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## Himalayan Linguistics

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*On the encoding of spatial concepts in Lahu*

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### ABSTRACT

Lahu utilizes an interesting array of morphemes and constructions, both in the noun phrase and the verb phrase, to express spatial concepts. These morphemes constitute a closed class of five members, each of which expresses a location or direction in space. This paper describes the semantic and pragmatic components of these spatial-encoding particles, as well as historical changes to these forms and their meanings.

### KEYWORDS

particles, deictic, directional, locative, temporal, versatile verbs

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# *On the expression of spatial concepts in Lahu*

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## 1 Introduction

Spatial/locative/directional concepts are sometimes highly grammaticalized in Tibeto-Burman, notably in the Qiangic languages, which are famous for their systems of “directional prefixes” preposed to verbs to indicate the literal or figurative direction of the verbal event. Huang Bufan (1991:298-9) tabulates a total of 13 directional categories, with any given language having anywhere from 3 (Namuyi) to 10 (Ersu, Muya). A typical array is found in the Northern Qiang dialect of Ekou village in the Yadu Township of Mao County, Sichuan (see also Genetti and Sims on Yonghe Qiang and Lin on Cogtse rGyalrong, both in this volume):

- |     |             |                     |                       |                        |
|-----|-------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| (1) | <i>tə-</i>  | ‘upward’            | <i>a-</i>             | ‘downward’             |
|     | <i>kə-</i>  | ‘inward’            | <i>ha-</i>            | ‘outward’              |
|     | <i>nə-</i>  | ‘upstream’          | <i>sə-</i>            | ‘downstream’           |
|     | <i>dzə-</i> | ‘toward the center’ | <i>tha-</i>           | ‘away from the center’ |
|     |             | <i>da-</i>          | ‘uncertain direction’ |                        |

Lahu boasts nothing quite as neat as this, but it does utilize an interesting array of disparate morphemes and constructions, both in the NP and the VP, to express spatial concepts.

## 2 The spatial demonstratives (Nsd) [GL 51-52]<sup>1</sup>

These morphemes constitute a closed class of five members, each of which expresses a location or direction in space (*chò* ‘here’, *ó* ‘there’, *có* ‘way over there’, *nó* ‘up there’, *mó* ‘down there’), as indicated in Figure 1:

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<sup>1</sup> Data provided are from Matisoff (1973) *The Grammar of Lahu* and Matisoff (1988), *The Dictionary of Lahu*. Data from these works will be cited as GL and DL respectively, followed by the relevant page numbers.

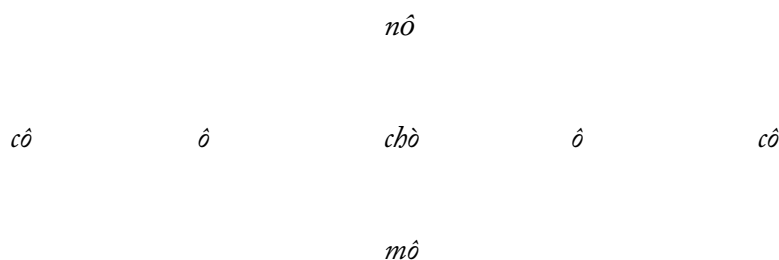


Figure 1. Lahu spatial demonstratives

Of particular interest are *nô* ‘up there’ and *mô* ‘down there’, a deictic opposition which is of special significance to hill-folk. We see this vertical dimension mapped onto body-part terms in nomenclature for Lahu villages. These have traditionally been located on mountain slopes and care is taken to distinguish the upper part of the village (*qbâʔ-ú*, lit. “village head”) from the lower part (*qbâʔ-mē*, lit. “village tail”).

Note that considerable paradigmatic leveling has occurred, so that all members of the class have the same vowel, and all of them (except for *chò*) are under the same high-falling tone /  $\hat{\ } /$ .

The Nsd’s occur with special frequency before the locative noun-particles (discussed in 4.0 below). The word *ô-ve*, consisting of *ô* ‘there’, in combination with the genitive particle *ve*, is the usual Lahu way of saying ‘that’, which can appear either before or after the noun it modifies: *ô-ve chò* ‘that person’, *á-pòʔ ô-ve* ‘that shirt’. This is the only demonstrative in Lahu that is constructed in this way; for example, the proximal demonstrative ‘this’ is *chi*, which is distinct from the proximal locational deictic ‘here’ *chò*.

