

THE LANGUAGES OF NEW YORK STATE:

A CUNY-NYSIEB GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



LUISANGELYN MOLINA, GRADE 9

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CUNY-NYS INITIATIVE ON
EMERGENT BILINGUALS

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About This Guide

This Guide to the Languages of New York State is designed as a resource for all education professionals, but with particular consideration to those who work with bilingual¹ students. Several ideas have underpinned its conception and execution:

- a) the languages other than English (LOTEs) spoken by bilingual students are neither obstacles nor excess baggage, but **resources of great value** to our community;
- b) the mission of supporting and encouraging students in home language development belongs to **all teachers**, not only those from similar linguistic backgrounds and/or certified in language education;
- c) **language and culture** are sufficiently intertwined as to make the understanding of one without the other a distinctively hollow experience;

and...

- d) the development of translingual and transcultural competence is not an on-off switch, but rather a **lifelong process** of engaging with different communities.

Educators constantly face the task of overcoming distances: between us and our students, between families and schools, between student performance and classroom objectives, and so on. In nearly all cases, these distances are best bridged when both sides extend toward each other, and it is no exception when it comes to language. The sense of linguistic distance between emergent bilinguals² and the English-speaking world can seem vast, and while great efforts should be and are made to help these students extend themselves toward ever-greater inclusion in the Anglosphere, one of the strongest positive messages we can send as educators is that we will work to **bridge linguistic distance** from our end, too. This Guide is a means to following through on that message.

¹ We use the word *bilingual* throughout to mean ‘speaking more than one language.’ *Multilingual* has certain advantages over this term, but the disadvantage of denoting ‘more than two languages.’ *Plurilingual* signifies exactly what we have in mind, but in our view hampers the reading experience by dint of its unfamiliarity.

² Consistent with the CUNY-NYSIEB vision, we use the term *emergent bilingual* to denote students traditionally referred to as *English Language Learners*. “[O]ur use of the term... conceptualizes these students as much more than learners of English only, since they are developing proficiency and literacy in academic English from the base of home language practices. Furthermore, the term *emergent bilinguals* acknowledges that the education of these students must go beyond simply English language learning, to include a challenging curriculum in the content areas that also meets their social and emotional needs.” For more: <http://www.nysieb.ws.gc.cuny.edu/our-vision/>

Karen

1. Karen in Brief

Karen for 'Karen language':

ကညီကိုန် *ka nyaw klo* [ka.nɔ.klo]

Karen word for 'English language':

အဲကလံးကိုန် *è ka li klo* [ɛ.ka.li.klo]

Writing system(s):

Burmese (alpha-syllabic/abugida)

Official national language in:

no countries

Minority language (> 5% speakers):

Burma/Myanmar (CIA, 2012)

Language family (related languages):

Sino-Tibetan (Burmese, Chinese)

US Speakers (US Census 2010a):

3,924

Did you know that...

... George Orwell studied Karen when he lived in Burma (Larkin, 2005)?

... in Sgaw, Karen's most widely spoken dialect, there are no consonants at the ends of syllables?

... a common Karen version of 'How are you?' is နအိန်မ့ၤဝံၤလၢခါ? *na aw me wi li ah?*
[nə.ʔə.me.wi.li.a] 'Have you eaten rice?'



2. Karen in Global Context

Karen--stressed on the second syllable--is the name for a group of Sino-Tibetan languages spoken by the Karen people of south-eastern ကိပ်ယီ *baw pa yaw* 'Burma' and western ကိပ်ကိုန်တဲ *kaw byaw tè* 'Thailand,' with roughly 90% of the world's **5 million speakers** located in Burma (Austin, 2008). Karen insurgents have struggled against the autocratic, one-party, ethnocentric Burmese government for over 60 years, resulting in the displacement of over 100,000 Karen refugees to camps along the border with Thailand. This uprooting has led to a recent spike in Karen emigration to the USA, facilitated by the US government's 2007 decision to allow as many as 20,000 Burmese refugees per year from Thai resettlement camps, and possibly intensified by the devastating 2008 Cyclone Nargis. Note that the figure of 3,924 total US Karen speakers cited above--the most recent available--reflects numbers from the 2006-08 period; these numbers have almost certainly jumped upwards since.

