

- * grammar is being constantly created .
- * diachronic notion .

Approaches To Grammaticalization

Areal and Universal Dimensions of Grammatization in Lahu

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1. INTRODUCTION

The term *grammaticalization*, despite its heptasyllabic cacophony (the more concise *grammaticization*, or even *grammatization* would be preferable) represents one of the most important phenomena in diachronic linguistics.

Grammat(ic[al])ization is inherently a diachronic concept. It refers to a historical semantic process whereby a "root-morpheme" with a full *lexical* meaning assumes a more abstract *functorial* or "grammatical" meaning. Such processes may take centuries to complete (as Bréal suggests: *see below*), but this does not seem necessarily to be the case. We can see grammatizational phenomena occurring rapidly before our eyes in any language we choose.

Traditional Chinese grammar distinguishes between *shí-cí* "full/solid/real/true words" and *xū-cí* "empty words", so that a good Chinese translation of *grammaticalization* is *xū-huà* ("empty-izing, emptification, evacuation"). This metaphor has much to recommend it, since a hallmark of many grammatized morphemes is that they are more conspicuous *in absentia* than they are *in praesentia*. Despite their "emptiness", their absence can immediately stamp one as a non-native speaker, or at best, as a child. (Try saying, e.g. **I going soon*, or **I read it in book*.)

The pioneer semanticist (and reputedly the inventor of the word *sémantique*, Michel Bréal, conceived of grammatization in terms of *specialization* rather than evacuation:

We can see from this...example in what the Law of Specialization consists. Among all words of a certain kind, distinguished by a certain grammatical imprint, there is always one which is little by little drawn apart from its

fellows. It becomes the pre-eminent exponent of the grammatical conception of which it bears the stamp. But at the same time it loses its individual value, and is no more than a grammatical instrument, one of the wheels of the phrase. When the French say *un temps plus long*, *une journée plus courte*, the word *plus* serves to determine the adjective by which it is followed; but by itself it has no more existence from a semantic point of view than the inflection *-ior*. In the same way we can guess the reason why the Law of Specialization demands the help of centuries before it can operate. Words have too much individual significance to adapt themselves at once to playing the part of auxiliary. It is only a long use of words in various connections that slowly prepares the mind to remove from them their superfluous value. (Bréal 1897; trans. 1964, p. 15)

A more vivid characterization of the process is Givón's term *bleaching*, which nicely captures the partial effacement of a morpheme's semantic features, the stripping away of some of its precise content so it can be used in an abstracter, grammatical-hardware-like way. The key notion here is *abstractness* (etymologically "drawing away"), a hard concept to define, since it seems to be almost a semantic primitive. One crude way of approaching it is in terms of what I have called *juxtapository productivity* (Matisoff, 1969), an index of a morpheme's combinatory possibilities in collocations — the fewer or more general the semantic features of a morpheme, the less likely they are to conflict with those of others. A full verb meaning 'send someone on an errand' will combine with fewer other lexemes than a bleached verb that means *causative*.

Grammatization may also be viewed as a subtype of *metaphor* (etymologically "carrying beyond"), our most general term for a meaning shift, or *glissement sémantique*. Grammatization is a metaphorical shift toward the abstract. Here G. Stern's distinction (Bréal would say *répartition*) between the etymologically identical terms *metaphor* and *transfer* is useful: "metaphor" being defined as an originally conscious or voluntary shift in a word's meaning because of some perceived similarity, while "transfer" is a meaning shift so natural that it happens unconsciously. Needless to say, the ordinary speaker is synchronically unaware of the semantic history of the functors of his language — such metaphors — (better, such transfers) are "dead".

Human beings are preeminently creatures of habit, partly because of laziness, but partly because of the rational need to save effort. The scholar who eats the same lunch every day frees his mind from the time-consuming necessity of choosing something different each time. If a new collocation of morphemes proves useful (if it satisfies a *Sprachnot*), it can be stored in the

brain as a unit, much like creating a "macro" key on a computer. Grammatized usages of a word may seem strange at first, but they can quickly begin to seem normal.

It could be claimed that all grammatization involves *analogy* — as indeed grammatical change in general seems to. Yet not all grammatical changes are instances of grammatization. One can think of many instances of ongoing grammatical change, where the younger generation accepts constructions which their elders find abhorrent — these are all analogical, though not necessarily grammatizational: e.g. *bored of* (instead of *bored with*), by analogy with *tired of*, *sick of*; *so fun* (instead of *such fun*), by analogy with, e.g. *so amusing*, *so funny*; *between she and I* (instead of *between her and me*), by analogy with, e.g. *She and I are going*; *I could care less* (instead of *I couldn't care less*), perhaps by analogy with *I should worry?!*; even the infamous new "double copula" construction (*What I think is, is that he's an idiot*), perhaps by "analogical conflation" of a topicalization (*What I think is — he's an idiot*) and an extraposition (*It's that he's an idiot*).

It should also be pointed out that a morpheme may lose semantic features without becoming grammatized. The English expression *white shirt* was borrowed into Japanese as *waishatsu* in the Meiji period to mean 'formal Western white shirt', but was soon bleached (how appropriate!) to mean 'Western shirt in general', leading to such historically oxymoronic collocations as *aoi waishatsu* (lit. "blue white-shirt"). Similarly, the Lahu applied the expression *Kâlâ-phu* (lit. "white Indian") to the first "Europeans" they met, and this term has stuck; when they later encountered American blacks they unhesitatingly called them *Kâlâ-phu-nâ*? (lit. "black white-Indian"). These are instances of *generalization without grammatization*. One could also call this *idiomatization* (see the discussion of Lahu "idiomatic verb concatenations", 4.31 below).

What is really going on in such cases is a *total* loss of morphemic identity, or an obliteration of a morpheme-boundary. This goes far beyond what happens in grammatization, where the bleached item at least retains its morphemic autonomy. Examples of morphemic obliteration may be cited at will. When phonological reduction has not been too extreme we may talk of *morphanization* (Matisoff, 1973; 1978a), i.e. becoming an "orphan morph" (e.g. the *cran-* in *cranberry* or the *-tril* in *nostril*). More spectacular instances include the swallowing up of *eye* in *window* (< *wind* + *eye*) and *daisy* (< *day's* + *eye*), and my all-time favorite, the *-k* in *ink* (ult. < Greek *en-kaustos* 'burnt into', with the second element < *kaiein* 'burn').

1.1. The Southeast Asian linguistic area

The Southeast Asian linguistic area, defined broadly to include China south of the Yangtze, NE India, and the Himalayan region, as well as peninsular and insular SE Asia, is one of the great linguistic areas of the world, with five major language families (Sino-Tibetan, Tai-Kadai, Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao), Austroasiatic (Mon-Khmer), and Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) flourishing in symbiotic profusion. Despite their genetic diversity, long periods of intimate contact have largely homogenized all aspects of the phonology, grammar, and semantics of these languages, so that it makes eminent good sense to consider phenomena like grammaticization in the widest possible areal context.

Although many SE Asian languages have more morphology than is generally realized, it is true that they are overwhelmingly analytic and (except for Austronesian) monosyllabic/tonal or sesquisyllabic ("syllable-and-a-half") in structure. This is especially true of the languages that are genetically related to or culturally dominated by Chinese. In the latter category of "Sinospheric" languages are the unrelated Tai-Kadai and Hmong-Mien families, as well as Vietnamese (genetically Mon-Khmer but under intense influence from Chinese). The more than 250 Tibeto-Burman (TB) languages are demonstrably related to Chinese, but are different from it typologically, being (except for the Karenic branch) SOV — undoubtedly the original Sino-Tibetan word order.

Lahu, a language with half a million speakers on which I have been working since 1965, is typical of the Lolo-Burmese branch of Tibeto-Burman — the branch most firmly planted in the Sinosphere. (The TB languages of India and the Himalayas have more morphology, are less tonal, and are more under the cultural/historical influence of India than of China.) In this paper we will explore issues in Lahu grammaticization that are of primary importance in the SE Asian linguistic area in general. The Sinospheric languages rely mostly on independent words rather than on affixes to express grammatical categories — particles, auxiliary verbs, classifiers, adverbs, etc. We will first consider the process whereby root-morphemes become grammaticized into particles; then the dynamics of verb-bleaching in complex verbal nuclei; finally some phenomena which illustrate the truism that grammatical/semantic categories are continua rather than discrete, neat compartments.

All the Lahu examples are from my own fieldwork. The Thai and Mandarin examples are from standard sources, as is most of the Vietnamese, Khmer, and Hmong data (see References). The remainder of the latter, as

$$\begin{array}{l} P_n \rightarrow \\ P_v \rightarrow \\ P_u \rightarrow \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \rightarrow \\ \rightarrow \\ \rightarrow \end{array} \begin{array}{l} V \\ V \\ V \end{array} - \text{GRAMMATIZATION IN LAHU}$$

well as the examples from Yao, are from my field-methods classes conducted at Berkeley.

Come from root -
morpheme

2. "PARTICULIZATION" IN LAHU

Particles are morphemes with abstract grammatical functions that cannot constitute the head of a phrase. Lahu, like other SE Asian languages, has dozens of them. They are conveniently divided into 3 subtypes: (a) *Noun-particles* (P_n) may only occur after nouns. Unlike true nouns, P_n 's may not be quantified or classified. (b) *Verb-particles* (P_v) only occur after verbs. Unlike true verbs, P_v 's may not be negated. (c) *Unrestricted particles* (P_u) may occur after either nouns or verbs. The P_u 's may be further subclassified according to whether they occur only in non-final clauses (*non-final unrestricted particles* or P_{unf} 's), only in final clauses (*final unrestricted particles* or P_{uf} 's), or in both final and non-final clauses (*universal unrestricted particles* or P_{univ} 's). Note that in Lahu, as in the other SOV languages of the Tibeto-Burman family, all particles are postpositional.

Particles convey such essential grammatical information as case relationships, verbal aspect, inter-clausal propositional relations, evidentiality, the speaker's emotional attitude, degrees of politeness, etc. Although as a group particles are obviously more abstract (or "empty") than either nouns or verbs, within the particle class itself there is a hierarchy of abstractness. As one might expect, the "unrestricted" particles are the most abstract of all — their meanings being so general as to be congruent both with nominality and verblity.

Sentence-final emotive particles are particularly richly developed in tone languages, since mere intonation is less salient when every syllable has a distinctive "melody" of its own.

Despite their centrality to the grammar of SE Asian languages, particles are generally open classes. Not only are particles readily borrowable from other languages, e.g. Lahu *šē* (P_v) 'attitude of regret' < Tai (cf. Siamese *śā*), they are also continually developing from fully lexical morphemes — i.e. particulization is an ongoing process. It is not always easy to say, in fact, where a root-morpheme ends and a particle begins. "In some cases the borderline between particles and members of other word classes is not too clear." (Thompson, 1965: 258; below 4.4.)

Particles (along with other high-frequency abstract morphemes like adverbs and numerals) are often marked by special phonological features. In Lahu they are likely to lose their initial consonants: *thà?* (P_n) 'accusative' is

often pronounced *àʔ* (below 2.11); *mā* (Adv) 'negative' becomes simply *ā*; *lè* (Punf) 'topicalizer' varies with *è*; *tā* or *tá* 'perfective; durative' (below 2.33, 4.42) frequently becomes *ā* or *á*, etc. Even if they manage to retain their initial consonant, particles may well lose their vowel quality through destressing: The Burmese negative adverb has been reduced to *mə-*, though it historically had the full vowel *-a* (cf. Lahu *mā*); the Burmese numeral *tiʔ* 'one' (Written Burmese *tac* < PTB **g-tyik*) is usually pronounced with a schwa (*tə-*). In extreme cases, a particle may get so reduced that it fuses with the preceding root-morpheme (cf. Lahu *qay* 'go' < **ka* 'go' + *e* (Pv) 'motion away from deictic center'; below 4.51). The limit of phonological slightness is reached when a particle comes to lack any segmental phoneme at all — it is convenient to treat an abrupt intonational contour on a Lahu verb as a verb-particle, "imperative glottal stop", e.g. *qay-ʔ* 'Go!' (Matisoff, 1973:353–4).

2.1. In the noun-phrase: A noun becomes a noun-particle

2.1.1. *thàʔ* 'upper surface' > OBJECT MARKER (direct or indirect); efficacy/agentivity depressant

This word has a good etymology that can be traced all the way back to Proto-Tibeto-Burman (PTB) **l-tak* ʃ **g-tak* 'ascend; above' (see Matisoff, 1972a: #42; Benedict 1972: 52, 110, 123).

As an independent noun prefixed by *ə-*, or a constituent in noun-compounds, Lahu *thàʔ* means 'upper surface; top part':

- ə-thàʔ-phə* ʃ *ə-thàʔ-pá* 'the outer side; top surface'
khi-tə-qə-thàʔ 'instep; upper side of foot'
liʔ ə-thàʔ 'on the book; the top surface of the book'

- (1) *ʃē-ʃī chi mi-chá ə-thàʔ bu tɛ a*
 sand DEM floor surface pile put PTCL
 'Pile the sand up on the floor!'

As a noun-particle (often reduced to *hàʔ* or even *àʔ*) (see above), this word has developed into an object-marker (Matisoff, 1973: 155–8). In this function it is used rather sparingly, only where clarity demands or emphasis is required. When both direct and indirect objects are present, *thàʔ* will follow the indirect object. This is because indirect objects are typically human (i.e. potential agents, high on the scale of efficacy), so that an explicit non-agent marker is sometimes required to exclude such an interpretation:

- (2) *liʔ chi nə thàʔ pí tā ve yò*
 book DEM 1SG *** give PTCL PTCL PTCL
 '(Someone) has given me that book.'

Without *thàʔ*, (1) could be interpreted as "I have given (someone) that book." This Pn may also be used in a temporal sense, marking a sort of "accusative of time":

- (3) *nə-hi khō dōʔ ve qhōʔ câ ve ha-pa thàʔ yò*
 1PL top hit REL year eat GEN month *** PTCL
 'We play with tops in the month that we celebrate New Year's.'

thàʔ may also mark embedded sentential objects:

- (4) *yō qōʔ la ve thàʔ nə dō-lo ve yò*
 3SG return PTCL PTCL *** I hope PTCL PTCL
 'I hope that he comes back.'

A clue to the semantic development of this etymon is found in the archaic Red Lahu ritual language, where one finds a compound noun-particle *ú-thàʔ* with a general locative or accusative meaning. The first syllable here is undoubtedly to be identified with *ú-ʃ ó-* 'head' (cf. *ú-gē* 'pillow', *ó-qō* 'head'):

- (5) *chə-yā-vā-yā ú-thàʔ gō mā gā*
 people *** affect NEG reach
 'May (these misfortunes) not be visited upon the people!' (cf. Eng. 'upon the heads of the people')
- (6) *mū-ni cə na ú-thàʔ, lə-pa cə na ú-thàʔ*
 sun be above *** moon be above ***
 'in the place above the sun, in the place above the moon'

It is easy to see how the basic meaning 'top surface' could have been bleached into the abstract idea of 'impingement upon; being topped by the action of the verb.'

2.1.2. *lo* 'road/way' > locative particle

Unlike the previous example, where the fully lexical meaning of the etymon continues to coexist alongside its grammaticized one, the original meaning of the locative Pn *lo* can only be deduced from comparative data.

There is a well-attested PTB etymon **lam* 'road; way' (STC #87) (cf.

Written Tibetan (WT) *lam*, Written Burmese (WB) *lām*), which has not survived with this meaning in Lahu. (The Lahu word for 'road' is now *yàʔ-qə*, perhaps related to the verb *yàʔ* 'descend'.) Instead, Lahu has developed a locative Pn *lo*, which I believe to be a variant of the 'road' root. *-o* is the regular Lahu reflex of **-am* (cf. WB *lam*, Lahu *lò* 'cord (measurement)'); the Lahu mid-tone, unmarked in my transcription, points to Proto-Lolo-Burmese (PLB) Tone *3, while the WB cognate reflects Tone *2, but this is no problem. Tonal developments are frequently irregular with functors, and Tone *3 is demonstrably secondary in any case.