There is an iconic dimension to the Nsd’s. All of them (except *chò*) may be pronounced with exaggerated high-to-low-to-mid pitch and extra-long vowel in order to convey a greater distance in the spatial dimension in question: *môô* ‘down there’, *mô-ô-o ô* ‘way down there’.

### 3 Classes of Lahu particles [GL 42-46]

There are dozens of particles that constitute the backbone of Lahu grammar. They are divided into three major classes, one of which has three subclasses:

1. noun-particles (Pn): occur only after nouns (or another noun-particle)
2. verb-particles (Pv): occur only after verbs (or another verb-particle)
3. unrestricted particles (Pu): may directly follow either a noun or a verb, or another particle, as well as certain adverbials
  - a. non-final unrestricted particles (Punf): occur only in non-final clauses
  - b. final unrestricted particles (Puf): occur only in final clauses
  - c. universal unrestricted particles (Puniv) occur in both final and non-final clauses

Locational meanings are expressed by particles in the first two of these classes.

#### 4 Locative noun-particles [GL 162-166]

Four of the noun-particles have general locative meanings. They specify neither the direction of motion nor even motion versus rest. The proper interpretation depends on the verb of the clause, or the sentence as a whole.

(a) *lo* [GL 162-3; DL 1377-8]

Probably derived from the widespread PTB etymon \**lam* ‘road/pathway’, *lo* is rather more formal than the other locative Pn’s. According to context, it is to be translated either as ‘in/at’, or ‘to/into’ or ‘out of/from’:

(2) *há-qō lō m̄f chē ve*  
cave LOC sit PROG NOM

‘(He’s) sitting in the cave.’

(3) *há-qō lō lōʔ e ò*  
cave LOC enter away CHANGE OF STATE

‘(He) has already gone into the cave.’

(4) *há-qō lō tōʔ e ò*  
cave LOC emerge away CHANGE OF STATE

‘(He) has already come out of the cave.’

(b) *ō* [GL 163-4, 175; DL 222]

The most general use of this particle is as a weak topicalizer, in which function it is a non-final unrestricted particle (Punf):

(5) *yō qōʔ ve ō à-thòʔ-ma le*  
3p say NOM Punf what QST

‘What is it that he’s saying?’

(6) *ú-pā-mā te qo ō ...*  
example make if Punf

‘For example...’

After nouns referring to places, however, this particle has acquired a weak locative force, where it is to be considered a noun-particle (Pn):

- (7) *yè*     *̄*  
house LOC  
'At the house; in the house; from the house; to the house'
- (8) *ai-qhɔ*   *̄*  
market LOC  
'At/from/to the market'
- (9) *hɔ-lòʔ-qō*   *ɔ-s̄ē-phá*     *chɔ-s̄i-mâ*                     *̄*     *ve*     *chɔ*     *yò*  
boat         master         land.of.the.dead         LOC     GEN     person     AFF  
'The master of the boat is a person from the land of the dead.'

The first NP in the following sentence illustrates both functions of this hard-working particle:

- (10) *nô*         *̄*         *qo*             *̄*         *mì*         *hā*         *já*  
up.there    LOC    TOPIC         TOPIC    ground    steep    very  
Nsd         Pn     Punf         Punf     N         Vadj    Vv  
'As for up there, the ground is very steep.'

(c) *kàʔ* [GL 164-5; DL 331]

This particle occurs after very few nouns, but these are among the most frequently occurring ones in the language: the spatial demonstratives (discussed in 2.0 above) and the interrogative noun *qhò* 'where':

*chò kàʔ* 'here'; *nòkàʔ* 'up there'; *mòkàʔ* 'down there'; *qhò kàʔ* 'where?'

Like the other locative Pn's, *kàʔ* is neutral with respect to direction: *chò kàʔ* may mean, according to context, 'here' or 'to here' or 'from here'.

Historically *kàʔ* is probably derived from the classifier for places, *kà*, plus the accusative noun-particle *thàʔ* ~ *àʔ*.