The current regime changed Burma's name to 'Myanmar' in 1988, and also altered a number of other geographical and ethnic terms, including 'Kayin' for the Karen language, people and state.

Many have hesitated to adopt these changes, particularly pro-democracy groups and ethnolinguistic minorities like the Karen; in light of their preference, the current discussion will adhere to the old names 'Burma' and 'Karen.'

2.1 History and Politics

The Karen people likely migrated south to their current homeland from somewhere near modern Tibet around 3000 years ago, making their first settlements in 793 BC (Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 2010), but are first mentioned by name--described as 'forest people'--in the 1700s, after Europeans had started to arrive. By many accounts, British rule benefitted Burma's ethnic minorities, offering protection and governmental representation for groups that had previously shut out of power. **The Karen became particularly pro-British:** a British official named D.M. Smeaton wrote a book in 1887 called *The Loyal Karens of Burma*, which prompted the British government to entrust the Karen with greater responsibility, including designation of Karen as an official language and encouragement of its use as medium of instruction in schools. By 1939, Karen soldiers in the British Army outnumbered Burmese by roughly 3:1 despite Karens representing only 9% of the native population (Selth, 1986).

As discussions of independence swelled in the years following World War II, the Karen hoped Britain would reward their historic loyalty by ensuring an autonomous Karen state, but the Panglong Conference of 1947 convinced Karen leaders that the Burmese majority would never make such concessions. Boycotting much of the Conference and subsequent parliamentary elections, the Karens formed the **Karen National Union (KNU)**, an independence-minded political organization that quickly sprouted a military wing, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). In 1949, active military conflict erupted in the Battle of Insein, which ended in a defeat for the KNLA, but which ushered in six decades of off-and-on guerilla conflict in the mountains and jungles of the Karen state.

Over the last 30 years, the KNU's objectives have shifted from the creation of an independent Karen state to the establishment of Karen autonomy within a federal and democratic Burma. This has long appeared to be an uphill battle: as recently as 1997, a Burmese Army general vowed that "in 20 years you will only be able to find Karen people in a museum" (Karen People, 2010). However, 2011 and 2012 saw enormous gains in Burma's international standing, prospects for democracy, and relations with the Karen. Democratic activist (and ethnic Burman) **Aung San Suu Kyi was freed** in late 2010, and allowed to run for legislative office, which she won in 2012. The KNU signed a ceasefire agreement with the Burmese government in 2012 (BBC, 2012), and--though this is merely a first step toward genuinely healthy, peaceful, and stable coexistence--the new climate of openness has inspired a tentative air of optimism regarding the future of for Karen life in Burma.

Fig. 1: Historical Timeline

<1000	Austroasiatic-speaking Mon settle in south Burma, Tibeto-Burman Pyu in north
1044	Anawrahta Minsaw expands Tibeto-Burman power, founds Pagan Dynasty
11th c.	First inscriptions in Burmese and Mon in 'Burma Mon' script
1277-87	Mongols invade; Pagan Kingdom disintegrates; Warring States period begins
1580	Burmese Toungoo Empire rises to control parts of modern-day China, Thailand
1740s	French-supported Mon rebellions overthrow Toungoo dynasty
1750s	Burmese-speaking Alaungpaya unites Burma, drives out French, British
1813	First American Baptist missionaries; high rate of conversion with animist Karen
1824-86	Anglo-Burmese Wars: Britain conquers Burma, adding it to Indian empire
19th c.	British designate seats in Burmese parliament for Karen; warm Anglo-Karen ties
1942-45	Japan occupies Burma under false pretext of aiding in independence from Britain
1947	Karen leaders boycott Panglong Agreement, elections; form national union KNU
1948	Burma achieves independence from Britain
1949	Armed Karen resistance to Burmese rule commences with Battle of Insein
1962	General Ne Win seizes power in Burma; establishes one-party hermit state
1988	'8888 Uprising' on Aug. 8th forces Ne Win to resign, recognize other parties
1990	Junta ignores elections; activist Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) under house arrest
2008	Cyclone Nargis kills 138,000--major damage and suffering in Karen state
2010-11	PM Thein Sein initiates reforms, releases Nobel Peace Prize winner ASSK
2012	ASSK's party wins majority in free elections; KNU signs ceasefire with regime