As a Pn, *lo* is somewhat more formal than the other locative particles *ɔ̄* and *kàʔ*. By itself *lo* does not specify direction of motion, or even motion vs. rest; the interpretation depends on the following verb, or the sentence as a whole:

- (7) há-qō *lo* [^] *mi chē* *ve* to be
 cave *** sit PROG PTCL
 'He's sitting in the cave.' ("ESSIVE") "esse"
- (8) há-qō *lo* ^{luut} *lòʔ* *e* *ò* towards
 *** enter PTCL PTCL
 'He has already gone into the cave.' ("ADESSIVE")
- (9) há-qō *lo* ^{g~} *tɔʔ* *e* *ò* from
 *** emerge
 'He has already come out of the cave.' ("ABESSIVE")

Convincing comparative evidence for this grammatization comes from an obscure, moribund language of E. Nepal, Hayu (Michailovsky 1989), which has a cognate noun *lom* 'way; road', as in *lom he* (N + Pn) '*sur le chemin; on the way*' and *ek din mu lom* ('one + day + GEN + road') '*un jour de chemin; a day's journey*'. In Hayu also this noun seems already to have developed into a noun-particle, as in (10):

- (10) ^ɛ *ang lom na* *ju!*
 1SG *** EMPH descend
 'Come down my way!'

Sequences like *ang lom* have changed their internal modificational structure, passing from a MODIFIER + HEAD (where the pronoun is genitively attributed to the following noun: *my way*) to a HEAD + MODIFIER (where the bleached noun is the satellite of the preceding pronoun: *first person locatively conceived*).

2.1.3. 'object/possession' → genitive marker

Thai, Vietnamese, and Cambodian have all developed genitive markers out of a noun meaning 'thing; object':

a. Thai *khǎw*

As noun:

- (11a) *paj sýy khǎw*
 vV Vh OBJ
 'go buy things'

As particle:

- (11b) *mia khǎw phǒm*
 wife GEN 1SG
 'my wife'

b. Vietnamese *của*

As noun:

- (12a) *của công*
 Nh public
 'public funds; state property'

As particle:

- (12b) *cái va-li của ông Nam*
 CLF valise GEN Mr.
 'Mr. Nam's suitcase'

c. Khmer *rəbɔh*

As noun:

- (13a) *rəbɔh nuh kee haw thaə kmaw-day*
 thing DEM 3SG call QUOT pencil
 'That thing is called a pencil.'

As particle:

- (13b) *puəq-maaq touc rəbɔh kñom pii neəq nih*
 friend little GEN 1SG two CLF DEM
 'these two little friends of mine'

2.1.4. 'female proprietary spirit' > feminine agentive nominalizer

The original or basic meaning of Lahu (ɔ̄-)ʃē-*ma* seems to have been 'female proprietary spirit', e.g. the guardian spirit of a stream. The syllable

šē is probably from the same etymon as *qhāʔ-šē* 'village headman'. *šē* (V) 'lead' (< PLB **sin*¹ ǵ **sin*² or **sin*¹ ǵ **sin*²; cf. WB *sañ*, *ʔasañ* 'owner: proprietor'); *-ma* is a feminine suffix.

From there the meaning branched out in several directions. In composition with the morpheme *yē* 'house' (*yē-šē-ma*) it developed two separate meanings: (a) the more "literal" one, *lady of the house*, and (b) the more idiomatic one 'house lizard', a harmless, ubiquitous creature that lives on the ceilings and walls of every house in Thailand. They are called *cīncōk* in Thai, and, like our *ladybugs*, are regarded with some affection.¹ From (b) the meaning developed into 'bug; critter' in general (e.g. *pū-šē-ma* 'silkworm'), and very recently the missionaries have encouraged a neologistic development into 'microbe, germ' (probably a calque on English, e.g. a *flu bug*). All this is certainly not grammaticalization, but merely *glissement sémantique*, metaphor, idiomatization.

On the other hand, the notion 'female proprietary spirit' developed more mundanely into 'female owner in general', and (in the direction of inalienable possession) into 'the female body':

- (14a) *yō ʔ-šē-ma dāʔ jā*
3SG FEM.body good very
'She's got a great body.'

From there it was only a small further step to two thoroughly grammaticalized usages:

(a) *feminine reflexive*

- (14b) *yō ʔ-šē-ma kán chí qha pā-è ġa te ve yō*
3SG *** work this all must do PTCL PTCL
'She has to do this work all by herself.'²

(b) *feminine agentive nominalizer*

- (15) *yā ġa ga pō pī šē-ma* 'midwife'
(i.e. "she who must help give birth")³

This is an interesting example of the same lexeme developing both highly concrete and highly abstract senses.

2.2. Verb > noun-particle: 'Copula' > pluralizer

Here is a case that can only be "teased out" as the result of much comparative/historical labor. In *God and the Sino-Tibetan copula* (1985), I

traced the phonological and semantic evolution of a PST etymon **s-ray* ǵ **s-way*, which originally seems to have had a highly abstract copular meaning. The variant in *-w-* gave rise to the most important and complex Lahu particle *ve*, which now does duty as a *nominalizer* (as such it occurs in the citation-form of verbs, like Eng. *to*) as well as a subordinator (*relativizer, genitivizer*) (see Matisoff, 1972b). The variant in **s-r-*, on the other hand, developed into a pluralizer in various TB languages — maximizing either the subject or the object of the verb:

Lakher *hrai* 'plural affix for denoting company, etc.'; Mikir *háy* 'plural of non-animate nouns'; Boro *sray* 'to V everything' (e.g. *za-sray* 'eat everything', *zankri-sray* 'shake everything', *ran-sray* 'distribute everything').

In Lahu, the descendant of this variant of the etymon is the morpheme *-hi*, used as a pluralizer with the personal pronouns and some proper nouns or nouns referring to people: *ṇā-hi* 'we', *nō-hi* 'you (pl.)', *yō-hi* 'they', *Cā-lō-hi* 'Cā-lō and his friends; Cā-lō and his group'.⁴

2.3. In the verb-phrase: From verb to verb-particle

This sort of development is highly typical of SEA languages in general. The pan-areal criteria for distinguishing full verbs from verb-particles are *negatability* and *occurability* as the only morpheme in a VP. The presumed development is from full verb to verb-particle. I have found no instances of the development proceeding in the opposite direction, i.e. "degrammatization" of particles to full verbs.

A neat example of the difference is the behavior of the Thai morpheme *ʔaat*, which behaves sometimes as a *full modal verb* meaning 'be able to; capable of' (in which case it may be directly preceded by the negative adverb *māʔ*), and sometimes as a modal particle meaning 'likely to; imminent possibility', in which role it may not be directly negated:

- (16a) *māʔ ʔaat cə paj*
NEG Vmod PTCL Vh
'isn't able to go'

- (16b) *ʔaat cə māʔ paj*
PTCL PTCL NEG V
'probably won't go'

(In the terminology of Noss 1964, a modal verb is one which can precede another V in the same verbal nucleus. A modal particle also precedes the verb it modifies.)

Similarly, in Chrau (a Mon-Khmer language of the Bahnaric group, spoken in Vietnam), where "auxiliary verbs are distinguished from preverbal particles in that the auxiliaries are negatable" (Thomas, 1971: 144-8), the word *conh* may function either as a full, negatable "intentional verb" meaning 'want to' (17), or as a non-negatable preverbal particle meaning 'almost; about to' (18):

(17) *anh conh saq*
1SG Vint Vh
'I want to go'

(17a) *anh êq conh saq*
NEG
'I don't want to go.'

(18) *anh conh churt*
PTCL V
'I'm about to die'

But not:

*(18a) *anh êq conh churt*
NEG PTCL V

The same semantic connection between imminence and volition is also illustrated by the range of meanings of the Lahu particle *gâ* (see 2.31 below and note 5), and the Burmese particle *hcĩ*, as well as by the Yao verb/verb-particle *ʔɔɔy* — though we are here dealing with a meaning constellation that is more universal than areal, as witness colloquial English expressions like "Looks like it wants to rain, doesn't it?"

2.3.1. 'think/desire' > desiderative particle

In modern Lahu, the important morpheme *gâ* combines freely with verbs to form desiderative expressions:

qay gâ 'want to go', *ʃĩ gâ* 'want to know', *gĩ gâ* 'want to laugh'

Yet *gâ* is not itself a verb, since it cannot be preceded by the negative adverb *mâ* (*mâ qay gâ* 'not want to go', NOT **qay mâ gâ*), nor can it constitute a

Lh. 5 ← dāy

verbal nucleus all by itself. To translate an English sentence where 'want' is the main verb (e.g. "I want mangoes"), a Lahu verb must be supplied for the *gâ* to hitch onto:

(19a) *ɲà má-mo-ʃĩ hâ? gâ* (lit. "I want to get mangoes.")⁵
1SG mango get PTCL

(19b) *ɲà má-mo-ʃĩ cá gâ* (lit. "I want to eat mangoes.")
eat PTCL

Other occurrences of *gâ* give clues as to what its original non-grammatized meaning must have been. Besides its use as a desiderative particle, it also occurs as a bound morpheme in "elaborate expressions" (an elaborate expression is a 4-syllable collocation formed with elegant intent, where either the 1st and 3rd, or the 2nd and 4th syllables are identical), where it appears as the "couplet" of the free verb *dō* 'think'. An *elaborate couplet* consists of the non-repeating syllables in an elaborate expression, usually synonymous, antonymous, or otherwise correlative in meaning, thus:

<i>dō-phu-gâ-phu</i>	'pure thoughts' ("think-white-gâ-white")
<i>dō-yè-gâ-yè</i>	'be strong-minded; have equanimity'
	("think-firm-gâ-firm")
<i>dō-ʃa-gâ-ʃa</i>	'be serene; have peace of mind'
	("think-easy-gâ-easy")

Certain expressions in the archaic ritual language clearly indicate that *gâ* must once have had an independent verbal meaning like "think of conatively; desire":

gâ-pi-gâ-ʃē? "desire-bundle" (ritual object offered in the temple, consisting of a bundle of sticks tipped with cottonwool to simulate flowers).

2.3.2. 'come' > cisative particle and marker of non-3rd person beneficiary

Sometimes the grammaticization of a Lahu root-morpheme is accompanied by a morphophonemic change — notably a change in tone (which may be the synchronic reflex of a now-vanished segmental affix). The full verb 'come' is in the low-falling tone, *là* (e.g. *mû-yè là ve* 'It's raining' ("rain comes")). This verb has been grammaticized into two semantically related particles, each of which is under its own distinctive tone: *la* (mid-tone (unmarked in the transcription)) and *lâ* (high-falling tone).^{6,7}

WT = sta

Lh. tã * ʔda² "tshia"
WB. thã m.

The mid-toned particle *la* indicates cisativity, either in the "literal" sense of motion toward the deictic center, or figuratively, in the sense of "almost coming to pass; nearly V", e.g. *mâ' la* (V + Pv) 'blow in this direction; blow hither', *pò la* 'come flying', *câ la* 'come and eat', *ši la* 'be close to death', *cò la* 'come to possess; get a hold of'.⁸

The falling-toned particle *lâ* has an even more abstract meaning. It is a benefactive particle indicating that the verbal action is for the benefit of (or impinges upon) a non-3rd person, e.g.:

- chô lâ* (V + Pv) 'chop for me/us/you'
phê lâ (V + Pv) 'release me/us/you'
phâ'-mâ lâ (V + Pv) 'confess to me/us/you'

In this usage, *lâ* forms a tight paradigmatic opposition with a grammatized verb *pî* 'give', which indicates that the verbal action impinges on a 3rd person, e.g.:

- chô pî* (Vh + Vv) 'chop for him/her/them'
phê pî (Vh + Vv) 'release him/her/them'
phâ'-mâ pî (Vh + Vv) 'confess to him/her/them'

See Figure 1.

The highly grammatized nature of the opposition between *lâ* and *pî* is noteworthy, despite their different grammatical statuses (*lâ* is a Pv, tonally differentiated from its parent verb, while the *pî* is homophonous with its parent verb, so must be regarded as a post-head versatile verb ("Vv"; below 3.1). (For a brief discussion of the causative function of *pî*, see below 3.2.3.)

2.3.3. 'place/put down' > perfective, durative, permanent action

The Lahu verb *tā* 'place on; put on; set on; stand sthg. upright' has impeccable Tibeto-Burman credentials⁹, reflecting PLB *ʔa² (cf. WB *thā*) and ultimately PTB *s-ta (cf. WT *sta* & *stad*):

- (20) *pê-hô tā ve*
 candle ***
 'Set up a candle.'
- (21) *ni-ma tê sī tī tā ve*
 heart one CLF only *** PTCL
 'concentrate one's efforts; be united in spirit with others'

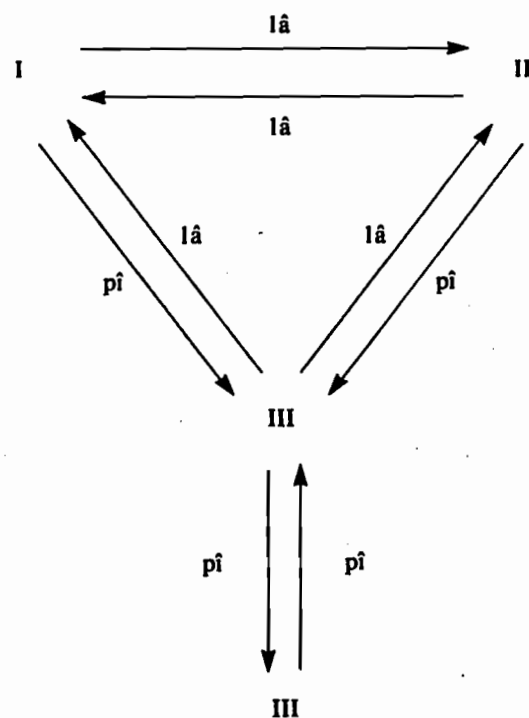


Figure 1: The Lahu benefactive system

This etymon has been bleached into one of the most important Lahu Pv's, in which function it indicates that the verbal action is stable, quasi-permanent, likely to last (*durative*); or that it is over and done with (*perfective*):¹⁰

- (22) *yô-hi á-qhō tī chē tā ve*
 3PL home only stay *** PTCL
 'They just stayed at home.'
- (23) *cô tā ve vâ'-ô-qô*
 boil *** GEN pig-head
 'a pig's head that has been boiled'

The particle *tā* does not collocate with adjectival verbs, apparently because of pernicious redundancy (adjectives *already* refer to quasi-permanent qualities or states). This fact provides one of the best criteria for distinguishing

the class of verbal adjectives from the other verbs in the language (adjectives are a subclass of verbs by virtue of their negatability (above 2.3)):

ORDINARY VERB	ADJECTIVAL VERB
<i>mā qay</i> 'not go'	<i>mā dā?</i> 'not good'
<i>qay tā</i> 'had gone; went for good'	* <i>dā? tā</i> (nonsense)

This morpheme is straddled precariously on the interface between versatile verbhood and particulitude. (See below 4.2.1.1, 4.4)

2.4. Verb becomes a clause-particle (complementizer)

Often a verbal morpheme comes to govern a whole clause, in the manner of a subordinating conjunction. Of the many examples which could be given, we confine ourselves here to a couple of typical developments. (We will return to this topic under "Causatives", below 3.23.)

2.4.1. 'say' > quotative/topicalizer/conditional

2.4.1.1. Thai *wāa* 'say; quotative complementizer'

The Thai word *wāa* still retains its full verbal meaning 'say' in certain contexts:

- (24) *wāa phǒm duu-thùuk nán, māj cīj ləj*
 *** 1SG despise DEM NEG true EMPH
 'To say that I look down on them is simply not true.'

At the end of a non-final clause containing a verb of utterance or of cognition,¹¹ before the intonation break, this morpheme appears in grammaticized form as the introducer of the *quotative* clause — i.e. the clause that specifies what has been said or thought about:

- (25) *phǒm kō jāj māj nēc-caj wāa, cə*
 1SG CONJ still NEG sure *** PTCL
paj dāj rýy māj
 go able or not
 'I'm still not sure whether I'll be able to go or not.'

Among the large number of verbs that may take a quotative *wāa*- complement are:

(a) UTTERANCE:

phūut 'speak; say', *bòok* 'tell', *riak* 'call', *sānjaa* 'promise', *tamni?-ti?-tian* 'blame; criticize', etc.