This particle is certainly not to be identified with the homophonous Punf that means 'also' or 'even' (GL 176, 426-7; DL 332-3), as in the following:

- (11) *ηà*     *kàʔ*     *qay*  
1p    ALSO    go  
'I'll go too./Even I will go.' [post-nominal use]
- (12) *nò*     *qay*     *kàʔ*     *ηà*     *mâ*             *qay*  
2p    go        EVEN    1s    NEG         go  
'Even if you go, I won't go.' [post-verbal use]

(d) *hɔ* [GL 164; DL 1095]

This particle is more colloquial and a bit more emphatic than the other locative Pn's. It may occur in sequence with a preceding *kàʔ* and/or a following *lo*.<sup>2</sup>

- (13) *ô kàʔ hɔ ɲâʔ-chu chi šu mi-qhɔ àʔ šē pi ve*  
 there LOC Pn bird-fat this 3p chair ACC smear BENEF NOM  
 'He smeared the bird-fat right there on her chair.'

In the vagueness of its semantic content *hɔ* seems most similar to *ə*, and may even be related to it historically.

## 5 Directional verb-particles (*e* and *la*) [GL 318-322]

Two members of the class of directional verb particles (Pv's) have the opposite meanings of 'motion away from a center of interest' (*e*) vs. 'motion toward a center of interest' (*la*). The motion may be either literal or figurative:

(a) The Pv *e*

The Pv *e* is derived from PTB \*ʔay 'go' [HPTB 209, 482-3]<sup>3</sup>. In most cases it conveys the literal meaning of transitive/outward motion:

*há e* 'go spend the night'; *phɔ e* 'run away/flee'; *pə e* 'send away/send off'

Occasionally, however, the motion is entirely figurative:

*šē e* 'die/pass away'; *kâe* 'overhear; catch the sound of'; *pə e* 'be all gone/be used up'

After adjectival verbs or action verbs referring to processes, *e* may convey a movement that is figurative in a temporal sense, indicating a continuous becoming through time (usually from the present to the future), or the progressively greater realization of a state:

*chu e* 'get fat; continue to get fat; get fatter and fatter'

In both its literal and figurative senses, the meaning of *e* is practically identical to that of the post-head versatile verb *qay* (see Section 9.0 below):

<i>yù e</i> (V + Pv) 'take away'	<i>yù qay</i> (Vh + Vv) 'take away'
<i>kî e</i> (V + Pv) 'get more and more rotten'	<i>kî qay</i> (Vh + Vv) 'get more and more rotten'

In fact, *qay* 'go' is the only native Lahu word ending in the diphthong *-ay*, and is probably a fusion of \**ka*, another PTB etymon meaning 'go' (HPTB 484) plus \*ʔay: \**ka-ay* > *qay*.

<sup>2</sup> For attested sequences of Pn's within a single NP, see GL 155 (Fig. 8).

<sup>3</sup> HPTB refers to *The Handbook of Proto-Tibeto-Burman* (Matisoff 2003).

The following sentence illustrates several categories of spatial morphemes simultaneously, including *mô*(Nsd), *hó* (Mpfx), *ḡ* (Pn), *ca* (vV) and *e* (Pv):

- (14) *ḡà mó hó ḡ ca<sup>4</sup> lə e*  
 Pron Nsd Mpfx Pn vV Vh Pv  
 1p down.there below LOC go wait away  
 ‘I’ll go and wait down below there.’

(b) The Pv *la*

In its more concrete sense, *la* functions as a Pv of motion opposite in meaning to *e*, indicating cisative motion, motion toward the center of interest:

*pò la* ‘come flying’; *pə la* ‘send hither’; *yù la* ‘bring to’; *pə̀ la* ‘come fleeing’

In its more figurative usage, *la* indicates becoming, imminence, a gradual approach to a present or future state of affairs. This is similar to the figurative use of *e*; however, *e* implies a greater continuity and a longer duration of action, and is more future-oriented than *la*:<sup>5</sup>

*sǎ la* ‘be moribund/about to die’; *pə̀ la* ‘be almost finished’; *bú? la* ‘be nearly satiated’;  
*sǎ la* ‘come to know/realize’; *dà? la* ‘get better/improve’; *chu la* ‘be nearly fat’<sup>6</sup>

This Pv is morphophonemically related both to the full verb *lā* (9.0 below), and to the non-3<sup>rd</sup> person benefactive Pv *lá*(GL 324-330).