2.2 Culture and Lifestyle

The Karen are one of seven principal ethnic groups within Burma, alongside Burmans (roughly half the population), Shan, Rakhine, Chinese, Indian, and Mon; in other words, they are **culturally distinct from Burmans**. We might take the ethnic, linguistic, historical, and cultural differences between Scottish, Irish, Welsh, and English people within Great Britain as a valuable (if rough) analogy: members of the historically oppressed ethnic minorities do not much appreciate being lumped in with the majority, and even a basic understanding of these groups must start with that clear distinction.

The Karen are a **rural, farming people**: life in traditional Karen villages--where most Karen still live--revolves around agriculture, religion, food, and family. The capital and only city of Karen state, Hpa 'An, has a population of roughly 50,000: by way of comparison, many of the 'small' cities in New York State to which Karen refugees have recently immigrated dwarf this in size: Utica has 62,000, Albany nearly 100,000, Syracuse 145,000, and Buffalo over 250,000. The vast majority of Burmese Karen people work in agriculture, usually farming rice on hills or paddies (CDC, 2010).

According to recent estimates, about 70% of Karen people fall under the religious categories of Buddhist, Buddhist-animist, or animist, with nearly all of the remaining 30% Christian, mainly Baptist. Baptist missionaries in the 19th had the uncanny fortune to encounter an animist tradition among the Karen that involved a god called ဝဉ္ဇာယော and the legend of a lost book of knowledge that would someday be brought back by a white brother from across the sea (Barron et al, 2007). By 1834, though fewer than 125 Burmans had converted, over 500 Karen had (Buadaeng, 2007). Today, for the most part, the different **religions coexist with little to no friction**; nothing about animism or Buddhism prevents one from observing other religious practices, and though Christianity does not allow such mixing, it has gotten along fine with its longer-established neighbors.

Unfortunately, the history of ethnic conflict with the Burmans, who have historically disparaged the Karen as primitive and/or overly sympathetic to Christianity and the British, has resulted in **two generations' worth of armed conflict** and humanitarian disruption. Roughly half of the 300,000 Karen Thai live in refugee camps (Karen People, 2010), chased out of their villages by skirmishes, robberies, extortion, rape, or murder. Burmese government forces do not have a monopoly on viciousness and violence--the KNLA recruits young soldiers from villages without great concern for willingness to participate--but the Karen people have had a relatively one-sided view of the conflict, as they have seen their own lives and livelihoods abused by Burman soldiers for decades. While statistics are very hard to come by, there is good evidence that eastern Burma is currently one of the most **heavily land-mined areas** in the world, and documented stories of children killed or maimed by undetonated mines are excruciatingly numerous (Karen Human Rights Group, 2012).

The Karen calendar assigns year 0 to western 739 BC, the date of the first Karen settlement in Burma: the year 2000 was 2739 for the Karen. While Karen months line up fairly closely to western patterns, it has been observed that the different days of the week hold far less importance to the Karen than they do to Americans. One anthropologist from the 1920s noted that “[f]ew of the Karen people can tell the days of the week, except according to Burmese or Christian nomenclature. Several old men have given me names for the days which, they say, were in use a long time ago” (Marshall, 1922: 50). This state of affairs may certainly have changed in the past 90 years, but it illustrates the extent to which rural Karen life really marches to a drumbeat different than our own.

Drums themselves are central to Karen culture. **Frog drums**--large, cast bronze drums with various ornamentation, but especially frogs--serve as status symbols, musical instruments, storage units, religious charms, and links to the Karen's prehistoric past, as the first ones are thought to have traveled with the Karen from Yunnan in China (Cooler, 1994). Typically made by nearby Shan craftsmen, the frog drum has been described as the “most sacred object” to the Karen, and a drum owner stands “higher in the community than if he possessed seven elephants” (Marshall, 1922).

