

A FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOR OF PROF. UDAYA NARAYANA SINGH

# SPHERES OF INDIAN SOCIOLINGUISTICS



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**STUDIES IN LANGUAGE,  
LITERATURE AND CULTURE  
OF NORTHEAST INDIA**

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## Lexical Borrowing in Tiwa: A Brief Survey

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—Ajit Kumar Baishya

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Borrowing is a conventional term used to refer to words, constructions, or in general, linguistic forms that originally belong to a particular language now being used by another language. Borrowing is a process by which one language or dialect takes or incorporates some linguistic elements from another (Arlotto, 1972). The borrowing of words is commonly known as loan words and though both 'borrowing' and 'loan words' are interchangeably used to refer to the same concept, the appropriateness of both the terms are still debated. Long time back, Haugen (1969) pointed out that since the borrowing language incurs no obligation to return the 'borrowed words' or 'loan words' to the source language (in fact, these are never returned), 'stealing' might be a better term, except for the fact that the lending language does not feel offended by having something taken from it and, in fact, has not lost anything. This debate is still going on. In spite of this, we freely use both the terms as no other suitable terms are available to refer to the modus operandi by which words are imported from another source.

Borrowing is inextricably linked with the social, cultural and political history of a speech community. Borrowing takes place when a speech community comes into close contact with another community. Therefore, without knowing the socio-political history of the community, it is almost impossible to know about the contact of one community with another. Without contact, borrowing cannot take place and the contact can be direct or

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# Some Aspects of the Liangmai Phonology

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Ajit Kumar Baishya & Widinibou

### Introduction

Liangmai is the name of a tribe as well as of the language they speak. They are generally found in the two North-Eastern states, Manipur and Nagaland. The Liangmais are a part of the larger Zeliangrong tribe. It is a collective term given to four tribes and the idea of the common term was based on common ethno-linguistic origin. These four tribes are Zeme, Liangmai, Rongmei and Puimei (Inpui) even though 'Pui' is not included in the nomenclature. The presence of this language came to light only after the British and the missionaries came to North East India. For example, Rev. N. Brown who produced a short Koireng vocabulary in 1837 appears to be the lexical items of Liangmai language (Sachdeva, 2001).

Liangmai belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family of languages and G. A. Grierson (1903) put this language under the Naga-Kuki sub group and he, while making his observation on Liangmai, said, "Their language appears to be an intermediate one between the Naga-Bodo and the Naga-Kuki Group. The pronouns agree best with the latter, and so I class it here, though its geographical position would incline one to put it with the former set of languages. Very little is known about their languages. The only trustworthy source of information is a vocabulary...The language is to be distinguished from Koireng, which belongs to the Kuki Group...It is an altogether different language." (Grierson, 1903, reprint 1995:498) The speakers are