Even though the meanings of *e* and *la* are diametrically opposed, they may both co-occur in the same VP, with either of two meanings:

(a) When both particles have their literal motive meanings, the sequence *e + la* indicates an action involving first a going and then a coming:

- (15) *mó lə-qá qhó ḡ chə tɛ tá̄ ve sǎ?-cǎ? ca tá? e la-?*  
 Nsd N Mpfx Pn Vh Vv Pv Puniv N vV Vh Pv Pv  
 down river above LOC chop leave PERF REL logs go carry away hither  
 ‘Go and carry back here the logs we chopped and left down there above the river.’

(b) When *e* is used to show figurative away-ness and *la* to show imminence, the sequence *e + la* means ‘imminent transitivity’:

<sup>4</sup> *ca*, which means ‘seek/look for’ as a main verb, here occurs as a ‘pre-head versatile verb’ meaning ‘go and [perform the action of the verb-head]’.

<sup>5</sup> While *e* indicates a ‘continuously greater realization of an already existent state of affairs, *la* implies a ‘gradual approach to a state of affairs’.

<sup>6</sup> Vs. *chu e* ‘get fatter and fatter’.



- (16)    *yò*    *šì*    *e*    *la*    *yò*  
           Pron V    Pv    Pv    Puf  
           3p   die   away   come.to   AFF  
           ‘He’s about to die.’

The expression *šì-e-la-yò* has been lexicalized into something like English ‘dreadfully/frightfully/to death’. This is undoubtedly a calque on Thai *cà? taaj* ‘to death’, and is used now in colloquial Lahu as a rather breathless emphatic tag after verbs:

- (17)    *ŋà*    *ō*    *mə̀?*    *šì-e-la-yò*  
           Pron N    V  
           1p   food   hungry  
           ‘I’m so hungry I could die; I’m starving to death.’

## 6 Locative nouns: spatial prefixable morphemes [GL 57, 73-4, 104, 115-6, 309, 528]

The most important prefix in Lahu is *ð-*, which occurs before hundreds of roots, both nominal and verbal.<sup>7</sup> This prefix (< PTB \*ʔaŋ-. [See HPTB 522], was probably originally a 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronominal affix: *yè ve ð-qhɔ* ‘inside the house’ (< “house-its-interior”). There is a set of eleven prefixable morphemes (Mpx’s) which indicate relative spatial locations:

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| (18) ‘above/on top of (and touching)’   | <i>(ð-)thà?</i>          |
| ‘above/over (not necessarily touching)’ | <i>(ð-)qhó~ (ð-)qhò?</i> |
| ‘underneath’                            | <i>(ð-)hó</i>            |
| ‘between’                               | <i>(ð-)kã</i>            |
| ‘in the middle’                         | <i>(ð-)qð-ji</i>         |
| ‘in back of /behind’                    | <i>(ð-)qhð?-nó</i>       |
| ‘in front of/before’                    | <i>(ð-)gü-šī</i>         |
| ‘in front of and above’                 | <i>(ð-)na</i>            |
| ‘inside’                                | <i>(ð-)qhɔ</i>           |
| ‘outside’                               | <i>(ð-)bà</i>            |
| ‘nearby’                                | <i>(ð-)pâ(-né)</i>       |

These words appear as possessed nouns in genitival constructions in both their prefixed and unprefixed forms, connected to their possessor nouns by the subordinating particle *ve*:

*šī?-cē ve ð-qhó* ‘the place above the trees’ / *šī?-cē ð-qhó* ‘up in the tree’ / *šī?-cē-qhó* ‘treetop’

As in genitival compounds in general, there are three degrees of semantic bonding between the possessor and the thing possessed:

<sup>7</sup> There are fully 86 pages of entries beginning with this prefix in DL (pp. 134-220). Morphemes which can take this prefix are called “prefixable morphemes” (Mpx’s).