Rice is a staple of the Karen diet, and the chewing of သဘျူလ်လ် *tha blu la* ‘betel leaf,’ a habit-forming stimulant much like tobacco, is very widespread, with distances occasionally expressed in ‘betel chews’ (Marshall, 1922). Soccer and the traditional game of *jin law* are the most popular Karen sports (Karen People, 2010).

2.3 Linguistic Variation and Contact

The Karen languages are **very different from Burmese**, a fact that has led some linguists to propose three main branches for the Sino-Tibetan language family: a Chinese branch, a Tibeto-Burman branch (including Burmese), and a Karen branch. In any case, there is no mutual intelligibility to speak of between Burmese and Karen, and many Karen speakers (possibly a majority) do not speak or understand Burmese at all.

Within the Karen group, there are anywhere between four and twenty dialects, roughly grouped into three regions, with limited mutual intelligibility between them:

Fig. 2: Some regional varieties of Karen (following Barron et al, 2007, i.a.)

Sgaw	(southern)	no syllable-final consonants; no nasal vowels; six tones
Pwo	(southern)	no syllable-final consonants; nasal vowels; six tones
Karenni	(central)	no syllable-final consonants; no nasal vowels; four tones
Pa-o	(northern)	syllable-final consonants; no nasal vowels; four tones

Sgaw and Pwo are the only two that may be considered ‘literary’ varieties; the others can be written but do not have strong traditions in that regard. **Sgaw is the most widely spoken** of the Karen languages, and the variety that is used for all the examples in this discussion. It has been observed that a high percentage of (13 out of every 14) Pwo and Sgaw words derive from the same roots (Wade, 1849), but also that speakers of the two varieties have such difficulty understanding each other that they speak Burmese to each other in Burma, and Thai in Thailand (Barron et al, 2007). In some cases, however, Sgaw functions as the lingua franca, and it is the variety taught in the schools of Thai refugee camps (Karen People, 2010).

2.4 Language and Education

The Buddhist and Christian traditions that inform Karen life strongly encourage education, and from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, the Sgaw Karen developed a healthy system of village schools. However, the 1962 coup and ensuing “Burmese Way to Socialism” banned private schools, and the more recent armed conflicts between Karen nationalists and Burmese troops have made **consistent and high-quality schooling the exception** for Karen children. Nonetheless, organizations such as the Karen Teachers Working Group continue to work to provide education to communities on the run from Burmese troops (Barron et al, 2007).

Functioning Karen schools usually provide **education in three languages**--Karen, English and Burmese--and incorporate traditional domestic subjects such as needlework into the curriculum, alongside subjects like science and history (Barron et al, 2007).

3. Karen in the United States

As mentioned above, Karen immigration to the USA is a very **recent phenomenon**: the 2000 Census counted only 240 Karen speakers nationwide (US Census, 2000), while the 2006-2008 survey data brought the figure up above 3,000 (US Census, 2010a). There is good reason to suppose that another 10-fold increase has since occurred.

3.1 National Trends

Though more recent data on Karen-speaking immigrants is not readily available, we can extrapolate from information on Burmese refugees generally, which illustrates the impact of the Bush administration's 2007 raising of the cap on such immigrants. Since 2005, the top three states for Burmese immigration to the USA have been **Texas, New York, and Indiana**: a look at the figures from 2005-09 indicates the magnitude of the boomlet:

Fig. 3: Fiscal Year Refugee Arrivals from Burma (US Office of Refugee Resettlement in CDC, 2010)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Indiana	185	193	1,066	1,150	1,147
New York	251	217	1,100	1,321	1,696
Texas	163	155	1,163	1,457	3,086

It is still early for many Karen-Americans to have made waves in US society. There are, however, a number of Burmese- and Thai-Americans whose prominence may be inspiring to new arrivals, bearing in mind, of course, that Karen do not identify strongly as Burmese or Thai:

