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Case marking in Lotha

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ABSTRACT

Case in Lotha, (a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Wokha District of Nagaland) is marked by suffixes which appear to the right of the noun it marks. In Lotha the ergative marker can combine with both nouns and pronouns. However, the nominative markers can only occur with pronouns. Lotha has aspectual split ergativity in which word class (noun vs. pronoun), aspect and tense are determining factors. The ergative marker occurs mainly with the A argument of a transitive clause when it is in the past and the future. However, a highly volitional or powerful S may receive ergative marking as well. So, in Lotha, the A argument NP is generally marked distinctly from the S argument or O argument. The nominative markers occur in perfective and imperfective clauses, marking the A argument (transitive) and S argument (intransitive). The nominative markers take different shapes on pronominals, where *-jɔ* marks exclusively first person singular, *-nɔ* marks second person singular and first, second and third person plural, *-ɔ* marks first, second and third person dual whereas the third person singular either receives null marking or is marked by the topic marker *-dʒɔ* .

KEYWORDS

Case, Ergativity, Aspectual split, Lotha, Naga, Tibeto-Burman

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Case marking in Lotha[1]

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1. Introduction

Lotha is a generic name and refers to both the linguistic group and the ethno-cultural entity. Linguistically, Lotha has been classified under the Ao group of the Naga sub-branch of the Tibeto-Burman languages (Lewis etal. 2015). Lotha is one of the major languages spoken in Nagaland. The speakers of Lotha are scattered all over Nagaland but the majority are concentrated at Wokha District of Nagaland. Lotha has no script of its own and has adopted the Roman script introduced by the British and the American missionaries in the late 19th century. According to the Census of India (2011), the total number of Lotha speakers was 166,343. Similarly, Lewis et al. (2015) list a total number of 166,000 Lotha speakers. Lotha has a number of varieties, but the variation is mainly at the phonological level, that is, the accent of the speaker, which varies from village to village. However, for the purpose of literary works, the variety spoken in central villages, particularly in and around Wokha Town, is used. This paper represents a study done on the standard variety of the Lotha language spoken in and around Wokha Town. Lotha is an SOV language and has person-number indexing on the verb.

1.1 Methodology

A linguistic fieldwork methodology was employed for this research study. This includes primary data collection from informants, i.e., the native speakers of the dialect, by going to the field. The informants selected include both male and female which are of different age groups. Educated as well as illiterate informants were interviewed for elicitation of data. The data collected were presented in the form of wordlists, sentence list, narratives and oral tradition. In addition, interviews with scholars and writers who have worked on Lotha are included. The number of language consultants consists of eight people.

The tools used include interviews, questionnaires, audio recorders like Zoom H4n, and field linguistic software like FLEx were used for recording and analyzing the data.

Secondary sources from which data were used include textbooks, articles, and journals for cross-reference.

1.2 *Previous works on case in Lotha*

Acharya (1983) in 'Lotha Grammar' gives a description of the phonology, morphology and syntax of Lotha. He claimed ten case markers in Lotha, namely nominative, accusative, instrumental, dative, benefactive, allative, ablative, sociative, genitive and locative. According to him, nominative is marked with two markers, -*no* and -*yo*. The instrumental is expressed by -*na*, benefactive by *tsukona*, allative by *i, lo* and *thungi*. He claimed that the ablative marker is formed out of the combination of allative and instrumental markers i.e. *ina, lona* or *thungina* whereas the sociative is expressed by *phana* and *nzo*.

'Outline grammar of the Lotha Naga language' (1888) by Rev. Witter serves more like a guide to non-Lotha speakers rather than a grammar. The work listed six case markers, namely nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, ablative and locative, where the nominative is marked by the suffix -*na* and the accusative case is not overtly marked. The ablative case is marked by *na* which can be omitted sometimes. The locative is marked by *i, lo* or *wi*.

A book entitled 'Kyong Yinsanlan' (1995) which translates to 'The way of Lotha language' by Murry gives a very basic and shallow introduction to the grammar of the language. Regarding case, he mentioned six case markers in Lotha, namely nominative, objective, dative, possessive, vocative, and locative. He lists two nominative case markers, *na* and *jo*. Besides that, he did not mention any case markers for the claimed cases in the language. The locative was explained as used when there is a postposition involved in the sentence.

All the above-mentioned works show somehow nominative-accusative alignment in case marking in Lotha. However, this paper claims that Lotha has aspectual split ergativity, where the ergative marker occurs mainly with the A argument of a transitive clause when it is in the past and the future and the nominative markers appear in perfective and imperfective clauses marking the A argument (transitive) and S argument (intransitive).