*vàʔ ve ɔ̄-sǎ̄* ‘the flesh of a pig’ / *vàʔ ɔ̄-sǎ̄* ‘pig-meat’ / *vàʔ-sǎ̄* ‘pork’

## 7 The time-space continuum and the ɔ̄-ǵũ-šĩ problem [GL 183-5; 477]

As in a great many languages (Traugott 1974, Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Haspelmath 1997, Radden 2004), a number of Lahu spatial morphemes have acquired temporal meanings as well. These include several of the spatial Mpx’s listed above (6.0):

(19)	<i>Spatial</i>		<i>Temporal</i>
(ɔ̄-)qhbɔ	inside		during/while
<i>yɛ̄ ɔ̄-qhbɔ</i>	‘inside the house’	<i>tɛ̄qhbɔʔ ve ɔ̄-qhbɔ lo</i>	‘in the course of a year’
(ɔ̄-)pâ-né	vicinity		nearly
<i>yɛ̄ ɔ̄-pâ-né</i>	‘near the house’	<i>mũpɔ̄ʔ la pâ-né</i>	‘nearly get dark’
(ɔ̄-)qhbɔʔ-nɔ	behind /in back of		after
<i>yɛ̄ ɔ̄-qhbɔʔ-nɔ</i>	‘behind the house’	<i>chi qhbɔʔ-nɔ</i>	‘after this/henceforth’
(ɔ̄-)ǵũ-šĩ	in front of		before
<i>yɛ̄ ɔ̄-ǵũ-šĩ</i>	‘in front of the house’	<i>ɔ̄-ǵũ-šĩ thâ</i>	‘formerly/in the past’
		<i>ɔ̄-ǵũ-šĩ qo</i>	‘after this/henceforth’

As the examples indicate, the most interesting of these are the last two on the list. There is no doubt that the basic spatial meaning of (ɔ̄-)ǵũ-šĩ is ‘front’, while that of (ɔ̄-)qhbɔʔ-nɔ is ‘back’. When used temporally, (ɔ̄-)qhbɔʔ-nɔ always has reference to later time, to the future, e.g.:

(20)	<i>màʔ</i>	<i>bɔʔ</i>	<i>dàʔ</i>	<i>ve</i>	(ɔ̄-)qhbɔʔ-nɔ
	N	V	Pv	Puniv	Mpx-spat/temp
	war	fight	mutually	REL	after
	‘after the war is over’				

The idea seems to be that future time is like the back of an object. It is the part of life that is hidden from view, the part we have not yet seen. If so, we’d expect that (ɔ̄-)ǵũ-šĩ would have reference to the past, whose face we have seen already, and indeed this is sometimes the case:

(21)	<i>chi</i>	<i>ɔ̄-ǵũ-šĩ</i>	<i>ŋa-hi</i>	<i>ti-mi</i>	<i>mâ</i>	<i>ǵa</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>câ</i>	<i>jo</i>	<i>šē</i>
	Det	Mpx-spat/temp	Pron	N	Adv	vV	Vh	Vv	Pv	Pv
	This	before	we	paddy.fields	NEG	get to	cultivate	to.eat	EXP	yet
	‘Before this we have never yet cultivated wet-rice fields.’									

The trouble is that ɔ̄-ǵũ-šĩ may just as easily refer to the future:

- (22) *yàʔ-ni tà lɛ ɔ̂-ǵù-šī qay qo a-ci dàʔ la tì hɛ́*  
 Ntime V Punf Mprfx-spat/temp V Punf Adv Vadj Pv Pv Puf  
 today begin SUSP future go when more good become FUT PROB

‘It will probably get better from today on into the future.’

Indeed *ɔ̂-ǵhòʔ-nɔ́* may be substituted for *ɔ̂-ǵù-šī* in this last example, with no change in meaning.