Fig. 4: Burmese- and Thai-American boldface names

Rich Cho	general manager of NBA's Charlotte Bobcats; born in Burma
Louisa Benson Craig	Karen-American rebel leader, actress (1941-2010)
Johnny Damon	All-Star baseball player, World Series champ; Thai mother
Tin Moe	Burmese poet, exiled to USA for pro-democracy stance
Thant Myint-U	Author, historian; grandson of ex-UN Secretary-General U Thant
May Sweet	Burmese pop singer
Aung San Oo	brother of Burmese democratic activist Aung San Suu Kyi
Alex Wagner	MSNBC star (<i>Now with Alex Wagner</i>); Burmese mother
Tiger Woods	legendary golfer; mother born and raised in Thailand

3.2 Karen in New York State

By 2009, there were **1,080 children of Karen-speaking backgrounds** receiving ESL services in the New York State public schools, the majority of them in Utica and Buffalo:

Fig. 5: Distribution of Karen-speaking EBs by NYS School District, 2008-09 (NYS DOE)

Utica	Buffalo	Syracuse	Rochester	Albany	Ithaca	NYC*	Rome	Liverpool
390	298	185	137	26	21	15	6	2

* NYC figure represents six districts combined (#11, #13, #17, #24, #19, and #20)

Given the recent nature of Karen immigration, little in the way of targeted programming has been developed for these students, though some guides (like the present one) have been prepared for health care providers and educators (see CDC, 2010; and Barron et al, 2007 in References below).

4 Structures of Note in Karen

Though unrelated to the Hawaiian language, most Karen languages share with it a lack of syllable-final consonants: all syllables end in vowels. Like many Sino-Tibetan languages, including Chinese and Burmese, **Karen is tonal**, which is to say that a single word can change meaning depending on the pitch contour with which it is spoken. Intonation matters in English, too, of course--rising intonation on [kə.fi] will make the question *coffee?*, while falling pitch indicates a command or observation--but not to the extent that it alters a word's core meaning. In Sgaw Karen, the words ၵ ၵ 'son-in-law,' ၵ ၵ 'to work,' and ၵ ၵ: '[intensifying particle]' all share the basic consonant-vowel pattern transcribed as *ma*, but are spoken with 'falling circumflex,' 'prolonged even,' and 'abrupt ordinary' tone contours, respectively (Gilmore, 1898).

4.1 Sound System

Outside of tones, the most challenging sound pattern in Karen for learners from English backgrounds is that of **consonant aspiration**: Karen pronounces a number of consonants with or without a puff of air, which can be the only difference between a pair of words like ၵ ၵ *tö* 'one' and ၵ ၵ *htö* 'to pick up or pick out one thing after another,' both of which are pronounced differently than ၵ ၵ *dö* 'to be pregnant.' The aspirated versions are different phonemes, and written with different letters in the Burmese script; in romanized transcription, the puff is usually indicated with an 'h' either before or after the relevant consonant, but when pronouncing these sounds, the puff comes afterwards. Contrasts in aspiration also feature critically in languages like Bengali, Chinese and Korean.

The sound system of English has a number of hurdles for the Karen learner to overcome, most notably **syllable-final consonants and consonant clusters**. Sgaw speakers may pronounce English words like ‘house,’ ‘hat,’ and ‘hack’ without their final sounds, while Pwo speakers may nasalize the vowels in English *now* and *pie*, making them sound like *noun* and *pine*. Karen does have a limited number of word-initial consonant clusters, but unusual patterns may be broken up: e.g., *sky* pronounced /sə.kai/, *crystal* as /kri.sə.tə/ (Barron et al, 2007). Additionally, English uses some sounds that do not occur regularly in Karen:

(Consonants)	(Vowels)
[ð] at the beginning of ‘this’	[æ] in the middle of ‘pat’
vs. [θ] at the beginning of ‘thin’	vs. [ɛ] in the middle of ‘pet’
[dʒ] at the beginning of ‘jump’	[ɪ] in the middle of ‘pit’
[tʃ] at the beginning of ‘change’	vs. [i] in the middle of ‘Pete’

4.2 Writing Systems

The Karen languages have only been written down with any consistency for two hundred years or so (Wade, 1849), and to date only the Sgaw and Pwo varieties can be said to have a written or literary corpus. The most widespread writing system for the Sgaw is **Burmese script**, a left-to-right system derived from an earlier Mon script of Indic origins, whose distinctively curvy form is reputed to have evolved through the tradition of writing on palm leaves, which would rip if incised with straighter letters (Burmese Script).