(b) COGNITION:

rúu/sâap 'know', *khít* 'think', *rúu-sýk* 'feel' *nēc-caj* 'be sure', *dājjin*, 'hear', *wāj* 'hope', etc.

Sometimes there is a slight difference of emphasis, according to whether the *wāa* is taken in its more verbal, postpausal sense (26a), or its more grammaticized, prepausal sense (26b) (see Noss 1964, p. 200):

- (26a) *khāw phūut sāmǎə, wāa ?aahǎan māj ?ərǝj*
 3SG speak always *** food NEG tasty
 'They're always talking (about it, saying among other things) that the food is no good.'
- (26b) *khāw phūut sāmǎə wāa, ?aahǎan māj ?ərǝj*
 'They always say that the food is no good.'

2.4.1.2. Khmer *thaa* 'say; quotative complementizer'

As a main verb Khmer *thaa* means 'say' (27). As a quotative complementizer (28, 29) it behaves exactly like its Thai counterpart, *wāa*:

a. As main verb:

- (27) *look thaa məc*
 2SG *** how
 'What did you say?'

b. As quotative complementizer:

- (28) *kñom kit thaa look qayuq prəhael məphi-y-pram*
 1SG think *** 2SG age about twenty five
 'I think that you're about 25 years old.'
- (29) *rəbɔh nih kee haw thaa qway*
 thing this 3SG call *** what
 'What do they call this?' ('This thing they call saying what?')

(See (13a), above.) This Khmer expression *haw thaa qway* is exactly analogous to Thai *riak wāa ?ərǝj*, also meaning literally "call-say-what".

2.4.1.3. Lahu *qô?* 'say' > *qo* 'if', *qô?* *qo* ('if one says') 'topicalizer.'

The Lahu verb *qô?* 'say; tell; call by a name' is routinely used to mark off a preceding clause as quoted material:

- (30) *yô kà? mâ qay gâ qô? ve*
 3SG PTCL NEG go want *** PTCL
 'He says he doesn't want to go either.'

The etymology of this verb is not certain¹², but it seems definitely to be related to a mid-toned particle *qo* 'topicalizer; if, when':

- (31) *phî chi tê gî qo à-thô?-ma te tù le*
 dog DEM one CLF *** what do PTCL Q
 'As for this bunch of dogs, what'll we do (with them)?'
- (32) *nò ô-ve câ qo, nà tù ve yò*
 2SG DEM eat *** sick PTCL PTCL PTCL
 'If you eat that, you'll get sick.'
- (33) *ha-pa chi tê ãi pə-ò qo*
 month DEM one CLF end ***
 'when this month is over'

Speakers seem to retain an instinctive feel for the relationship between *qô?* and *qo*, since they are sometimes used together to form a more emphatic topicalizer, lit. "if one speaks of CLAUSE":

- (34) *lî? hé ve qô? qo ɔ̃, ɔ̃-yân gā*
 book study PTCL *** PTCL time must
pə mâ ve yò
 spend much PTCL PTCL
 'When it comes to studying now, you've got to spend a lot of time at it.'

2.4.1.4. Tamang ³pi-sam and Mandarin *de huà*

The development of topicalizers or conditionals from verbs meaning 'say' is documentable in many other languages of East and Southeast Asia: In Tamang (a TB language of Nepal), the sequence of morphemes ³pi + sam (lit. SAY + IF "if one says") behaves as a unitary conditional marker, exactly like Lahu *qô? qo*:

- (35) ¹ni-ci ³pi-sam
 's'il est parti',

"...où le verbe dire, ³pi, tend à jouer le rôle d'une particule, d'un monème grammatical" (Mazaudon, 1973:50).

In Mandarin, the noun *huà* 'speech' may occur as the head of a relative clause (marked by the preceding subordinating particle *de*), with the whole clause then functioning as the protasis of a conditional sentence:

- (36) *tā yě bù kǎn lái de huà,*
 3SG PTCL NEG willing come ***
wǒmen zěnmē bàn ne?
 1PL how do PTCL
 'If he's not willing to come either, what shall we do?'

(Literally the first clause means something like "(as for) the talk of his also not being willing to come".)

Yet here too we seem to be dealing with a universal grammaticalization tendency, as witness the English use of *say* to introduce hypothetical clauses: "Say you give me two coconuts..."

2.4.2. 'come' > purpose marker

The Chinese verb *lái* 'come' plays many special grammatical roles in the language. As an auxiliary after verbs of motion, it functions like Lahu *la*, to show that the verbal action is carried out toward the deictic center (Mand. *fēi lái* 'come flying', Lahu *pò la* 'id.') (see above 2.3.2).

As a coda to quantified expressions *lái* conveys an approximative notion: *wǔ shí lái suì* 'about 50 years old'; *liǎng mí lái gāo* 'about 2 meters high' (lit. "50 COME years", "2 meters COME tall"; cf. Eng. *give or take 50 years*).

So abstract may this verb become that it is frequently used as a pro-verb (much like English *do*), substituting for verbs of more specific meaning:

- (37) *nǐ xiē-xiē, ràng wǒ lái ba*
 2SG rest let 1SG *** PTCL
 'You rest — let me do (it)' (e.g. dig, pull, cook, etc.).
- (38) *wǒ zìjǐ lái ba*
 1SG self *** PTCL
 (a) 'I'll do (it) myself.' (b) 'I'll help myself (to food).'

- (39) *zài lái yí-diǎn ba*
again *** a little PTCL
'Would you like to have ("come") some more (to eat)?'
- (40) *zài lái yí ge*
again *** one CLF
'Encore!' ('Come again (with) one!')

Finally, in its use as a subordinating conjunction, *lái* is not only abstractified but is grammaticized as well, serving to introduce a purpose-clause, or a clause that signifies intended future action:

- (41) *nǐ néng yòng shénme fāngfǎ lái bāngzhù*
2SG can use what method *** help
ta ne?
3SG PTCL
'How are you going to help him?'
- (42) *qǐng nǐ lái gěi dàjiā dú bàopap*
beg 2SG *** for everybody read paper
'Please (come on and) read the paper to everybody.'¹³

3. VERBLEACHING: FROM CONCRETE VERB TO ABSTRACTER VERB

"Verbleaching" looks as if it should be a German word, but it is actually only a jocular haplology for *verb-bleaching*, the semantic process by which a full verb undergoes abstractification, at the same time as it expands its syntactic co-occurrence possibilities, or "syntactic versatility". When this process is far enough advanced, the bleached morpheme can become a satellite to an indefinite number of heads — an auxiliary, helping, or "versatile" verb.

3.1. Verb concatenation in Lahu

Even by Lolo-Burmese standards, Lahu is remarkable for the apparent ease with which up to five verbs may be strung together or "concatenated" by simple juxtaposition to form complex verbal nuclei. This is a subject I had to begin to tackle almost a quarter of a century ago (see Matisoff, 1969; 1973: 199–265), and it has acquired an ever fresher interest in the context of the

general theory of grammaticization. Lahu verb concatenation, with its minimum of morphology and its intricate idiosyncracies, operates according to an interplay of syntactic and semantic factors that resists any rigid formalization. It is in fact a "discourse-driven" aspect of the grammar.

One of the verbs in each concatenation is the verb-head or "Vh". The others (the "juxtapositorily productive", or "versatile" verbs) stand in a semantically subordinate relationship to the head, occurring either all to the head's left, or all to its right, or, often, flanking the head on both sides.

Lahu thus accomplishes in a uniform surface way what languages like English need many different structures to do. See Figure 2 (reproduced from Matisoff, 1973: 201), where the verb *qō* 'hoe' appears in simple juxtaposition with 12 versatile verbs, while the English translations use 6 different types of constructions.

complementary infinitives	<i>qō ša</i>	'easy to hoe'	<i>ga qō</i>	'help to hoe'
-ing complements	<i>qō ki</i>	'busy hoeing'	<i>tā qō</i>	'start hoeing'
modal auxiliaries	<i>qō cō</i>	'should hoe'	<i>gā qō</i>	'must hoe'
adverbs	<i>qō bā</i>	'hoe away'	<i>qō' qō</i>	'hoe again'
prepositional phrases	<i>qō pī</i>	'hoe for smn'	<i>phō' qō</i>	'hoe in a group'
subordinate clauses	<i>qō ni</i>	'hoe and see'	<i>ca qō</i>	'go and hoe'

Figure 2: The gamut of English subordinating devices vs. Lahu juxtaposition

The verbs in a true concatenation (there are several other types of multiverbal constructions in Lahu — see 3.13 below) form a single verbal idea, and are all deemed to belong to the same clause. They function as a semantic/syntactic unit.

How my ideas on this subject fell on deaf ears in the late 60's/early 70's! For it flew in the face of a cherished dogma of the generative panjandrums of the day — that each individual verb in a multiverbal "surface" expression must necessarily represent a separate underlying sentence. I felt obliged to defend my monoclausal analysis against the philistines:

It might well be objected at this point that what is actually involved is a nesting of embedded sentences, with each verb in the concatenation deriving ultimately from a separate underlying sentence. For a variety of reasons¹⁴ I find that approach cumbersome for the present purpose. Yet note that it does not really affect the substance of the argument at all whether one operates with embedded sentences or simply embedded verb strings. In either case we are still faced with the problem of stating the complex restrictions on the concatenative process, the nature of the hierarchical relationship among the concatenated entities, etc. (Matisoff, 1973:215)

And how would it account for semantic contrasts between full vs. bleached meanings of the lexeme, according to whether one or more underlying clauses were involved? For sometimes there is a real ambiguity, which proves the correctness of the unitary VP interpretation in one reading. Cf. the Lahu pair of sentences:

(43a) *yɔ̌ yè te chē ve*
 3SG house make PROG
 Vh Vv
 'He is building a house.'

(43b) *yɔ̌ yè te (lɛ) chē ve*
 3SG house make live
 Vh Vh
 'He built a house and is living (in it).'

(For the criterion of *lɛ*-insertability in "fortuitous concatenations" like (43b), see below 3.131.)

The non-head verbs in a concatenation get bleached semantically — occasionally in ways that may be idiosyncratic to Lahu, but more often in accordance with well-attested areal (or even universal) tendencies.

Although the grammatical structure of Lahu verb concatenations depends crucially on the semantic features of the individual lexemes involved, brute syntactic constraints also play a role. Though most versatile (= grammaticized) verbs follow their Vh's, about a dozen always precede. We call these two syntactic classes *post-head versatile verbs* (Vv's) and *pre-head versatile verbs* (vV's), respectively. It is impossible to give a general semantic characterization of the vV's as opposed to the Vv's. (One such hypothetical dichotomy would be between "prerequisite" (vV) and "result" (Vv), but this does not hold water.) This arbitrariness makes it impossible mechanically to assign constituent structure to 3-verb "fore-and-aft" concatenations, which contain both a vV and a Vv in addition to the Vh (see Figure 9, below).

Concatenations containing 2 verbs may thus have either of two hierarchical structures. Either the first verb modifies the second (this is a *binary pre-head concatenation*, symbolized as vV + Vh), or the second modifies the first (*binary post-head concatenations*, symbolized as Vh + Vv).

3.1.1 Subclasses of post-head versatile verbs.

With only one major exception (see the discussion of *gā* 'get', 3.2.2 below) the classes of vV's and Vv's are disjunct. As just mentioned, the set

of pre-head versatile differs significantly from the post-head set in terms of number of members: There are only about a dozen vV's, and they seem to constitute a closed class, while there are several dozen Vv's, including a number of apparently recent loanwords. The two classes are also strikingly different in their internal ordering properties. The vV's have few mutual exclusions, and do not fall into semantically coherent subsets. The Vv's do have such exclusions, making it feasible to divide them into 4 subclasses (i.e. *juxtacapitals*, *medials*, *caudals*, and *variables*) on the basis of both semantic and syntactic criteria. (See Figure 3.)

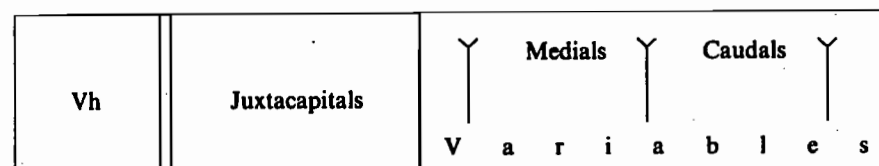


Figure 3: *Classes of Lahu Post-head Versatile Verbs*

3.1.1.1 The juxtacapital Vv's

The *juxtacapitals*, as their name implies, always occur right next to the head. They number about twelve, and have concrete meanings related to modes of motion or directionality. This is a relatively highly grammaticized group, and the members are mutually exclusive. They are as closely welded to the Vh as are such English "particles" as *out* or *away*. (See the examples in Figure 4.)

VERB	MEANING AS Vh	MEANING AS Vv	EXAMPLES
<i>kə</i>	'put into, insert'	'Vh into'	<i>mā? kə</i> 'blow into' <i>cā? kə</i> 'push into'
<i>bā</i>	'throw; discard'	'Vh away; Vh so sthg. is displaced; Vh in an irrevocable way'	<i>tú bā</i> 'burn away' <i>qhē? bā</i> 'chip away'
<i>yā?</i>	'descend'	'Vh downward'	<i>pu yā?</i> 'roll down' <i>pš? yā?</i> 'jump down'

Figure 4: Some juxtacapital Vv's

3.1.1.2 The caudal Vv's.

The caudals occur at or near the tail end of concatenations, and have highly abstract meanings, many connected with potentiality. (See Figure 5.)

VERB	MEANING AS Vh	MEANING AS Vv	EXAMPLES
<i>phê?</i>	'be; be the case'	'able to Vh'	<i>ti phê?</i> 'able to plant' <i>qay phê?</i> 'may go'
<i>gà</i>	'reach; arrive at'	'manage to Vh'	<i>tu gà</i> 'manage to stand' <i>t5? gà</i> 'manage to emerge'
<i>c5</i>	'be right; correct'	'ought to Vh'	<i>thô c5</i> 'ought to touch' <i>yù c5</i> 'should take'

Figure 5: Some caudal Vv's

3.1.1.3 The medial Vv's.

The medials are the most numerous and heterogeneous of the subclasses. They have highly specific meanings (e.g. *late*, *dare*, *busy*, *easy*) and, like the juxtacapitals, are mutually exclusive. This class has a number of adjectival verbs, and is open, since it includes several loanwords from Tai. (See Figure 6.)

VERB	MEANING AS Vh	MEANING AS Vv	EXAMPLES
<i>yà?</i>	'commit an offense; be at fault'	'Vh by mistake; offend by Vh'ing'	<i>d5 yà?</i> 'misunderstand' <i>še yà?</i> 'lead astray'
<i>bù?</i>	'be immoderate; be harsh'	'Vh to satiety; Vh to excess'	<i>yì? bù?</i> 'sleep one's fill' <i>d5 bù?</i> 'drink plenty'
<i>b5</i>	'be lazy'	'be tired of Vh'ing'	<i>chê b5</i> 'tired of living' <i>gĩ b5</i> 'tired of running'

Figure 6: Some medial Vv's

3.1.1.4 The variable Vv's.

The variables are among the most abstract of the Vv's. They have the interesting property of relatively free permutability in "multiversatile" strings (i.e. concatenations with at least 2 versatile verbs), and may occur before or after medials or caudals — with alternative orderings entailing differences in semantic interpretation (see (44) and below 3.13):

(44a) *câ phê?chê*
eat POT PROG
Vh Vv Vv
'is still able to eat'

(44b) *câ chê phê?*
eat PROG POT
Vh Vv Vv
'is able to continue eating'

The meanings of the variable Vv's are best characterized as aspectual. (See Figure 7.)