The Lahu conception of time embodied in the word *ɔ̂-ǵù-šī* is reminiscent of the two-headed Roman god Janus, who could look simultaneously backwards into the past and forwards into the future. The correct interpretation of this word in any given instance depends on other clues in the sentence or elsewhere in the discourse. An especially neat way of disambiguating *ɔ̂-ǵù-šī* by means of morphemes within the NP is via the particles *thá* ‘temporal’ and *qo* ‘if; when’:

*ɔ̂-ǵù-šī thá* ‘formerly/in the past’      *ɔ̂-ǵù-šī qo* ‘after this/henceforth’

English shows similar vacillation of deictic viewpoint with respect to the flow of time. When we speak of someone ‘following’ us in the spatial sense, the follower is *behind* us. Yet when we extend the word ‘follow’ to the temporal realm, the orientation is reversed. Things which follow in time are conceived of as being *in front of* the point in time where one is at the moment.<sup>8</sup>

It is rather like looking at a two-dimensional drawing of a cube, where first one, than another of the surfaces appears to be closer to the viewer.

## 8 Locative specifying nouns (Nspec) and the FROM problem [GL167-8; 309]

The exact nature of the spatial relationship between a noun and a following verb is very often left unexpressed by any locative morpheme, but is rather to be deduced from the semantic features of the verb itself. English translations of these constructions usually involve locative prepositions:

- (23) *á-ǵhɔ́ chɛ́* ‘stay **at** home’      *í-kâʔ pā-tiʔ* ‘sink **into** the water’  
*há-qō tɔʔ* ‘come **out of** a cave’      *yàʔ-qɔ́ jú* ‘walk **along** a road’  
*í-múce* ‘fall **from** a horse’      *yɛ́ cɔ* ‘go **around** a house’  
*á-ǵhɔ́ qay* ‘go **to** market’      *mɛʔ-ǵù khá* ‘be stuck **in** a swamp’

In GL, the nouns in this construction are called *locative specifying nouns* (Nspec). No locative particles may be inserted between the Nspec and the verb in most cases.

Of particular interest is the disparate variety of Lahu constructions that must be brought to bear to translate English prepositional phrases with *from*:

<sup>8</sup> A similar shift of deictic center frequently occurs with verbs like *bring* and *take*. If I’m at home I might say either “I’m going to take this book to my office today” or “I’m going to bring this book to my office today”. I could equally well use either verb if I were in my office: “I’m going to take/bring this book home today.” It all depends on where one’s internal deictic center is at the moment.

(a) Most often the “fromness” is part of the semantic core of the verb itself, and requires no further overt expression:

- (24) *hêʔ-pí-qhɔ̃ ɔ̃ vâ ca thu qòʔ la ò*  
 jungle LOC bamboo go chop return CIS COMP  
 ‘(He’s) come back from cutting bamboo in the jungle.’

- (25) *nò yè̃ lɛ lɔ̃-qá ô-ve lè̃ vî à lâ*  
 2p house and river that TOP far EMPH QST  
 ‘Is your house far from that river?’

The noun which is the object of *from* in the English translation may be followed by the accusative Pn *thàʔ*, by the comitative Pn *gɛ*, or by any of the trio of locative Pn’s discussed in 4.0:

- (26) *yô-hi thàʔ ñà-hi ġa phâʔ dàʔ tû yò*  
 3p-PL ACC 1p-PL must separate mutually FUT AFF  
 ‘We’ll have to separate from them.’

- (27) *yô gɛ hâʔ yù qhòʔ*  
 3p COMIT quickly take back  
 ‘Hurry and take it back from him.’

- (28) *mòʔ-qɔ̃ lo à-mī tɔʔ la ve*  
 mouth LOC fire emerge CIS NOM  
 ‘Fire came out from his mouth.’

(b) Sometimes Lahu expresses an ablative meaning by means of a spatial prefixable morpheme (see section 5.0 above) referring to the position of the object *before* the separation or withdrawal took place:<sup>9</sup>

- (29) *í-kâʔ qhɔ̃ tɔʔ la ò*  
 water INSIDE emerge CIS COMPL’V  
 ‘It came from [inside] the water.’

- (30) *í-mú qhò hâʔ yàʔ mē*  
 horse OVER quickly descend URGE  
 ‘Hurry and get down from [on top of] the horse!’

<sup>9</sup> In this construction the prefixable morpheme usually occurs without the prefix.

- (31) *ŋà lãʔ-sẽ qhɔ yù qhòʔ gá lá*  
 1p hand INSIDE take back want QST

‘Do you want to take it back from [inside] my hand?’