Karen writing is alpha-syllabic: each consonant sound has a distinct symbol (e.g., **မ** for [m]), while each vowel sound has a distinct diacritic (or accent) that is marked over, under, or next to the consonant symbol to form the sound of a complete syllable. For instance, the diacritic ‘**◌◌**’ written over a consonant adds the vowel sound *o* [o]; thus, Karen **မ◌◌** represents a syllable with the sound [mo], standardly transcribed as *mo*. Tones are indicated by symbols that follow each syllable: **◌◌** indicates ‘heavy falling’ inflection (Gilmore, 1898), so the complete word **မ◌◌◌◌** *mo* ‘mother’ is pronounced with heavy falling inflection. The absence of a tone symbol indicates neutral tone.

No standard romanization system exists for the Karen languages; this discussion has employed a relatively traditional system used in **Gilmore’s 1898 grammar** (available online, in the public domain), which has the benefit of following English pronunciation patterns fairly closely, but in which Karen’s **tones are not represented**. The only difficult symbols are ‘*ö*,’ which is pronounced with something of an ‘uh’ sound as it is in German; ‘*è*,’ pronounced like the vowel in English ‘get,’ as opposed to ‘*e*,’ pronounced like the vowel in English ‘gate’; and ‘*ü*,’ pronounced as it is in German, like the vowel in ‘beat’ but with lips more tightly rounded. The use of ‘*h*’ to indicate aspiration was discussed in 4.1 above.

4.3 Grammar

The Karen languages adhere fairly closely to **SVO word order**. They are mono-syllabic and isolating, which is to say that the minimal units of meaning are inevitably single syllables (as opposed to English ‘cinnamon’ and ‘potato,’ both tri-syllabic morphemes), and that grammatical markings such as plural and event time are indicated with distinct ‘particle’ words, rather than inflections on the nouns or verbs themselves.

Like Chinese, Karen does not have articles such as ‘a’ or ‘the,’ but does have a system of noun classifiers that affects the particle that precedes any noun being counted. Adjectives generally follow the nouns they modify, as in $\text{p}i\text{ }ghe$ ‘good man,’ literally ‘man good.’

4.4 How Names Work

Karen people typically have one name only--**PERSONAL**--which is given to them by their parents, with nothing necessarily passed down between generations. That name can consist of multiple words, e.g. *Tee Ser Paw*, meaning ‘Sweet Water Flower.’ Some families may have begun to give family names to their children, but this is a relatively recent and uncommon phenomenon (Phan, 2010).

4.5 ‘Friends’ and Classroom Phrases

Though they are unrelated in terms of ‘linguistic genetics,’ Karen and English do have similar-sounding words for many of the same concepts, particularly those related to **science and measurement**:

Fig. 6: Karen-English Academic ‘Friends’