<i>chê</i> dwell/continuative	<i>ni</i> look at/tentative
<i>ci</i> send/causative	<i>pà</i> finish/completive; exhaustive
<i>qay</i> go/continuative; inchoative	<i>pĩ</i> give/benefactive; permissio-causative
<i>m5</i> be a long time/durative	<i>l3?</i> enough/sufficient

We may illustrate the grammaticized meanings of these verbs by combining them all with the same Vh, e.g. *và?* 'put on; wear':

<i>và? chē</i> 'is wearing'	<i>và? ci</i> 'make/let smn wear'
<i>và? qay</i> 'goes on wearing'	<i>và? m5</i> 'has worn for a long time'
<i>và? ni</i> 'wear and see; try on'	<i>và? pà</i> (1) 'has already put on' (2) 'everybody wears'
<i>và? pĩ</i> 'dress smn'	<i>và? l3?</i> 'enough to wear; wear enough'

Figure 7: The aspectual nature of the variable Vv's

3.1.2 Pre- vs. post-headedness and the continuum of abstractness.

The reality of the left- vs. right-headedness distinction may be dramatically demonstrated by considering three types of binary concatenations (i.e. concatenations consisting of only 2 verbs, the Vh and a single versatile verb).

3.1.2.1 Where both verbs can function as pre-head versatiles.

<i>qh5</i> (Vh) 'steal'	(vV) 'Vh stealthily'
<i>phô?</i> (Vh) 'pile up; assemble'	(vV) 'Vh in a group'
<i>qh5 phô?</i> (vV + Vh) 'assemble secretly'	
<i>phô? qh5</i> (vV + Vh) 'steal in a group'	

<i>l̥</i>	(Vh) 'beg, ask for'	(vV) 'ask to Vh'
<i>tà</i>	(Vh) 'begin'	(vV) 'begin to Vh'
<i>l̥ tà</i>	(vV + Vh) 'ask to begin'	
<i>tà l̥</i>	(vV + Vh) 'begin to ask'	

In cases like these, permutation shows that it is the *second* of the two verbs that is interpreted as the head.

3.1.2.2 Where both verbs can function as post-head versatiles:

<i>chê</i>	(Vh) 'be in a place; dwell'	(Vv) 'progressive'
<i>bò</i>	(Vh) 'be lazy, unwilling, bored'	(Vv) 'tired of Vh'ing'
<i>chê bò</i>	(Vh + Vv) 'be tired of living; be weary of life'	
<i>bò chô</i>	(Vh + Vv) 'is bored; is being lazy'	
<i>ni</i>	(Vh) 'look at'	(Vv) 'Vh and see; try Vh'ing'
<i>ci</i>	(Vh) 'send on an errand'	(Vv) 'causative'
<i>ni ci</i>	(Vh + Vv) 'cause to look at; show smn sthg'	
<i>ci ni</i>	(Vh + Vv) 'try sending smn on an errand'	

In these cases it is the *first* of the two verbs that is interpreted as the head.

3.1.2.3 Where the first verb is a vV and the second is a Vv:

Concatenations like these are inherently ambiguous, EVEN WITH NO PERMUTATION, according to which verb is interpreted as the head. (See Figure 8.)

	vV + Vh	Vh + Vv
<i>l̥ chô</i>	'beg to be there'	'is begging'
<i>gã ki</i>	'must be busy'	'is busy getting'
<i>tà ša</i>	'begin to be easy'	'easy to begin'
<i>ga ci</i>	'help to send'	'cause to help'
<i>ca ni</i>	'go and look'	'try and search for'
<i>gã m̥</i>	'get to see; find'	'see (smn) get'
<i>l̥ l̥?</i>	'beg to eat'	'earn a living by begging'
<i>šú g̃ə? bú?</i>	'be terribly nauseated by tobacco'	'have enough of tobacco smoking'

Figure 8: Inherent ambiguity of vV + Vv concatenations

3.1.2.4 The constituent structure and semantic hierarchization of multiversatile concatenations.

Even though there is no correlation between semantic content and pre-headedness vs. postheadedness per se, within the pre-head or the post-head group there is definitely a correlation between position in the verb-string and relative abstractness — this can only come out clearly in concatenations of at least 3 verbs (i.e. containing 2 versatile verbs, both of which are on the same side of the head):

Vh + Vv + Vv or vV + vV + Vh.

Let us here repeat the previous example:

(44a) *câ phê? chô*
eat POT PROG
Vh Vv Vv
'is still able to eat'

(44b) *câ chô phê?*
eat PROG POT
Vh Vv Vv
'is able to continue eating'

The general principle is, the closer to the Vh a versatile verb is, the less abstract it is — *the more abstract modifies, the more concrete is modified*. If all the versatile verbs in a concatenation are on the same side of the head, there is thus no problem in determining the hierarchy of modification. Every outer verb modifies the ensemble of the more inner constituents taken as a unit. Thus, (45) is a pure pre-head concatenation (vC), while (46) is a pure post-head one (Cv):

(45) *ŋà-hi g̃a q̃? phô? l̥ câ ve¹⁵*
1PL vV vV vV vV Vh PTCL
must again together ask eat
'We've got to ask (them) again together (for food) to eat.'

The most deeply embedded of the vV's, *l̥*, is subordinate to its head *câ* (the act of begging is secondary to its envisaged goal, eating): 'beg to eat'. *l̥ câ* as a whole is the head of *phô?*: the 'begging to eat' is performed 'together'. *phô? l̥ câ* as a whole is the head of *q̃?*: the action of 'together begging to eat' is performed 'again'. Finally, the string *q̃? phô? l̥ câ* as a whole is the head of *g̃a*: it is the 'repetition of the communal act of

supplication to relieve hunger' which is deemed to be 'necessary'.¹⁵ (See Matisoff, 1973: 214–5)

It can readily be seen that the structure of (46) is the right-branching mirror image of (45):

- (46) *ci ġǝ tǝ? mā pī cǝ*
 Vh Vv Vv Vv Vv
 tooth pull emerge teach BENEF ought
 '(They) ought to show them how to pull out teeth.'

The futility of trying to write formal rules to capture semantic interpretations is particularly apparent in the case of fore-and-aft concatenations, where there is at least one grammaticized verb on each side of the Vh. Here there is no mechanical way to predict from the syntactic structure what the hierarchy of modification is. Consider the pair of 3-verb concatenations in Figure 9, each of which has the superficially identical constituent structure vV + Vh + Vv:

Those interested in the analysis of maximally complex 5-verb fore-and-aft concatenations like (47) and (48) are urged to consult Matisoff, 1973: 260–4.

- (47) *ǵà-hi ga yù qay ci cǝ ve lâ*
 vV Vh Vv Vv V Q
 help-take go send ought
 'Should (we) make (them) help to take (it) away?'
 1. *cǝ* outranks *ga* 2. *ci* outranks *ga* 3. *ga* outranks *qay* (See Matisoff, 1973: 251, Fig. 27)

- (48) *ǵà-hi ġǝ qǝ? chí tǝ? pī ve*
 vV vV Vh Vv Vv
 must return lift emerge give
 '(We) had to lift (it) out again for (them).'
1. *ġǝ* outranks *pī* 2. *qǝ?* outranks *pī* 3. *pī* (automatically) outranks *tǝ?* (See Matisoff, 1973: 262, Fig. 28)

3.1.3 Other types of multiverbal constructions in Lahu

3.1.3.1 Fortuitous concatenations

Not all Lahu multiverbal sequences represent true versatile concatenations. Sometimes verbs come to be juxtaposed "accidentally", even though

pre-primacy			post-primacy		
<i>ga</i>	<i>yù</i>	<i>tǝ?</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>yù</i>	<i>bǝ</i>
vV	Vh	Vv	vV	Vh	Vv
help	take	emerge	help	take	tired of
'help to take out'			'tired of helping to take'		

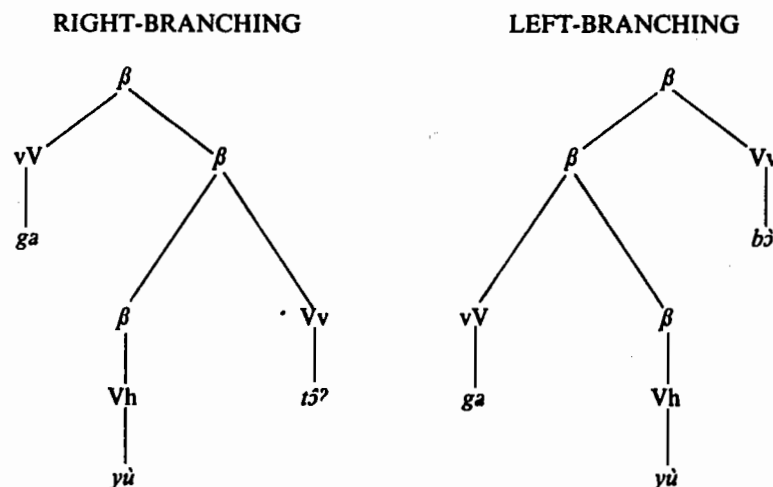


Figure 9: Contrasting transcapit relationships: Pre-and post-primacy

they belong to separate underlying VP's. In most of these cases the verbs refer to a series of temporally consecutive actions, as in (49):

- (49) *lâ pǝ? chè? câ pǝ šē ve cē*
 Vh Vh Vh Vv Pv Puniv Puf
 tiger jump bite eat finish PTCL PTCL QUOT
 'The tiger jumped (out) and bit (into them) and ate (them) all up!'

A good rule of thumb to test whether a verb-string is really multi-clausal is to try inserting the "suspensive" non-final unrestricted particle (Punf) *le*, as in (49a), and see if the meaning is thereby changed significantly:

- (49a) *lâ pǝ? le chè? le câ pǝ šē ve cē*
 PTCL PTCL

This particle is an explicit demarcator of the end of a non-final clause, functioning similarly to the “gerundive” or “-TE form” of a Japanese verb:

(49b) *tora ga tobidashite kamitsuite kutte shimatta to-yuu*
 tiger PTCL jump out bite onto eat complete QUOT

In a true versatile concatenation it either makes no sense, or else drastically changes the meaning to insert *le* between the verbs (see, e.g. (43a,b) above).

Yet here too the interclausal bonding is a matter of degree. Although the jumping, biting, and eating are 3 successive actions, clearly the latter two verbs, *chê? câ* are more closely related to each other (almost forming a lexical compound) than either is to *pô? ‘jump’*. On the other hand, the 4th verb in the string, *pə? ‘finish’*, is definitely forming a true concatenation with *câ*, with the grammaticized aspectual meaning ‘completive’ (see above, Figure 7) — so *le*-insertion is impossible between them.¹⁶

3.1.3.2 Resultative complements

Some resultative verbs are truly versatile, and can occur with grammaticized meanings after an indefinite number of Vh’s. Thus *ci* ‘stick to; stick fast’ appears both in more “literal” concatenations (e.g. *jû? ci* (Vh + Vv) ‘stab home (so the knife sticks in the wound)’) and more “figurative” ones (e.g. *hà? ci* (Vh + Vv) ‘love unshakably’).

Other resultative verbs are restricted to collocations with only one or two specific Vh’s. Thus *tò? ‘catch fire; burn’* occurs only after *tú* ‘kindle’; *də* ‘fit inside’ only after *kə* ‘insert’ or *dô?* ‘pack into’; *mi* ‘catch’ only after *gà?* ‘chase’; *kì* ‘be melted’ only after *l̥* ‘cause to melt’. Verbs of this type, which fail the criterion for “juxtapository productivity”, we call *resultative complements* (Cr’s). Combinations of Vh + Cr resemble lexical compounds, but differ from the latter in that they must be negated “intrusively”: *tú mâ tò?* ‘does not catch fire’ (“light-not-burn”), *gà? mâ mi* ‘cannot catch’ (“chase-not-catch”), etc.

3.1.3.3 Lexical compounds

Lexical compounds composed of 2 free verbs are usually readily distinguishable from versatile concatenations: *nù-qhâ* ‘smell acrid’ (“stink” + “bitter”), *phē-chi?* ‘tie up’ (“restrain” + “bind”), *chī-mu* ‘praise’ (“lift” + “high”). Neither of the elements in a true compound is juxta-productive —

each occurs at most in a few combinations with verbs of compatible semantic content. It is as difficult to invent a comprehensible and acceptable Lahu compound as it is to create any neologism. Versatile concatenations, on the other hand, are freely inventable as the communicative need arises, and are not likely to be recognized as novel.

3.1.3.4 Borderline cases.

As always, however, there are borderline cases, where verbal collocations appear to be intermediate between lexical compounds and versatile concatenations. These ‘idiomatic concatenations’ and ‘productive compound-formations’ are discussed briefly in the context of ‘continua of grammatico-semantic categories’ (below 4.3).

3.1.4 Polysemy and grammaticization.

Not every meaning shift or *glissement sémantique* is in the direction of greater abstraction/bleaching/grammatization. Sometimes we just find “lateral slides” in semantic space. Consider the following two Lahu verbs, *phē* ‘release’ and *pò(n)* ‘pass by’ (the latter a loan from Tai).

3.1.4.1 *phē* ‘send forth’ > violent action

The verb *phē* ‘release’ has developed many shades of meaning, only one of which can be said to represent a “grammaticization” — its use as an emphatic Vv, where it lends a vague nuance of outward-thrusting vigor to the verbal action. See Figure 10.¹⁷

3.1.4.2 *pò(n)* ‘pass by; be spared’ > ago; except

The Tai-derived verb *pò(n)* ‘pass by; go past’ seems to have originally had spatial/temporal reference. From there it easily passed over into the social (“be spared”) and moral (“transgress”) realms, and finally into the field of abstract logic (“omit in thought”), achieving grammaticized status in a phrase that translates the English conjunction/preposition *except*. (See Figure 11.)

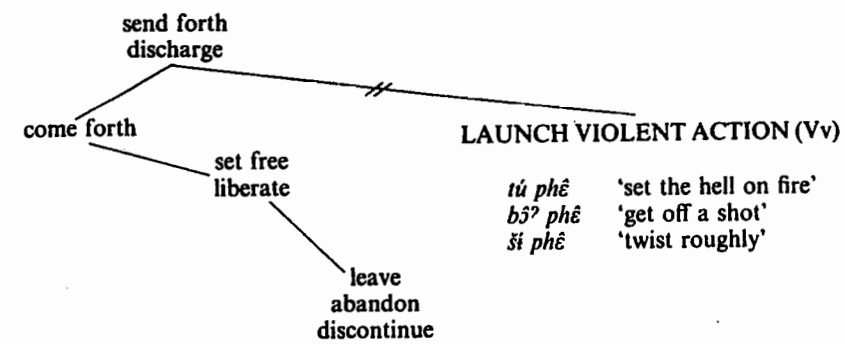


Figure 10: Polysemy and grammatization of phê

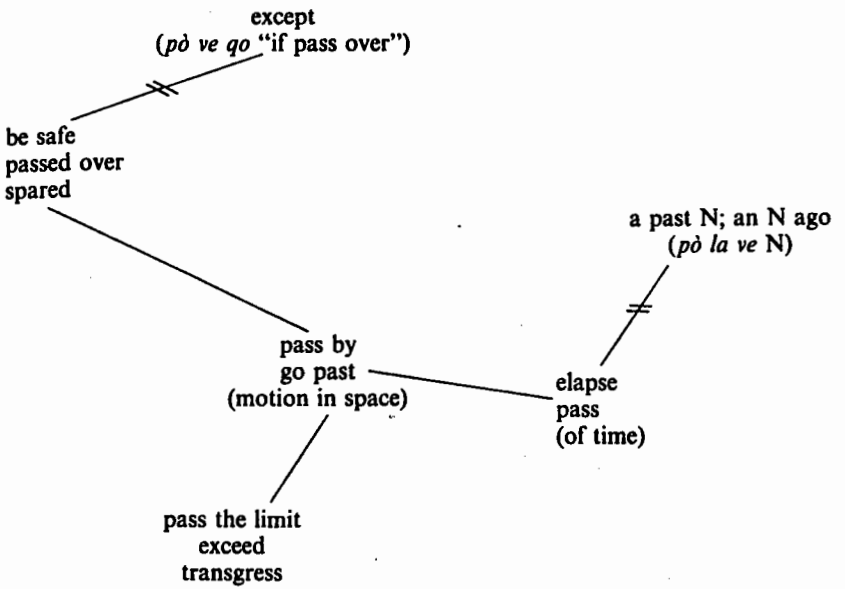


Figure 11: Polysemy and grammatization of pò(n)

3.2 Areal and universal patterns of verbleaching

We cannot attempt here to trace all the interesting semantic developments along the continuum of verb-grammaticization in SEA'n languages. Let us pick a few which Lahu shares broadly with other East and Southeast Asian

languages, and which seem to have universal resonances as well: *dwell/be at*; *get/obtain*; and *give*.