(c) In correlative expressions of the form ‘from NP1 to NP2’, the place-from-which (NP1) is followed by the clause *te le*, composed of the verb *te* ‘do’ and the suspensive non-final unrestricted particle *le*, meaning literally “having done”. The idea here is evidently that “being done with this place, we proceed FROM it to another point”. The place-to-which (NP2) is marked either by the locative Pn *ɔ* or the extensive noun *qha-gà* ‘up to; until’:

- (32) *Há-ni hó ɔ te le mô ɔ gãʔ-qò lá ā ve*  
 Red.Rock below LOC down LOC drive.out BENEF PERF NOM

‘(They) drove (them) out for us from below Red Rock downwards.’

- (33) *ò-hó tẽ qháʔ te le ò-na tẽ qháʔ qha-gà qay gá*  
 lower one village upper one village up.to go want

‘(I) want to go from the lower village to the upper village.’

## 9 Post-head versatile verbs of motion (GL 222-5)

Many TB languages are remarkable for the ease with which two or more verbs may be strung together or concatenated by simple juxtaposition to form complex verbal nuclei. There is a sizable class of Lahu verbs that are distinguished by their ability to co-occur as modifiers with large numbers of other verbs. This “juxtapository productivity” earns them the sobriquet of *versatile verbs* (VV).<sup>10</sup> Those which occur before their head verb (Vh) are called pre-head versatile verbs (vV), while those which occur after the Vh are called post-head versatile verbs (Vv).

One well-defined subtype of Vv’s are the “juxtacapitals”, which occur directly after the head verb, with meanings related to motion or directionality. These are mutually exclusive when both are functioning as versatile verbs, but there is nothing to stop one of them from functioning as a main verb with a juxtacapital modifying it, e.g. *ɔ tãʔ* (Vh + Vv) ‘spiral upward’, *bà qhòʔ* (Vh + Vv) ‘throw back’ (see below). These verbs of motion often neatly translate the complementary adverbs in English phrasal verbs, like ‘out’, ‘away’, ‘up’, ‘down’, etc.

### 9.1 IN and OUT

- | (34) | Verb      | Meaning as Vh | Meaning as Vv | Examples   |
|------|-----------|---------------|---------------|--|
|      | <i>kə</i> | ‘insert’      | ‘Vh into’     | <i>júʔ kə</i> ‘impale’ (“stab into”)<br><i>máʔ kə</i> ‘blow into’<br><i>càʔ kə</i> ‘push into’ |

<sup>10</sup> See Matisoff (1969) as well as the long section on “verb concatenation” in GL, pp. 199-265. Some Lahu versatile verbs are quite concrete in meaning, while others are more abstract. Those on the more abstract end of the spectrum are somewhat similar to what are usually called “auxiliary verbs” in Western languages.

<i>lò?</i> <sup>11</sup>	‘enter’	‘move into in the manner of the Vh’	<i>gĩ lò?</i> ‘run into’ <i>pāy lò?</i> ‘fall over into’ <i>šɛ lò?</i> ‘lead into’
<i>tɔ?</i>	‘emerge’	‘Vh out’	<i>gò tɔ?</i> ‘pull out’ <i>yù tɔ?</i> ‘take out’ <i>ní tɔ?</i> ‘squeeze out’

## 9.2 COMING and GOING

(35)	Verb <i>là</i> <sup>12</sup>	Meaning as Vh ‘come’	Meaning as Vv ‘come in order to Vh’	Examples <i>qa-mì là</i> ‘come to sing’ <i>ca gĩ là</i> ‘come to visit’
	<i>qay</i>	‘go’	‘go and Vh; Vh away’	<i>lē-gĩ qay</i> ‘go and play’ <i>yù qay</i> ‘take away’ <i>mɛ qay</i> ‘vanish away’ <i>jùqay</i> ‘go walking’