Elementary			လှစာ်	<i>le sö</i>	‘laser’
ပာ်	<i>pah</i>	‘father/pa’	မဲးဒြိုင်စကီး	<i>mè khro sa ko</i>	‘microscope’
ဟဲလ်လိခီးပတၢ်	<i>hè li khaw pa tö</i>	‘helicopter’	မံလိလိထၢ်	<i>mi li li tö</i>	‘milliliter’
မဲးကစ	<i>mè ka si</i>	‘magazine’	နဲလိလိ	<i>nè lo</i>	‘nylon’
မံးလၢ်	<i>mi la</i>	‘mile’	ပၤပၤ	<i>pa pa</i>	‘pope’
မိာ်	<i>mo</i>	‘mother/ma’	ပုးရမံး	<i>pe ra mi</i>	‘pyramid’
နဲးပတၢ်	<i>nè ptyu</i>	‘Neptune’	ရိဘီး	<i>ro baw</i>	‘robot’
နါစုၤ	<i>nah se</i>	‘nose’	Secondary		
နိာ်	<i>naw</i>	‘noun’	ဘဲထံရံယါ	<i>bè ti ri yah</i>	‘bacteria’
ပလူတို	<i>pa lu to</i>	‘Pluto’	ချိန်ရိန်ဖုလ်	<i>khlo ro hpe la</i>	‘chlorophyll’
စအုၣ်	<i>sè ‘e</i>	‘science’	ဒိန်မိန်ခြွန်စံၣ်	<i>di mo kre si</i>	‘democracy’
Intermediate			ခိရ်(နိ)	<i>kho rè (na)</i>	‘Koran’
ခၢ်ဘိၣ်ဒဲၣ်အီးစး	<i>kha bo dè ‘aw sè</i>	‘carbon dioxide’	မဲးကနဲး	<i>mè ka ni</i>	‘manganese’
ခိန်ဖူထၢ်	<i>khaw hpyu tö</i>	‘computer’	မံလိဘၢ	<i>mi li ba</i>	‘millibar’
ကလူခိးစံ	<i>ka lu kho sa</i>	‘glucose’	နဲးထြး	<i>nè htre</i>	‘nitrates’
ခရၢ်တ	<i>ka ra ta</i>	‘karate’	နဲးထြိုင်ကွၢ်	<i>nè htro kye</i>	‘nitrogen’
ကံလိကြၢ်(မ်)	<i>ki lo grè (ma)</i>	‘kilogram’	ဖိစံး	<i>hpaw sa hpe</i>	‘phosphate’
			ထဲစံး	<i>htè sa te</i>	‘tungsten’
			သမီမံထၢ်	<i>tha maw mi tö</i>	‘thermometer’
			ဘဲရးစံ	<i>bè rö sa</i>	‘virus’

Fig. 7: Classroom Phrases in Karen and English

<u>Greetings & Questions</u>			<u>ယနံတပါ်ဘဉ်</u>		
ဟဲလိန်	<i>hè lo</i>	'Hello'			<i>ya nah ta pö ba</i> 'I don't understand'
တူလိန်မုန်	<i>tu lo mü</i>	'Welcome'			မုန် / တမုန်ဘဉ် <i>me / ta me ba</i> 'yes / no'
နအိန်ဆူဉ်ခါ?	<i>na 'o hsu ah?</i>	'How are you?'			<u>ယမၤစၢနၢသ့ခါ</u>
တၢ်ဟးလိန်ခါ?	<i>ta ha law ah?</i>	'Toilet?'			<i>ya ma sö na the ah?</i>
လဲမုန်မုန်	<i>lè mü mü</i>	'Goodbye'			'Can I help you?'
<u>Compliments & Niceties</u>			<u>Directions</u>		
တၢ်မၤဂ့ၤ!	<i>tah ma ghe!</i>	'Good work!'	ဆၢထၢဉ်	<i>hsö htö</i>	'Stand up'
တၢ်ဘျး	<i>tah blu</i>	'Thanks'	ဆုဉ်နီၤ	<i>hse naw</i>	'Sit down'
ဗျးဝံသးစူၤ	<i>che wi tha su</i>	'Please'	ဖးလိန်	<i>hpa li</i>	'Read'
ပျီၤသါ	<i>plü thah</i>	'Excuse me'	ကွဲး	<i>kwè</i>	'Write'
			ကနဉ်	<i>ka na</i>	'Listen'
<u>Communication</u>			စံးဆၢတၢ်	<i>si hsö tah</i>	'Answer'
ယနံတပါ်	<i>ya nah pö</i>	'I understand'	မၤတၢ်မၤ	<i>ma tah ma</i>	'Work'

5 Further Reading and References

5.1 Imaginative Literature

Books in Karen, books about the Karen people, and books about the Karen diaspora are difficult to come by. Two signs that this might be changing are the 2010 publication of Zoya Phan's *Undaunted: My Struggle for Freedom and Survival in Burma*, and the 2011 publication of **Richard Dove's** *Us Karen*, a book in English for ages 4-8 about Karen immigrants in Australia. Reading and teaching materials are available, however: two good organizations with plentiful online materials are Drum Publications (drumpublications.org) and Cornell University's Southeast Asia Program (SEAP), which has an online resource for Karen books at http://seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/karen_books.

5.2 English Language Periodicals

Karen News--<http://www.karennews.org/>

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