3.2.1 'dwell/be at' > *continuative/progressive* → *in/at*

Verbs meaning 'dwell; be in/at a place' typically develop into progressive auxiliaries. In some of our SVO languages such morphemes can also function as locative prepositions (see the discussion of "verpositions", below 4.1).

3.2.1.1 Lahu chē

- a. As main verb:
(50) *ɲà nāʔ ɔ̌-ha mā chē*
1SG gun soul NEG dwell
'There dwells no soul in my gun.'
- b. As post-head versatile verb:
(51) *qa-mi chē šē*
sing *** PTCL
Vh Vv
'Go on singing!'
(52) *yā-pā chi ġĩ tō chē ve tí yò*
boy this run roam *** PTCL only PTCL
Vh Vv Vv
'This boy just keeps running around.'

As we have noted (above 3.1, [43a,b]), sometimes there is a real ambiguity according to whether the *chē* is functioning as an auxiliary or merely as a full verb in fortuitous concatenation:

- (43a) *yɔ̌ yè te chē ve*
3SG house make PROG
Vh Vv
'He is building a house.'
- (43b) *yɔ̌ yè te (lɛ) chē ve*
3SG house make live
Vh Vh
'He built a house and is living (in it).'

3.2.1.2 *Burmese nei*

a. As main verb:

- (53) *θu ?eĩ nei te*
3SG house be at PTCL
'He is at home.'

b. As post-head auxiliary:

- (54) *θu zəgā pyō nei te*
3SG words speak *** PTCL
'He is speaking.'

3.2.1.3 *Thai jùu*

a. As main verb:

- (55) *khun phō māj jùu bān*
HON father NEG be at home
'Father is not at home.'

b. As post-verbal auxiliary:

- (56) *khāw rian phasāa ?aṅkrìt jùu*
3SG study language English ***
'He's still studying English.' (cf. Eng. "He's still at it.")

3.2.1.4 *Chinese zài*

a. As main verb:

- (57) *tā xiànzài zài bù zài jiā*
3SG now be at NEG be at home
'Is he at home now?'

b. As pre-head auxiliary verb:

- (58) *tā zài fúshuǐ*
3SG *** swim
'She is swimming.'
- (59) *gémìng zài fāzhǎn, rénmin zài qiánjìn*
revolution *** develop people *** advance
'Revolution is on the ascendant and the people are on the march.'

c. As preposition:

- (60) *tā zài jiā lǐ kàn zhe zázhì*
3SG *** house interior read PROG magazine
'He's reading magazines in the house.'

(*zhe* is another progressive marker, grammaticized from a full verb *zhào* 'touch'.)

3.2.1.5 *Vietnamese ở*,

a. As main verb:

- (61) *ông chủ ở nhà*
HON boss be at home
'The boss is at home.'

b. As pre-head auxiliary verb:

- (62) *nhà tôi ở gần đây*
house 1SG *** be near here
'My house is near here.'

c. As preposition (post- or pre-verbal):

- (1) Post-verbal
(63) *nhiều khi tôi thích ăn ở ngoài*
many time 1SG like eat *** outside
'Often I prefer to eat out.'

(2) Pre-verbal

A phrase with *ở* may also be preposed to the verb, especially to indicate the source of an action:

- (64) *ở Mỹ qua Việt Nam*
*** America go over to
'come to Vietnam from America'

3.2.1.6 *Yao Samsao yiam*

a. As main verb:

- (65) *h-ñe maa yiam wua nɔm pyáw*
my mother *** DEM CLF house
'My mother lives in that house.'

b. As pre-verbal preposition:

(66) *yiə yiəm Samsàaw tshuət-sǎy tâay*
 1SG *** emerge world come
 'I was born in Samsaò.'

(67) *yiə yiəm wúa 'ii hñǎŋ tòò' sǎw*
 1SG *** DEM two year read book
 'I studied during those two years.'

(68) *yiə yiəm kàdiā mǎ bǎ' naay*
 1SG *** grass inside hit snake
 'I, being in the grass, hit the snake.'

c. As post-verbal preposition:

(69) *yiə bǎ' naay yiəm kàdiā mǎ*
 1SG hit snake *** grass inside
 'I hit the snake that was in the grass.'

d. As postposition:

(70) *yiə pyǎw jiə Nāmtūay yiəm*
 1SG flee descend ***
 'I fled down to Namtuay (village) to live.'

3.2.1.7 Hmong nyob

a. As main verb:

(71) *kuv txiv tsis nyob hauv tsev*
 1SG male NEG be at inside house
 'My father is not at home.' (Clark 1979: 7)

b. As verposition:

(72) *nws pw nyob hauv txaj*
 3SG lie *** inside room
 'He's sleeping in the room.' (ibid.: 6)

3.2.2 'get/obtain' → MANAGE/GET TO; HAVE TO/MUST; ABLE TO

Verbs meaning 'get; obtain' show striking parallelism in the way they grammaticize in Southeast Asian languages. Of particular interest is a widespread pattern whereby this verb functions as both a pre-head and a post-head auxiliary, with concomitant meaning difference: in pre-verbal position

meaning 'have a successful past experience; have managed to Vh; have gotten to Vh' and/or 'have to Vh; must Vh' and in post-verbal position meaning 'able to Vh'.

3.2.2.1 Lahu ġa

This is the only Lahu versatile verb that can function either as a vV or a Vv.

a. As main verb:

(73) *mā ġa e kǎ' mā bǎ' — ġa*
 NEG get PTCL even NEG angry get
e kǎ' mā ha-lè
 PTCL even NEG happy
 'If I don't get it I won't be mad — if I do get it I won't be happy.'

b. As pre-head versatile verb:

(1) 'manage to Vh; get to Vh'

(74) *ṣ-chī me-me ve kǎ' mā ġa cǎ ve yò*
 curry tasty PTCL even NEG *** eat PTCL PTCL
 'We didn't get to eat very tasty food either.'

(2) 'must Vh'

(75) *chi-bǎ' nǎ ġa qay ve yò*
 now 1SG *** go PTCL PTCL
 'I must leave now.'

c. As post-head versatile verb: 'get by Vh'ing; able to Vh; completed Vh'ing'

(76a) *jú' ġa ve*
 stab ***
 'get by impaling'

(76b) *Kālā-phu ve ṣ-chī nǎ cǎ mā ġa*
 whiteman GEN food 1SG eat NEG ***
 'I just can't eat white men's food.'

3.2.2.2 Thai dǎj

a. As main verb: get/obtain

(77) *khǎw dǎj sǎtaay maa càak khun phǎw léew*
 3SG obtain money come from HON father already
 'He's already gotten some money from his father.'

V ✓

c. As post-head auxiliary (Vv)

In post-head position *tau* (like Thai *dāj* and Lahu *ḡa*) indicates ability, possibility, permissibility:

(88) *kuv mus tau*

Vh Vv

'I can go there.'

(89) *los tsev puas tau*

come house Q ***

Vh Vv

'May I come in?'

(90) *hom txiv no noj tau*

fruit CLF DEM eat -able

Vh Vv

'This fruit may be eaten.'

In close constituency with a preceding verb, *tau* may indicate the real accomplishment of the purpose of an action (*faire et obtenir réellement quelque chose*): *nrhiav* 'look for' > *nrhiav tau* 'find sthg.'; *yuav* 'buy' > *yuav tau* 'possess'; *caum* 'chase' > *caum tau* 'catch'.

There is a related verb under a different tone, *taus*, with meanings quite similar to those of Lahu *pí* (below 4.41) '*avoir la possibilité physique ou matérielle de*; *avoir l'habitude de*'. Note that *ḡa* (mid-tone), the Lahu functional equivalent of Hmong *tau*, also has a morphotonemically related "allofam" (word-family alternant; see Matisoff 1978) *ḡā* (high-falling tone) 'win; overcome'.

3.2.2.5 Vietnamese *được* and its analogues (especially Thai *thùuk* and Chinese *tək)¹⁸

a. As main verb:

As a main verb, Vietnamese *được* means (1) 'be acceptable; correct; fine; O.K.; all right' (2) 'obtain; get' (3) 'win'.

được phép 'obtain authority'*được mùa* 'get a harvest',*được trận* 'win a battle'

b. As pre-head auxiliary:

In this position, *được* is grammaticized into a passivizer (but in the oppositely valued sense from its Thai phonological lookalike, *thùuk*!), conveying the notion of 'being benefited by, affected favorably by some action, state or factor':¹⁹

(91) *tôi được đi*

1SG *** go

vV Vh

'I was allowed to go.'

(92) *tôi được ăn*

vV Vh

'I am permitted to eat.'

(Contrast (92a): *tôi ăn được*

Vh Vv

'I am edible' (see 3.225c, below).)

(93) *em Toàn được thầy giáo khen*

y.bro. vV teacher Vh

'Brother Toan was praised by the teacher.'

(94) *mười lăm giáo sư được chọn đi Mỹ*

10 5 teachers vV Vh go America

'Fifteen teachers were chosen to go to America.'

c. As post-head auxiliary:

In post-head position, *được* may indicate ability (in a manner similar to Lahu *ḡa*, Thai *dāj*, Hmong *tau*):

(95) *tôi đi được*

Vh Vv

'I can go.'

Either verb of (95) may be negated, with a different nuance of meaning:

(96) *tôi đi không được*

Vh NEG Vv

'I can't go' (because of physical or compelling material reasons).

(97) *tôi không đi được*

NEG Vh Vv

'I can't go' (because I'm too busy, it's not convenient, etc.).

With some preceding verbs, *durɔc* is a neat translation of the English suffix *-able/-ible*:

- ăn durɔc* ("eat + -able") > 'eatable, edible'
làm durɔc ("do + -able") > 'doable, feasible'

As a post-head auxiliary *durɔc* may also have another shade of meaning: That the action of the verb has resulted in something real or good, or has been carried out to a successful conclusion:

- (98) *mua durɔc nhà*
 buy *** house
 Vh Vv
 'bought a house'
- (99) *sinh durɔc một đứa con-giai*
 born *** one/a CLF son
 Vh Vv
 'had a son born to us'

The position of the object can also affect the semantic interpretation of a post-verbal *durɔc*:

- (100a) *tôi bắt hai con cá durɔc*
 1SG catch two CLF fish ***
 Vh Vv
 'I'm able to catch two fish.'
- (100b) *tôi bắt durɔc hai con cá*
 Vh Vv
 'I caught two fish.'

Contrast a similar sentence where *durɔc* appears in the pre-head position:

- (100c) *tôi durɔc bắt hai con cá*
 vV Vh
 'I'm permitted to catch two fish.'

Phonologically, *durɔc* resembles the Thai word *thùuk*, and there is a considerable semantic and grammatical overlap between these two important words. The lexical (fully-verbal) meaning of Thai *thùuk* ranges from the moral/abstract sense 'be right; correct' to the physical sense of 'hit the mark; touch; come in contact with.' There is a homophonous and homographic

verb meaning 'be cheap; inexpensive' which must also ultimately be related, via the notion *the price is right*. (See Li Fang Kuei, 1977, p. 102, #16.) As a grammatized morpheme, *thùuk* forms adversative passive constructions with a following verb or clause: *thùuk kàt* 'be bitten', *thùuk thɔɔraaŋ* 'be tortured', *thùuk khǎa hǎk* 'get one's leg broken', *thùuk rôt chon* 'be hit by a car'. This is in sharp semantic contrast to the Vietnamese 'benefactive passive' construction, *durɔc* + Vh (above (b)).

There is another close phonological resemblance between *durɔc* and Chinese (Old Chinese **tək*) 'get; obtain', a word with a variety of grammaticized uses in Chinese dialects. This character has several Mandarin pronunciations. As *dé* it is a full verb 'get; obtain'. With a different tone and vowel, *děi*, it is a modal auxiliary meaning 'must; have to', or expressing an unpleasant eventuality. In unstressed form, *-de-* it marks a positive resultative complement (*kàn-de-jiàn* 'look-can-see', here being opposed to the negative resultative marker *-bu-* (*kàn-bu-jiàn* 'look-not-see')).

The phonological and semantic interrelationships among these Vietnamese, Thai, and Chinese words — and undoubtedly the Yao (Mien) word *tú?* as well — bespeak a long period of profound language contact.

We may note in passing that there is also a Khmer verb, *trəw*, which fills a range of syntactic/semantic roles quite similar to Thai *thùuk* and Viet. *durɔc*, even though it seems quite unrelated phonologically to the latter two. Thus *trəw* also can mean 'be correct' or 'to hit (the mark)' as a main verb²⁰, and is also used as a passive complementizer:

- (101) *pīi-msəl-mǎñ kñom trəw ckae kham*
 yesterday 1SG *** dog bite
 'I was bitten by a dog yesterday.' (Huffman 1970: 302)

3.2.2.6 Khmer baan

Finally, the astounding parallelism in the syntactic/semantic details of the grammatization of words for *get* in SEA'n languages is also manifested in the Khmer verb *baan*:

- a. As main verb:
 (102) *look cɔŋ baan chǎa-kuh tee*
 2SG want *** matches Q
 'Do you want to get some matches?'

b. As pre-head auxiliary:

In this position, *baan* expresses successful past experience ('to have managed to, been able to; to have had a chance to'):

(103) *kñom baan tiw pii dɔvng*
 1SG *** go two time
 vV Vh
 'I've gotten to go twice.'²¹

c. As post-head auxiliary:

In post-head position, *baan*, like its equivalents in our other languages, refers to ability:

(104) *kñom sdap baan*
 Vh Vv
 'I can understand.'

(105) *kñom sdap min baan tee*
 Vh NEG Vv PTCL
 'I can't understand.'

3.2.2.7 English 'get'

The modal polysemy of *get* comes as no surprise to English speakers. Cf. the ambiguity of (106):

- (106) Tomorrow you can get to work.
 a. begin working
 b. have the privilege of working
 c. be transported to work

Sometimes stress helps to disambiguate:

- 107a) I gotta [*ajgʌrə*] swim today. (=I must swim today.)
 107b) I got to [*ajgʌttə*] swim today. (=I managed to swim today.)

At any event, the constellation of ideas emanating from the basic notion of 'get; obtain' seems to have much more than areal significance. See the diagram in Figure 12.

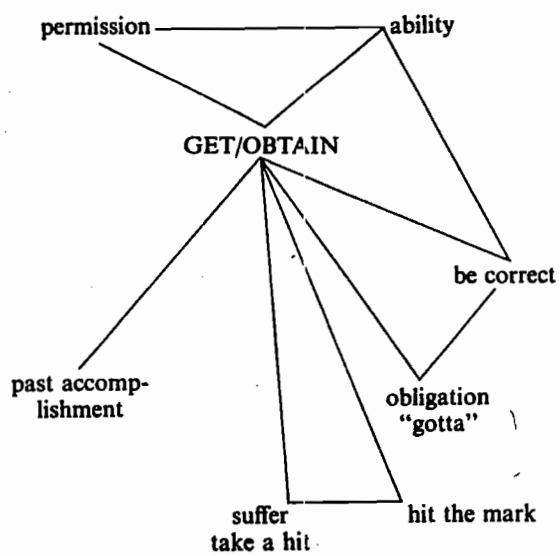


Figure 12: Semantic extensions of GET/OBTAIN

3.2.3. 'give' > causative/benefactive

Though many verbs are typically grammatized for causative purposes (e.g. TAKE, DO, MAKE, LET, HAVE, SEND (on an errand)), the benefactive verb *par excellence* is, of course, GIVE.

The Thai causative/benefactive morpheme *hāj* is discussed in connection with postpositions (below 4.2.2). In this section we shall briefly consider some examples from Lahu, Yao, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Mandarin.

3.2.3.1. Lahu pī and its competitors.

Several verbs have vied for causativizational honors in Lahu, including *yù* 'take', *te* 'do', *ci* 'send on an errand' (see Matisoff, 1976). The most highly grammatized of them all is *pī* 'give':

- a. As main verb:
 (108) *phu pī ve* 'give money'
 OBJ V
 b. As post-head versatile verb:
 (1) benefactive

We have already discussed the paradigmatic opposition between *pī* (Vv) '3rd person beneficiary' and *lā* (P,) 'non-3rd person beneficiary' in the Lahu VP. (See above 2.32 and Figure 1.)