## 9.3 UP and DOWN

(36)	Verb <i>tá?</i>	Meaning as Vh ‘climb; ascend’	Meaning as Vv ‘Vh upward’	Examples <i>phɔ tá?</i> ‘flee upward’ <i>já? tá?</i> ‘sneak upward’ <i>cɔ tá?</i> ‘spiral upward’
	<i>yà?</i>	‘descend’	‘Vh downward’	<i>pɔ? yà?</i> ‘jump down’ <i>lɔɛ yà?</i> ‘swim downstream’ <i>pu yà?</i> ‘roll down’

## 9.4 BACK

(37)	Verb <i>qò</i>	Meaning as Vh ‘give away; deliver’	Meaning as Vv ‘Vh back; Vh away’	Examples <i>hə qò</i> ‘chase away by shouting’ <i>dɔ? qò</i> ‘beat back’ <i>gò qò</i> ‘drag away’
	<i>qhò?</i>	‘bring/take back’	‘Vh in return’	<i>hə? qhò?</i> ‘get sthg back’ <i>bà qhò?</i> ‘throw back’ <i>te qhò?</i> ‘do in reprisal’

<sup>11</sup> *lò?* differs slightly from *kə* in that it only occurs after Vh’s which are themselves verbs of motion.

<sup>12</sup> This verb is to be distinguished from the morphophonemically related verb-particle *la*, under a different tone, above 5.0.

### 9.5 IN and OUT

(38)	Verb	Meaning as Vh	Meaning as Vv	Examples
	<i>bà</i>	'throw; discard'	'Vh away/irrevocably'	<i>tú bà</i> 'burn away' <i>thê? bà</i> 'kick over' <i>qhê? bà</i> 'chip away'
	<i>ce</i>	'fall (from a height)'	'Vh downward; Vh' so it falls'	<i>bô? ce</i> 'shoot down' <i>bà ce</i> 'throw down' <i>gà? ce</i> 'hunt down'
	<i>pə</i>	'send'	'send to Vh ; set in motion by Vh'ing'	<i>hō pə</i> 'send to sell' <i>phû? pə</i> 'knock sthg over' <i>cà? pə</i> 'push away'

### 9.6 IN and OUT

(39)	Verb	Meaning as Vh	Meaning as Vv	Examples
	<i>ɔ</i>	'go around; turn'	'Vh around; go around Vh'ing'	<i>ɔ mi</i> 'sit in a circle' <i>ɔ ti</i> 'plant around' <i>ɔ ni</i> 'look around'

## 10 Conclusion

This quick *tour d'horizon* of Lahu spatial constructions has raised a number of interesting issues for further discussion:

- The differing degrees of grammaticalization illustrated by the various syntactic and semantic resources used to express spatial concepts.
- The derivation of spatial particles from earlier root-morphemes.
- The quasi-universal relationship between spatial and temporal concepts.
- Possible shifts in deictic viewpoint with respect to space and time.
- The division of the work of expressing spatial concepts between the NP and the VP.
- The often covert semantic/syntactic relationship between a noun and the following verb.
- The incommensurability of cross-linguistic spatial concepts, as illustrated by the diverse Lahu ways to translate the English preposition *from*.
- The semantic bleaching of spatial verbs when concatenated with other verbs.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	accusative	Pn	noun particle
Adv	adverb	PROG	progressive
COMP	complementizer	PROX	proximate
AFF	affirmative	PTB	Proto-Tibeto-Burman
CIS	cisative	Pu	unrestricted particle
COMIT	comitative	Puf	final unrestricted particle
COMP	completive	Punf	non-final unrestricted particle
DL	<i>Dictionary of Lahu</i> (Matisoff 1988)	Puniv	universal unrestricted particle
EMPH	emphatic	Pv	verb particle
EXP	experiential	QST	question
FUT	future	REL	relativizer
GEN	genitive	Spat/Temp	spatial/temporal
GL	<i>Grammar of Lahu</i> (Matisoff 1973/1982)	TOP	topicalizer
HBTB	<i>Handbook of Proto-Tibeto-Burman</i> (Matisoff 2003)	Vadj	adjectival verb
LOC	locative	Vh	verb head
NOM	nominalizer	VV	versatile verb
Mpfx	prefixable morpheme	vV	pre-head versatile verb
Nsd	spatial demonstrative noun	Vv	post-head versatile verb
`	specifying noun		
PL	Proto-Loloish		

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