goal 2**

This section uses the summary of findings presented in the previous section to draw conclusions relating to the goal of assessing the potential demand for literacy in Khuen. The evidence of strong language vitality indicates that Khuen is likely to be spoken by future generations, i.e., the mother tongue of future generations will be Khuen. This means that in future generations there is likely to be a significant population for whom Khuen is the most natural language of literacy. Strong positive attitudes towards Khuen language suggest that Khuen will continue to be passed on to future generations, as indeed it is with present-day children learning Khuen as their mother tongue. Strong positive attitudes towards Khuen literacy are connected with the widespread use of written materials in Khuen in the everyday life of Khuen communities. Moreover the current high literacy rates show that becoming literate in Khuen is the norm for almost all males and about half of the females. Studying Khuen literacy is so well established that it appears likely to continue into future generations.