(109) *ʃu àʔ tã dẽ pīʔ*
3SG PTCL ADV Vh Vv
'Don't scold other people!'

(110) *yɔ̃ àʔ chi qhe qôʔ pīʔ*
3SG PTCL this like Vh Vv
'Tell that to him.'

(2) causative

In many contexts, the benefactive meaning of *pī* shades into that of a causativizer (3rd person causee):

ce pī (Vh + Vv) 'make it fall; drop sthg'
chu pī (Vh + Vv) 'make him fat'
ʃi pī (Vh + Vv) 'make/let him die'

3.2.3.2. Yao Samsao pun

a. As a main verb:

(111) *nîn pun pǎw yia*
3SG Vh axe 1SG
'He gave me an axe.'

b. As a benefactive preposition:

(112) *yia tsiáʔ nɔm daan pun nîn*
1SG weave CLF basket *** 3SG
'I wove a basket for him.'

(113) *maa cáp bùdòʔ-gwǎy pun fũʔ-cúay*
mother cut fingernails *** child
'The mother cut the child's nails for him' ('cut the nails for the child').

c. As a causative complementizer (with sentential object):

(114) *maa pun fũʔ-cúay cáp bùdòʔ-gwǎy*
mother *** child cut nails
'The mother let the child cut his nails.'

This sentence is understood as a permissive causative. To express the coercive

causative equivalent, a different higher verb, *bũa* 'tell' must be used, along with a pre-head auxiliary *a-tsùʔ* expressing obligation:

(115) *maa bũa fũʔ-cúay a-tsùʔ cáp bùdòʔ-gwǎy*
mother tell child must cut nails
'The mother made the child cut his nails.'

3.2.3.3. Vietnamese cho

a. As a main verb:

(116) *ông ấy vừa cho con gái chiếc xe*
HON 3SG just *** daughter CLF car
'He just gave his daughter a car.'

b. As benefactive/causative pre-head auxiliary verb:

cho ăn (vV + Vh) 'feed; have someone eat'
cho hay (vV + Vh) 'let someone know; inform smn'

c. As benefactive preposition:

(117) *dưa cái chổi dây cho tôi*
hand over CLF broom DET *** 1SG
'Please hand me the broom.'

d. As permissive-causative complementizer:

(118) *ông ấy không cho tôi thôi*
HON 3SG NEG *** 1SG resign
'He wouldn't let me resign.'

e. As benefactive postposition:

(119) *để tôi viết cho*
let 1SG write ***
'Let me write it for (you).'

(Cf. the postpositional use of Thai *hâi*, below 4.22.)

3.2.3.4. Khmer qaoy

a. As main verb:

(120) *mānuh prəh baan qaoy siəwphəw təw mānuh srəy*
person male PAST *** book to person female
'The man gave the book to the woman.'

b. As a pre-head auxiliary before adjectival verbs:

This is just a special case of the pre-verbal causative effect of *qaoy*, but this construction translates most naturally by English adverbs (Huffman, 1970: 153):²²

- (121) *riap-cəm kluən qaoy chap*
prepare self *** quick
'Get ready quickly.' ('making it quick')

- (122) *sliəq-peəq qaoy sqaat-baat*
dress *** careful
'Dress carefully.'

c. As a causative complementizer (with sentential object):

- (123) *qəyləw maq cəng qaoy kñom twəə qəy*
now mother want *** 1SG do PTCL
'What would Mother like to have me do now?'

- (124) *kñom qaoy koət ruət*
1SG *** 3SG run
'I had him run.' (intentionally)

In this function, *qaoy* is often used together with the preceding verb *twəə* 'do', to express a more coercive causative.²³

- (125) *kñom twəə qaoy koət ruət*
*** ***
'I made him run.' (maybe by scaring him inadvertently)
- (126) *kñom baan twəə qaoy koət phək sraa klah*
PAST *** *** 3SG drink liquor some
'I made her drink some wine.'

3.2.3.5. Mandarin gěi

a. As main verb:

- (127) *wǒmen yīnggāi gěi ta yī ge xīngqī de jià*
1PL ought *** 3SG one CLF week GEN vacation
'We ought to give him a week's vacation.'

b. As benefactive preposition:

A benefactive prepositional phrase with *gěi* may either follow or precede the verb of the clause:

(1) Post-verbal prepositional phrase:

- (128) *xìn yǐjīng jiāo gěi ta le*
letter already hand over *** 3SG PTCL
'I've already handed the letter to him.'

- (129) *wǒ bǎ yàoshi liú gěi nǐ*
1SG OBJ key leave *** 2SG
'I'll leave the key with you.'

(2) Pre-verbal prepositional phrase:

- (130) *tā gěi lǔkè sòng shuǐ dào chá*
3SG *** passenger bring water serve tea
'She brought water and served tea for the passengers.'

Sometimes the meaning of *gěi* in this construction is more like 'let; allow':

- (131) *gěi wǒ kàn-kan*
*** 1SG look-look
'Let me have a look!'

If there is a sentential complement, however, *gěi* cannot be used to convey permission, and the verb *ràng* (lit. "give way; yield") is required instead:

- (132) *tā hái bù kǎn ràng xiǎoháir gen*
3SG still NEG willing *** child with
Yóutàirén jiéhūn
Jew marry
'She's still not willing to let her child marry a Jew.'

c. As passive complementizer:

In this construction, *gěi* functions much like the adversative passive marker *bèi* (see above 3.2.2.5, note 19), following the topicalized patient and introducing the clause which expresses the agency that brought about the unpleasant event:

- (133) *zhè gǔ dīrén quán gěi yóujī-duì xiāomiè le*
this gang enemy all *** guerrilla-band wipe out PTCL
'The whole horde of enemy soldiers was wiped out by the guerrillas.'
- (134) *wǒmen de yīfu gěi hàn-shuǐ shī-tòu le*
1PL GEN clothes *** sweat soak through PTCL
'Our clothes got soaked with sweat.'

3.2.4. *Excursus on Lahu te 'do'*

Not surprisingly, *te* 'do; make' is the Lahu verb with the most abstract meaning and the widest range of grammatical functions. Even in the simplest cases, where it occurs as the only verb in its VP, it collocates with preceding NP's or adverbials in a wide variety of semantic relationships which can only be deduced from the context. To these one may give discrete names (though of course they shade imperceptibly into each other), e.g.: "abstract" (*kán te ve* 'do work'), "factive" (*ú-gê te ve* 'make a pillow'), "functional" (*qhâ?-šê te ve* 'act as headman'), "exploitative" (*ú-gê te ve* 'use for a pillow'), "appurtenant" (*š-qhê? te ve* 'have ridges, be corrugated'), "locomotive" (*khi-nê? te ve* 'limp'), "adverbial" (*qô? ê te ve* 'be crooked'), etc.²⁴

More abstractly, *te* may serve as the higher verb governing embedded clauses of various types, e.g. as a "resumptive pro-verb" after two correlative or contrasting verbs:

- (135) *gĩ yà? gĩ tã? te ve*
 run descend run ascend *** PTCL
 'keep running up and down'

This is quite reminiscent of the Japanese construction V_1 -*tari* V_2 -*tari* + *suru*, with the verb *suru* 'do' used "resumptively" after a pair of correlative verbs, e.g. *ittari kitari suru* 'be coming and going (all the time)'.

Closer to our present concerns is the use of *te* as a pre-head versatile verb. Sometimes it retains a more literal meaning in this construction: 'Make something and Vh with it' (*te kã ve* 'make and put in', *lã-gĩ te te ve* 'make tea and set it down'), but often it serves to transitivize or causativize the following verb, whether it be an adjectival (=stative) verb (*te qê ve* 'widen; make wide'), an intransitive action verb (*te pã ve* 'cause to go through (as a road)'; cf. French *faire pénétrer*), or a verb which is already transitive (*te tẽ ve* 'cause to crush'; cf. French *faire écraser*). Most elusively, it sometimes is purely redundant, just adding a bit of phonological bulk but bringing no perceptible increment of meaning. Thus in combination with *tã?* 'carry', *te* has neither factitive nor causative force: *te tã? ve* can just mean 'carry something along' — it does not necessarily mean either 'make sthg. and carry it', or 'cause to carry'. Similarly, *te dê ve* just means 'scold smn.' ('do-scold'), not 'cause to scold'.

4.0 CONTINUA OF GRAMMATICO-SEMANTIC CATEGORIES

There seems to be a fundamental temperamental difference among linguists, according to whether they like neat or messy classifications.²⁵ In her otherwise perceptive paper on Hmong verb-derived prepositions (1979), Clark comes down squarely on the side of the rigid categorizers:

The question here is, at what point can a word be said to be a preposition and not a verb? The notion of category 'squish' (Ross 1972) or gradual shift from one category to another is as absurd for lexical change as the notion of gradual shift from one sound to another is absurd for sound change. (p. 8)

Somewhat similar is the reductionist position taken in Warotamasikkhadit (1988), who, having made the valid observation that almost all Thai prepositions can be derived historically from full nouns or verbs, goes on to claim that even synchronically there is no such thing as a class of "prepositions" in Thai.

Some grammarians who have dealt with Chinese despair of imposing ready-made "Standard Average European" category-labels on all form-classes and construction types, and have been reduced (or inspired?) to create their own terminology, in a way that some find distasteful.²⁶ It is as if a proliferation of terminology were some kind of violation of Occam's razor.

Certainly neologistic terminologizing can be carried too far — since linguistic phenomena are continua, it is impossible to find discrete names for every point on each (or any) continuum. One must use heuristic principles — create new terms if necessary, but only if none of the old ones will do. The motive should not be to dazzle or obfuscate by new coinages, but rather to clarify.

Yet I personally would like to come down wetly on the side of the squishers. There are duck-billed platypuses in the animal world, and there are borderline entities in grammar as well. I have never shrunk from coining conflationary neologisms to characterize entities which straddle categories: e.g. my Lahu *nadverbs*, a class of expressions with both nominal and adverbial characteristics (Matisoff, 1973: 306–15). It is far more interesting to set these anomalous phenomena into high relief than to try and sweep them under the rug, or make it look as if they behaved like the non-problematic cases.²⁷

4.1 "Verpositions" in SVO languages

In this non-confrontational spirit I would like to propose the euphonious term *verpositions* for verb-derived morphemes that have come to function like

prepositions.²⁸ A few random examples:

(a) Viet. *vào* 'enter' (V) ↔ 'into NP' (*inessive Prep.*)

- (136) *đi sâu vào xã-hội Việt-Nam*
go deep *** society
'go deeper into Vietnamese society'

(b) Viet. *với* 'join' (V) ↔ 'together with NP' (*comitative Prep.*)

- (137) *tôi không thích làm với ông ta*
1SG NEG like work *** 3SG
'I don't like to work for him.'

(c) Thai *khâam* 'cross over' (V) ↔ 'across NP' (*transitive Prep.*)

- (138) *phũuujĩ dään khâam thănǎn paj lǎew*
woman walk **** street go already
'The woman went off across the street already.'

(d) Mand. *yòng* 'use' (V) ↔ 'with NP' (*instrumental Prep.*)

- (139) *tā yòng kuàizi chī bái-cài*
3SG *** chopstick eat cabbage
'He eats cabbage with chopsticks.'

It is interesting to compare and contrast similar serializations in SOV languages. The Lahu translation of (139) is:

- (140) *yǎ á-cu-ka yù lɛ ġǎ-cá cá ve*
3SG chopstick take PTCL cabbage eat PTCL
(lit. 'He, taking chopsticks, eats cabbage.')

Just as the Mandarin serialization with *yòng* 'use' is the only way to express the instrumental notion of this sentence, Lahu has no other means than the *yù lɛ* construction to do so.

But there are several differences here, over and above the relative ordering of verb and object.²⁹ Chinese can use the *yòng*-construction even with an instrument that is a part of the body:

- (141) *tā yòng shǒu chī bái-cài*
*** hand
'He eats cabbage with his hands.'

Here Lahu cannot use the *yù lɛ* construction, but must use the postposed noun-particle *ge* instead.³⁰

- (142) *yǎ làʔ-ʃɛ ge ġǎ-cá cá ve*
hand Pn

In Lahu the use of the serialized construction implies volitionality on the part of the agent:

- (143) *yǎ á-thɔ yù lɛ làʔ-nɔ tɔʔ ve*
3SG knife take PTCL finger cut PTCL

This can only mean 'He cut his finger with a knife (on purpose).' To express the corresponding accidental event the sentence must be recast somehow, e.g.:

- (144) *ŋá ve làʔ-nɔ á-thɔ tɔʔ ve*
1SG GEN finger knife cut PTCL
(lit. 'As for my finger, knife cut (it).')

The most interesting overt difference between (139) and (140) is the presence of the particle *lɛ* in the Lahu sentence. The function of this "non-final unrestricted particle" is to indicate that the preceding clause is NOT THE LAST in the sentence.³¹ The presence of *lɛ* makes explicit the biclausal nature of the sentence. (As we have noted (above 3.141), the insertibility of *lɛ* is the chief criterion for distinguishing "fortuitous" from real concatenations.) Yet one cannot help wondering whether the Lahu speaker really considers the verbal event of cabbage-eating to be more of a two-part sequence than the Chinese speaker does. Surely sentence (140) is less biclausal than a sentence like (146):

- (146) *yǎ á-cu-ka ǎ-the lɛ ġǎ-cá cá ve*
bend-break
'He broke the chopsticks (by bending them) and ate the cabbage.'³²

There must in fact be a *continuum of clausality* — a continuum of closeness of relationship or unitarity more subtle than the minimal morphological/syntactic apparatus of these languages can overtly indicate. (Cf. the discussion of the relative clausal autonomy of pairs of verbs in "fortuitous concatenation" above 3.141, ex. (49).)

4.2. Verbs as postpositions in SVO languages

We'll just give a few quick examples:

4.2.1 'finish' > perfective

4.2.1.1 Lahu pə

As a main verb this word means 'spend; use up' (*phu pə ve* 'spend money') or 'finish':

- (147) *pə thā qha-gà ġa te qay ve yò*
 finish time until must do go on PTCL PTCL
 Vh Puniv Next vV Vh Vv
 'We've got to keep on doing it until it's finished.'

As post-head versatile verb (Vv), *pə* means 'finish Vh'ing' (see above 3.1.2.4):

- (148) *ō cā pə ò lā*
 rice eat *** PTCL Q
 'Have you finished eating?' (common greeting)

In this post-verbal position *pə* has developed into a more general perfective marker, in which capacity it can now follow the perfective Pv *tā* (see 2.3.3 above). Here we should probably consider *pə* to have become a true verb-particle in its own right:

- (149) *ō tē ni thā ġa pa pə tā pə*
 that one day PTCL 1SG father born PTCL PTCL
 'On that day my father was born.'

4.2.1.2. Thai ləw

This word does not usually occur as a main verb in Thai, except in some common idioms like *pen ləw kan* 'That's settled; That does it', *kə ləw paj* 'Let it go; Leave it at that'.

In clause-final position this word has been grammaticized into one of the language's most important aspectual postpositions, signifying 'completed action; change of state':

- (150) *kləp paj bān ləw khráp*
 return go home *** POLITE
 'He's gone off home already, sir.'

- (151) *thāa khrəŋdiim mət ləw raw cə tham ʔəraj*
 if beverage used up *** 1PL PTCL do what
 'What'll we do if the drinks are all finished?'

This seems certainly to be an early loan from Chinese (Mand. *liǎo*, also a former verb (now literary) meaning 'to finish', but grammaticized in unstressed form, *le*, into a perfective particle. Also undoubtedly due to contact influence from Chinese is the functionally and phonologically similar Hmong aspectual particle *lawm* (cf. sentence (87) above; the *-m* represents a creaky tone in Hmong orthography, while the *-w-* is barred-*i*).

4.2.2. GIVE/TAKE ↔ outer-directed/inner-directed

The Thai verbs *hāj* 'give' and *ʔaw* 'take' play several interrelated roles in the grammar, where they are more-or-less neatly, paradigmatically opposed to each other.³³

As prepositions, *hāj* indicates intentional benefaction, while *ʔaw* signals that an unintentional effect has been produced on something:

- (152) *tōŋ jŋyn ɲəən hāj phənákŋaan*
 must handmoney *** clerk
 'You've got to hand the money over to the clerk.'

- (153) *məw təkuj ʔaw sŋa*
 cat scratch *** mat
 'The cat scratched up the mat.'

As complementizers (clause-introducers), *hāj* has a causative function (human or at least animate causee),³⁴ while *ʔaw* has an instrumental one (inanimate instrument):

- (154) *məe-khrua hāj dək tət nŋa pen chin lək-lək*
 cook *** child cut meat be slice small-small
 'The cook had the child cut the meat into tiny slices.'

- (155) *məe-khrua ʔaw mŋit tət nŋa pen chin lək-lək*
 *** knife
 'The cook used a knife to cut the meat into tiny slices.'

This latter construction is substantially identical to the Lahu instrumental serialization with *yù le* (above 4.1). We may translate (155) into Lahu as:

- (156) *te-câ-sē-ma*³⁵ *á-tho yù le šā thàʔ*
cook knife *** meat PTCL
š-dì š-dì é te tšʔ ve
hunks little make cut PTCL

Finally, what we are interested in here is the postpositional use of these words, where they contrast on the dimension of inner- vs. outer-directedness: *hâj* being used for actions performed for someone else (“givingly”), while *ʔaw* is used for actions done for oneself/itself (“takingly”):

- (157) *phúujŋ kèp dōckmáaj hâj*
woman pick flower ***
The woman picked flowers for (somebody).³⁶
- (158) *phúujŋ kèp dōckmáaj ʔaw*
‘The woman picked flowers for (herself).’

4.2.3. COME/GO ← → toward/away from the deictic center (Postposition)

We have already touched on some of the multifarious grammaticizations of *come* and *go* (above 2.3.1, 2.4.2). Here we will just give some examples of the use of these verbs as postpositions, with either temporal or spatial or “more abstract” reference.

(a) Temporal deictic function:

The Yao Samsao expression for ‘hitherto’ (159) is exactly parallel in its internal tri-verbal structure to similar expressions in Thai (160) and Mandarin (161):

- (159) *yiam thaaw ʔi-tsàn tâay*
be reach now COME
V₁ V₂ V₃
- (160) *jùu thŷŋ dŷawnii maa*
be reach now COME
- (161) *zài dào xiànzài lái*
be reach now COME

(b) Spatial deictic function:

Expressions for *give* and *take* in East and SE Asian languages tend to

be 2-verb sequences composed of the same direction-neutral main verb meaning ‘hold’, plus either of the pair of grammaticized postpositional verbs meaning *come/go* to specify the directionality. See Figure 13.

BRING = HOLD + COME			TAKE = HOLD + GO		
Yao	<i>tš</i>	<i>tšay</i>	<i>tš</i>	<i>mŋing</i>	
Thai	<i>ʔaw</i>	<i>maa</i>	<i>ʔaw</i>	<i>paj</i>	
Mandarin	<i>ná</i>	<i>lái</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>qù</i>	
Japanese	<i>motte</i>	<i>kuru</i>	<i>motte</i>	<i>iku</i> ³⁷	

Figure 13: *Bring/take and come/go*

4.2.3.1. Thai *maa* ‘come’ and *paj* ‘go’³⁸

- (162a) *laa wŋ khâw paj naj pàa*
donkey run enter go into forest
V_h V_v V_v PREP
‘The donkey ran off into the forest (e.g. to get away).’
- (162b) *laa wŋ khâw maa naj pàa*
donkey run enter come into forest
V_h V_v V_v PREP
‘The donkey came running into the forest (e.g. to rejoin his waiting wife and children).’³⁹

In this connection we should cite the common Thai greeting, so hard for foreigners properly to understand at first:

- (163) *paj năj maa*
go where come
‘Where are you coming from?; Where have you been?’
(“Having gone where do you come?”)

4.2.3.2. Yao Samsao *tây* ‘come’ and *mŋing* ‘go’

The difference in deictic viewpoint exemplified by (162a,b) is exactly paralleled in these Yao sentences:

- (164a) *bua tš ʔâw-cuây piəʔ kêm tâay*
1PL *** family enter forest ***
‘We brought our wives and kids into the forest (to join us there).’

(164b) *bua tɔ̀w ?áw-cúay pià? kêem m̃ing*
 *** ****

'We brought our wives and kids into the forest (and left them there).'

4.3 Verb-compounds vs. verb concatenations

Certain Lahu verb sequences seem intermediate between lexical compounds and verb concatenations (see Matisoff, 1973, pp. 210–211).

4.3.1. “Idiomatic” concatenations

Occasionally the collocation of a versatile verb with a particular Vh acquires an unpredictable or "idiomatic" meaning. Thus *ša* (Vadj) 'pleasant; comfortable' participates as a Vv in many normal concatenations, where it means 'easy to Vh', e.g. *tā? ša* (Vh + Vv) 'easy to climb', *i-kā? qho ša* (OBJ + Vh + Vv) 'easy to fetch water', etc. In a few combinations, however, the meaning has become idiomatic:

po-ša 'be wealthy; prosperous' ("born-easy")

chê-ša 'be healthy' ("dwell-easy")

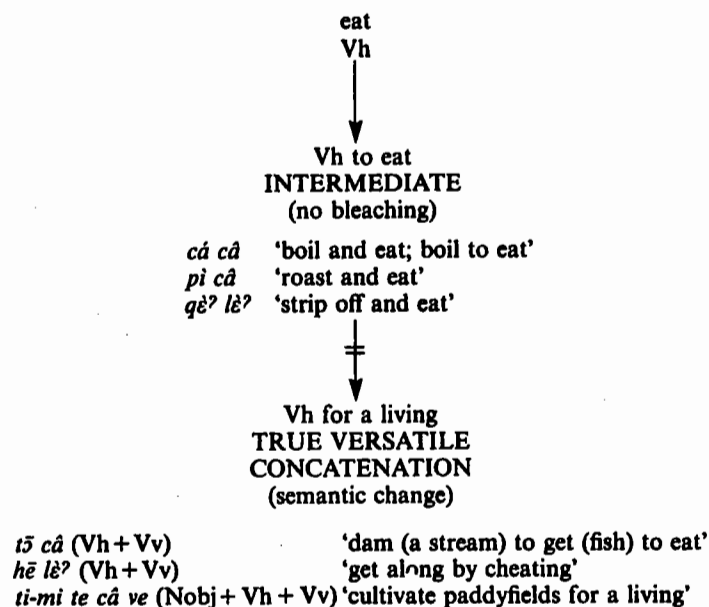
These are more like lexical compounds than like true concatenations, and it is best to write them with hyphens.

Another interesting example is the compound *te-câ* 'cook' (lit. "do + eat"), which is homophonous with the true concatenation *te câ* (Vh + Vv) 'do for a living' (see 4.32).

4.3.2. Productive compound-formations

The opposite kind of problem is exemplified by the data in Figure 14. The verb *câ* 'eat' appears as an indubitable Vv in collocations where it has the bleached meaning 'Vh for a living'. However, in a number of other collocations with verbs relating to the preparation of food or the killing of an edible animal, *câ* maintains its literal meaning, i.e. 'Vh to eat'. These sequences are like fortuitous concatenations in that the two verbs represent temporally successive actions (though it is not natural to insert *le* between the elements). They are like versatile concatenations in that the verbs which may precede *câ* in this construction are actually considerable in number. (Lahu happens to abound in verbs relating to the preparation of food.) But

they are most like lexical compounds in that the possible partners of *câ* are restricted to a narrow semantic range.



4.4.2. *Lahu 'perfective' tã revisited*

We have noted (above 2.3.3) how this durative/perfective morpheme seems intermediate between a Vv and a Pv. In *The Grammar of Lahu* I decided (for complicated reasons involving ordering in multiparticle sequences) to consider *tã* to be a Pv and not a Vv, though I have had misgivings ever since. This problem is aggravated by the fact that as a head verb, *tã* (whose original meaning is 'place, put, set upright') seems to be conflating with another, accidentally homophonous verb of Tai origin, *tã(n)* 'set up, establish' (cf. Siamese *tān*), in expressions like, e.g. *vê-bâ? tã ve* 'accuse' ('set up a sin').⁴⁰

Curiously, a similar intermediate place on the Vv↔Pv continuum is occupied by another perfective morpheme, *pà* 'finish' (see above 4.2.1.1).

4.5 The syntagmatic continuum: loss of syllable/morpheme boundary

4.5.1. *Lahu qay 'go' < *qa + e*

Certain verbs seem to attract certain particles as collocation-partners — conversely, certain particles occur with particular frequency after a handful of very high frequency verbs. Thus the asseverative particle *à* is very common after *dâ?* 'be good', or *šī* 'know' (*dâ?-à* 'Fine! O.K.!'; *šī à* 'I know it (already)!'). The strong declarative particle *ɔ* is frequent after *phê?* 'be; be able' (*phê? ɔ* 'Sure I can do it!') and *chê* 'be in a place' (*chê ɔ* 'Here he is!; It's here all right!').

Just about the only native monomorphemic Lahu word that has the diphthong *-ay* is the verb *qay* 'go'.⁴¹ Internal reconstruction, as well as comparative/historical evidence strongly indicates that this is an old fusion of a now obsolete verb **qa* (< PTB **ka* 'divaricate; spread the legs in striding, go' (STC #469) plus *e* (Pv) 'transitive motion; motion away from deictic center'. (This is the antonymous counterpart of *la* (Pv) 'motion toward deictic center' (above 2.3.2).) This particle *e* must itself once have been a full verb, related to two other words meaning 'go' that survive in limited contexts, viz. *i* (archaic) as in the ritual phrase *šī-mâ tê phô nò tâ i* 'Wend not thy way to the land of the dead!', and *yì* (used in set expressions like *à-qâ? yì ve* 'defecate (polite)' (lit. "go outside") and *yì-yì là-là te ve* 'keep going to and fro'). There is also an Akha cognate, *i* 'go'.

From a broad historical perspective we may thus assume a gradual development from two independent verbs in series, to a sequence of head-

verb plus grammaticized directional verb, to verb plus verb-particle, to complete incorporation of the particle into the verb:

$$V1 + V2 \rightarrow Vh + Vv \rightarrow V + Pv \rightarrow V$$

4.5.2. *Thai khráp 'polite particle' < khǎo ráp*

Equally dramatic is the case of the Thai word *khráp*, which is used by men as a sentence-final politeness particle (and as the polite way of saying "Yes" as an independent utterance):

(165) *khráp, khráp* — *cə paj thanthii khráp*
PTCL go right away ***
'Yes, yes — I'll go right away, sir!'

This is historically a fusion of a two-verb sequence, part of the humilific expression *khǎo ráp thōot* 'beg to receive punishment' (*khǎo* (V) 'beg', *ráp* (V) 'receive').

This is quite analogous to the radical reduction undergone by the old English greeting *God be with ye!* (> *good-bye!* > *bye!*).

4.6. Cheshirization

Finally, we should mention a couple of cases where the phonological reduction of a grammatical morpheme has gone so far that all of its segmental phonemes have disappeared, leaving only a perturbation of the neighboring syllable's tone as the reminder of its former presence — the smile of the Cheshire cat, gradually fading away.

4.6.1. PTB **sya* 'meat; flesh' > **sə-* 'body-part prefix' > HIGH TONE

The Lahu root for 'eye' is *mě?*, under the high-stopped tone. If this syllable had descended from an ordinary (fully voiced) nasal it would have acquired the *low*-stopped tone. We therefore infer the presence of an **s*-prefix at the Proto-Lolo-Burmese level. (This is amply confirmed by forms in the other Loloish languages; see Matisoff, 1972, #145.) The source of this prefix, which can be reconstructed for many other body-part etyma, was undoubtedly the independent root **sya* 'flesh; animal':

$$*sya-myak \rightarrow *samyak \rightarrow mē? (+HIGH\ TONE)$$

4.6.2. *Atsi and Mpi: citation-particle on verb → special tone on verb*

Burling (1967) noted the interesting fact that in Atsi (= Zaiwa), a language in the Burmish branch of Lolo-Burmese, words descending from PLB Tone *2 developed different tonal reflexes according to whether they were nouns or verbs. Later a similar phenomenon was observed in the S. Loloish language Mpi, where all three of the PLB open tones split according to the form-class of the etymon, yielding a 6-tone system (Srinuan, 1976; Matisoff 1978).

What undoubtedly occurred was the absorption into the verb-root of a citation-particle (actually a nominalizer, like Eng. *to* in *to go*). Such a particle is ubiquitous in TB languages, the Lahu form being *ve* (see Matisoff 1972b, and 2.2 above). This particle in many languages is a form with initial vowel — e.g. Akha *a* — eminently fusible into the syllabic nucleus of the preceding verb. The vowel of the particle must eventually have been swallowed up, leaving only a perturbation of the tone to establish a form-class identity for its head-syllables.

5. Concluding remarks

5.1. Areal and typological differences in grammaticalization tendencies.

Although many grammaticalization tendencies are doubtless universal, there are certainly areal differences of nuance. Bréal (1897: 16 and *passim*) points out that Indo-European prepositions usually develop from *adverbs* (an independent and well-defined form-class). In the SVO languages of SE Asia, as we have seen, prepositions derive typically from full verbs.

Brute facts of word-order can be decisive in determining the paths grammaticalization will take. In the SE Asian linguistic area, verb concatenation has reached its fullest flowering — i.e. strings of up to 5 verbs in a row — in the SOV languages of the Tibeto-Burman family (especially in the phonologically reduced Sinospheric branches, like Lolo-Burmese). These languages are accustomed to bunching up long series of nominal arguments, without verbal intrusions. In their verb-phrases as well they are free to string together long sequences of verbs, without nominal interruptions. On the other hand, the SVO languages (Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Hmong-Mien, and the Karenic branch of TB) must break up verb-strings by inserting NP's as close to their governing verbs as possible, so that even their longest concatenations

can only achieve a length of 3 verbs (e.g. motion-verb sequences like Chinese *fēi jìn qù* 'go flying in' (see note 39)).

5.2. Predictability and controllability of grammaticalization

It would seem to be a truism that the course of semantic change is unpredictable in principle, partly because it is at the mercy of extralinguistic factors. We live in a world where a word meaning 'befigged; stuffed with figs' (Vulgar Latin **ficātu*) could come to mean 'liver' (It. *fegato*, Sp. *higado*, Fr. *foie*), because of the Mediterranean custom of force-feeding geese with figs in order to cause their livers to hypertrophy into delectable *foie gras*.

The question then arises whether grammaticalization meaning shifts are more predictable than semantic shifts in general? Joseph Greenberg has claimed (at the Symposium on Grammaticalization, May, 1988) that this is indeed the case, and that one might safely predict, e.g. that a verb meaning 'sneeze' or 'buy fish' would never be pressed into grammatical service. While we can certainly agree that such a development is much less likely than for a verb meaning 'give' to develop into a benefactive marker, one should perhaps never say *never* when talking about hypothetical semantic developments. Surely in some language or other a verb meaning 'sneeze' might acquire a figurative sense like 'to treat lightly; treat with contempt' (cf. Eng. *That's nothing to sneeze at*), giving rise to such grammaticalized collocations as 'to sneeze-talk' (i.e. "talk disparagingly") or 'to sneeze-walk' (i.e. "walk insouciantly; strut")!

Equally unpredictable are the occasional cases of *degrammaticalization* that may be observed — instances where an "empty morpheme" has filled itself up and acquired a true lexical root-meaning. Perhaps the best-known example in English is the word for the large conveyance we call *bus*, which is derived ultimately from the Latin dative plural ending of the form *omnibus* 'for all; for everyone'.

Attempts are sometimes made to intervene directly in the grammaticalization process by deliberate language planning. Chinese linguist/administrators have recently taken a paternalistic approach toward "improving" the minority languages of China by encouraging the introduction of new functors from Chinese, e.g. in order to make inter-clausal semantic relationships more precise. Actually, however, the borrowing or calquing of functors from more prestigious languages is something that has gone on for millennia even without official encouragement!⁴² We have noted the areal diffusion of several functors above (see e.g. the discussions of Vietnamese *đurợc*, Thai *thiuk*, Yao *tú?* and

Chinese **tək* (3.2.2.5); the Thai perfective particle *lēw* and Chinese *liǎo* (4.2.1.2), Lahu *šē* ‘attitude of regret’ and Thai *slā* (2)).

Let us close by trying to predict the fate of two Slavic derivational suffixes in English.

The Russian agentive suffix *-nik* first impinged on the general American consciousness in 1957, with the successful flight of the first manned satellite, the *isskustvennyj sputnik zemli* ‘artificial satellite of the earth’, quickly dubbed *sputnik* (a tri-morphemic form also comprising *s-* ‘with; together’ and *-put-* ‘journey’; i.e. “fellow-traveler, satellite”). That might have been the end of the saga had not the way already been paved for *-nik* by words introduced into American English from Yiddish, especially the useful word *nudnik* ‘pest; pain-in-the-ass’ (from a Slavic root meaning ‘to bother; nag; get on the nerves of’). There is something ingratiating about the sound of *-nik*, which had long before ensured its success in Yiddish, leading to such made-in-America coinages as *allrightnik* ‘somebody who’s doing all right for himself; a prosperous person’; *neatnik* ‘a compulsively neat person’, and *nogoodnik* ‘scoundrel; sonofabitch’. Yiddish influence was probably cooperating with *sputnik* to stimulate the brain of the popular columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle, Herb Caen, when he coined the word *beatnik* around 1960, to refer to members of the “beat generation”. This coinage was spectacularly successful, opening the floodgates for *-nik*’s further penetration into the lexicon. Soon we had *refusenik* ‘a Soviet Jew who was refused a visa to emigrate’ — and most recently (February 1989) *waitnik*, ‘an émigré who is still waiting in Italy for permission to come to the U.S.’ It seems safe to predict that the future holds limitless promise for *-nik*. It is only a matter of time before such locutions as *government-and-bind-nik* will catch on.

To this success story we may contrast the bleak future that doubtless awaits another Slavic suffix, even though two words containing it are already familiar to millions of Americans. This is the noun-forming derivational morpheme represented by Polish *solidarność* ‘solidarity; name of a labor union’ and Russian *glasnost’* ‘openness; frankness’. We may confidently venture to predict that this morpheme will never be attached to English roots. In the first place it takes a bit of sophistication to identify the Polish and Russian forms as cognate, so that they do not reinforce each other. Secondly, they are hard to pronounce (especially the Polish variety). Thirdly, they do not sound particularly cute. And finally, they do not fill a derivational or semantic lack — English has plenty of its own nominalizing suffixes, including the phonologically similar *-ness*.

In general, however, we must content ourselves with sitting back and

watching how languages change syntactically and semantically according to their own inner, inscrutable laws. The early generative conception of language change as involving “the addition of rules to the end of a grammar” naively implied that one could completely characterize all the rules of a grammar in the first place. Students of grammatization realize that worrying about where one grammar ends and the next grammar begins is a totally meaningless and futile pursuit. For “the new grammar is constantly being created on top of the willing and yielding ruins of the old.”⁴³

SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A x B	A is an allofam of B; A and B belong to the same word family
CLF	classifier
Cr	resultative complement
HON	honorific
Next	extensive noun
Nh	head noun; noun-head; head of a NP
Pn	noun-particle
Pu	unrestricted particle
Puf	final unrestricted particle
Punf	non-final unrestricted particle
Puniv	universal unrestricted particle
Pv	verb-particle
Vh	head verb; verb-head; head of a VP
Vint	intentional verb
Vmod	modal verb
vV	pre-head versatile verb
Vv	post-head versatile verb
PLB	Proto-Lolo-Burmese
POT	potential
PST	Proto-Sino-Tibetan
PTB	Proto-Tibeto-Burman
STC	Sino-Tibetan: a Conspectus (Benedict/Matisoff, 1972)
WB	Written Burmese
WT	Written Tibetan

NOTES

1. They eat bugs (as well as wounded members of their own species). The only bad habit they have is laying their droppings on you from the ceiling. This is probably why newly arrived foreigners in Thailand are urged to avoid sleeping with their mouths open.

2. One could point to many similar grammaticalizations in the SEA area — e.g. Thai *tua* 'body', *tua ?eey* 'by oneself' — but the grammaticalization of a word for BODY into a pronoun is more a universal than an areal semantic development: cf. Eng. *body* → indefinite pronouns like *somebody*, *anybody* (with reduced stress).
Lahu has a separate word *ǰ-šē-phā* for 'the male body', which also means 'male owner' or 'he himself':
(14c) *yǰ ǰ-šē-phā dā? ǰā* 'He has a fine physique.'
3. Incidentally, this expression contains a 4-verb concatenation (see below 3.1), with the main verb *pǰ* 'be born' preceded by two pre-head versatile verbs (*ǰā* 'OBTAIN/must', *ǰā* 'HELP/auxiliative'), and followed by the post-head versatile verb *pǰ* 'GIVE/benefactive.'
4. The various semantic developments of this etymon are diagrammed in a "metastatic flowchart" in Matisoff, 1985: 56.
5. *ǰā* may have other shades of meaning as a verb-particle, e.g. 'like to V; be fond of V'ing': *ǰā á-pǰ-qu cá ǰā ve* "I like to eat bananas" (i.e. habitual desire); or "imminent likelihood" (*mǰ-yè lá ǰā ve* 'It looks like it will rain'). There is a similar constellation of meanings shared by such particles as Burmese *hčī*, Yao *ʔɕy*, and Chrau *conh* (above 2.3).
6. The WB cognate *la* 'come' shows that Lahu *lā* has the etymologically correct tone for the full verb.
7. Verbs meaning 'come' (and 'go') are eminently grammaticalizable, in a variety of syntactic contexts. For a discussion of the Thai postpositions *paj* 'GO; away from deictic center' and *maa* 'COME; toward deictic center', see below 4.1.2. For the use of Chinese *lái* 'come' as an introducer of purpose-clauses, see below 2.42.
8. In this usage it closely parallels Mandarin *lái* appearing as a post-verbal auxiliary: *fēi lái* 'come flying', *pǎo lái* 'come running', etc.
9. We shall see, however, that in certain contexts it has conflated itself with a distinct Tai-derived morpheme (below 4.4).
10. In this usage it closely parallels the Japanese verb *oku* 'put; place', which has acquired a perfective meaning as an auxiliary (governing the -TE form or gerund of the preceding verb): *kangaete oku* 'think sthg. over', *oite oku* 'put sthg. down to keep', *totte oku* 'take sthg. to keep', etc.
11. What have traditionally been called *verba dicendi* and *verba cognoscendi*. Cf. Frajzyngier, 1988.
12. *qǰ?* could descend from PLB **kap*, while *qǰ* could be from PLB **kam*. (The alternation of homorganic stops and nasals in syllable-final position is one of the most common morphophonemic patterns in Sino-Tibetan word-families.) It is possible that these words are to be related to the etyma reconstructed as PTB **gam* (STC #491) 'put into the mouth; seize with the mouth' and/or **hap* (STC #89) 'bite; snap at; mouthful' (both with Chinese cognates). On the other hand, there is a Proto-Tai form **gam* 'mouthful; bite' (Li Fang Kuei, 1977:198), underlying Thai *kham* 'word; speech; classifier for words'. A Tai donor language might well be the immediate source of the Lahu forms. The ultimate relationship of the Proto-Tai and Proto-Sino-Tibetan forms is undoubtedly one of borrowing in one direction or the other, though the resemblance might also be coincidental, involving sound-symbolism (closing the lips at syllable-final to suggest a bite).
13. The benefactive word *ǰēi*, here translated 'for', is a grammaticalized usage of the verb GIVE (below 3.2.3, 4.2.2).

14. I expanded somewhat on those reasons in a footnote: "It would require a great clanking of generative machinery: obligatory deletions of dummy NP 'subjects' (and other ghostly nominal arguments), rules specifying that no adverbs or particles may occur in any of the underlying sentences but the one underlying the Vh, etc. Most crucially, how would it help us to capture the fact that the meanings of the verbs as Vh's are systematically different from their meanings as versatile verbs?" (Matisoff, 1973: 552, note 43.)
15. To achieve other hierarchical orders of modification, the sentence must be recast, typically by breaking up the concatenation into two pieces, nominalizing one of them and embedding it as the object of the other. (See Matisoff, 1973: 218, Fig. 20.)
16. Despite the ending on *kutte*, the Japanese verb sequence *kutte shimatta* 'ate up; ate completely' (lit. "having eaten, finished"), also expresses a unitary monoclausal idea. The *-te* ending (unlike Lahu *le*) appears on non-final members of Japanese verb-sequences whether or not the following verb has been "grammatized into" the same clause with it.
17. The theory of these crude semantic diagrams ("metastatic flowcharts") is developed in Matisoff, 1978. Representations like Figures 10–12 are merely intended to suggest pathways of association in "semantic space", and are not to be taken in too literal-minded a way. Whatever semantic space is, it is certainly at least non-Euclidean. We can hardly do justice to its unimaginable convolutions by pathetic symbols like arrows and straight lines. A double bar across a line is meant to show that the "boundary of grammaticalization" has been crossed, so that on the other side of the bar one is approaching the void of emptied-out, bleached semantic space.
18. The examples in this section are from Thompson, 1965 (pp. 228–9, 309–10, 314, 344–5) and Nguyen Dinh-Hoa, 1966 (p. 147), sometimes with slight changes.
19. Vietnamese does indeed have an adversative passive construction, but this is marked by the auxiliary verb *bị* 'suffer; undergo'. This word looks very much like the Mandarin adversative passive marker *bèi* (which originally meant 'to cover, as with a quilt'), as in:
(90a) *Tā bā-ba shì bèi dìzhǔ hài-sǐ de*
3SG father COP *** landlord murder PRT
'His father was murdered by a landlord.'
20. The Khmer expression *traw haay* 'That's right!' ("correct already") corresponds exactly to the Thai phrase *thùuk lēw*.
21. Huffman (1970) observes (p. 75) that in sentences like (103) that include a quantified expression *baan* may also occur in post-verbal position with little or no meaning difference:
(103a) *kāom tiw baan pii daay* 'id.'
22. Huffman (1970) transcribes glottal stop by "q". Some of the examples in this section are from my own field-notes, but they have been more or less regularized into Huffman's transcription.
23. This is exactly analogous to the causative use of the Thai verb sequence *tham + hāj + Clause* (lit. "make + give + Clause").
24. *ve* is a nominalizing particle used in the citation form of verbs or noun-plus-verb collocations; *è* is an adverbializing particle.
25. We might dub these camps the *neatniks* vs. the *messniks*. For a discussion of our new affix *-nik*, see 5.2 below.
26. Cf. Alleton's (1978) review of Hagege, 1975, where she criticizes such terminological

innovations of the author as *adverbal* (pl. *adverbaux*) vs. *adverbial* (pl. *adverbiaux*), *nominoides*, *prédicatoïdes*, etc. Similar reservations (from an early generativistic point of view) were expressed by Lehman in his review (1978) of *The Grammar of Lahu*.

27. E.g., the distinction between Lahu verb-particles (which can only follow verbs) and unrestricted particles (which can follow nouns as well as verbs) is basic to my analytical framework (see above, 2.0). But there are two morphemes I wish to consider verb-particles (*ʃɛ* and *ʃɔ*) which can sometimes occur after nouns as well. The pros and cons of the various analytical possibilities are discussed in GL, 339–41.
28. These items have sometimes been called co-verbs in the literature (e.g. Li and Thompson (1974) for Mandarin, Clark (1978) for Vietnamese. Noss (1964: 154–6) recognizes a class of prepositions that are “weak-stressed forms of verbs”. Parallel examples may be found at will in Hmong-Mien and the Karenic branch of Tibeto-Burman. The most perceptive analysis of Karenic multiverbal constructions yet achieved is to be found in an unpublished dissertation by D.B. Solnit (1986).
29. The first difference lies in the choice of verb each language made to grammaticalize into the instrumental sense. The Lahu word for ‘use’ is *yɛ* (<PLB **zum*²), which is actually ultimately cognate to Mand. *yòng* (<Old Chin. *djüng*), but this verb plays no grammatical role in Lahu. On the other hand Chinese does have a co-verb that derives from an old verb meaning ‘take’, none other than *bǎ*, but this has been grammaticized in a different direction, and is now the highly abstract marker of a pre-verbal “disposed-of” object. It has in fact become the most famous of the co-verbs of the language, with no fewer than 16 papers having been devoted to it during the first 21 years of the annual Sino-Tibetan Conferences!
30. The Pn *ge* is most often used comitatively, expressing ‘with’ in the sense of accompaniment:
(141a) *chi tɛ hɑ ɲɑ-hi ɣɛ chɛ mɛ*
DEM one night 1PL *** stay PTCL
‘Please stay with us tonight.’
31. This is very similar to the role of the “-TE form” or “gerund” in Japanese verb morphology (see (49b), above). Instrumental NP’s are typically marked with the postposition *de*, as in:
(145a) *naifu de yubi wo kitta*
knife *** finger OBJ cut-PAST
‘(He) cut (his) finger with a knife.’

This sentence is neutral with respect to intentionality, as is the alternative construction with the gerundive form of *tsukau* ‘use’:

- (145b) *naifu wo tsukatte yubi wo kitta.*
OBJ use -TE

To indicate intentionality, an adverb like *waza to* ‘on purpose’ must be added.

32. *ʃ-the* is a verb-compound of the loose, *resultative* type, formed from the verbs *ʃ* ‘bend’ and *the* ‘break (of an elongated object)’. It may be negated as *ʃ mā the* ‘not break when bent’ (“bend not break”).
33. These are cogently discussed in Noss, 1964: 159–62.
34. For a more general discussion of causative/benefactive grammaticizations of GIVE-verbs, see above 3.2.3.

35. Note the use of the feminine agentive nominalizer *ʃɛ-ma* (above 2.1.4), nominalizing the verb-compound *te-cá* ‘cook’ (below 4.3.1).
36. There is an identical construction in Vietnamese, with *cho* used as a postposition (see above 3.2.3.3e).
37. The first verb in the Japanese examples are in the gerundive (-TE form). See note 31.
38. Cf. the treatment in Noss (p. 185), and Bickner’s extensive study (1978) of the discorsal dynamics of these two words.
39. This sort of Thai 3-verb sequence is exactly paralleled in Mandarin:
verb of specific motion + IN/OUT + COME/GO
UP/DOWN
V1 V2 V3
where the first verb expresses the specific manner of locomotion (‘fly’, ‘run’, ‘swim’), the second signals whether the motion is IN or OUT (Mand. *jìn* vs. *chū*) or UP or DOWN (Mand. *shàng* vs. *xià*), and the third tells whether the whole verbal action is performed toward (*lái*) or away from (*qù*) the deictic center, e.g. *ʃɛi xià lái* ‘come flying down’, *pǎo chū qù* ‘go running out’.
The ordering of similar verbs in Yao is somewhat different, e.g.
Vh + miiŋ + tshuet (*miiŋ* ‘go’, *tshuet* ‘emerge’).
The latter verb is a loanword <Chinese (cf. Mand. *chū*).
40. This involves still another continuum, that of *etymological identity*. At what point do two originally distinct lexemes conflate into one? Cf. the conflation of English ‘let’ (as in ‘let ball’ (tennis)) <Mid.Eng. *letten* <OE *lettan* ‘delay; hinder’ and let ‘permit’ (<ME *leten* <OE *lātian*).
41. This verb has itself been grammaticized, with several shades of meaning as a Vv: “go and Vh” (*lɛ-gi qay* ‘go and play’); “Vh along/away” (*mɛ qay* ‘disappear’); ‘keep on Vh’ing’ (*te qay* ‘keep doing’); ‘become more and more Vh’ (*chu qay* ‘get fatter and fatter’).
42. As one random example, the high-frequency Hmong conjunction *tabsis* ‘but’ seems to have been borrowed long ago from Chinese *dàn-shì*. See C. Li (1988).
43. Matisoff, 1979: 2.

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