2. Case markers in Lotha

Dixon (1994: 9) formulates that 'In an ergative language, the A argument of a transitive clause is marked differently from the O argument of transitive clause and the S argument of an intransitive clause. On the other hand, in an accusative language, the O argument is marked differently from the A and S arguments'. Dixon (1994: 61) presented the distinction between an ergative language and nominative language diagrammatically as illustrated in figure 1, where A stands for the subject of a transitive clause, S stands for the subject of an intransitive clause and O stands for the direct object of a transitive clause.
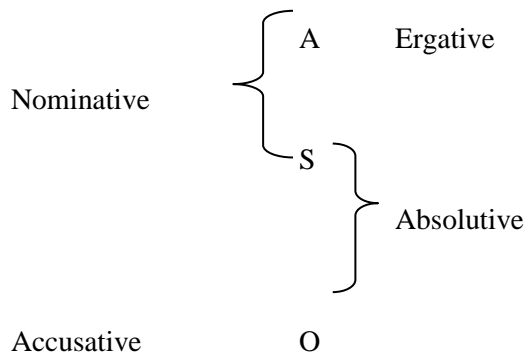
A   Ergative

Nominative

S

Absolutive

Accusative   O

Figure 1 – Alignment systems

Plank (1979: 4) describes the idea of a case system as follows: A grammatical pattern or process shows ergative alignment if it identifies intransitive subjects (Si) and transitive direct objects (dO) as opposed to transitive subjects (St). It shows accusative alignment if it identifies Si and St as opposed to dO.'

DeLancey (1981: 626) states that the assignment of certain case-markers in natural languages is partly influenced by some factor other than semantic or syntactic role, so that case marking is partly independent of the semantic case-role or the grammatical function of the NP that receives the marking. In his article, he considers three different types of case marking:

i.   The 'split ergative' (SE) pattern in which a transitive agent is marked for ergative case or left unmarked depending on its position on the 'animacy' or 'empathy' hierarchy.
ii. The split pattern which depends on the tense/aspect of the clause.
iii. The 'active/stative' split pattern, in which the subject of an intransitive verb is marked as a transitive agent or patient depending on whether it engages in the act described on its own volition or not.

Following DeLancey, I propose Lotha has an aspectual split-ergativity, which he defines as a pattern in which ergative morphology is linked or associated with perfective aspect or past tense, and morphology with imperfective aspect, or with present or future tense. In Lotha, the ergative marker -*na* occurs mainly with the A argument of a transitive clause when it is in past or the future and the nominative markers -*jɔ*, -*nɔ* and -*ɔ* appear in perfective and imperfective clauses, marking the A argument (transitive) and S argument (intransitive). The nominative markers take different shapes on pronominals where, -*jɔ* marks exclusively first person singular, -*nɔ* marks second person singular and first, second and third person plural, -*ɔ* marks first, second and third person dual whereas the third person singular either receives null marking or is marked by the topic marker -*dʒɔ*. The following table provides an overview of the ergative and nominative case marking pattern in Lotha:

Function	Noun	Pronoun	Occurrence
A (Ergative)	*-na*	*-na*	+ past + future
S (Ergative)	*-na*		+ volitional + powerful
A (Nominative)		*-jɔ* (1sg) *-nɔ* (2sg, 1pl, 2pl, 3pl) *-ɔ* (1du, 2du, 3du) *-ø/-dʒɔ* (3sg)	+ perfective + imperfective
S (Nominative)		*-jɔ* (1sg) *-nɔ* (2sg, 1pl, 2pl, 3pl) *-ɔ* (1du, 2du, 3du)	+ past + future + perfective + imperfective

Table 1 – Ergative and nominative case marking pattern in Lotha

Given the above discussed definitions, Lotha has a split-ergativity system of case marking where cases are marked by suffixes which appear to the right of the noun. Case marking in Lotha manifests itself in a split between nouns and pronouns and it extends on certain dependents of the noun via concord such as demonstratives. In the ergative alignment of case marking, the Agent is associated with the ergative case marker and the absolutive is associated with the Patient. However, the absolutive case which is associated with the Patient has zero realization (ø) in the language, indicating a zero morpheme. Table 2 shows case markers in Lotha with their case roles:

Case name	Case marker	Case role
Ergative	*-na*	Agent
Nominative	*-nɔ* *-jɔ* *-ɔ*	Patient, Experiencer
Genitive/possessive	*-tʃə*	Possessor
Allative	*-tʰəŋi* *-tʰəŋwe*	Destination (towards)
Ablative	*-lona*	Source
Benefactive	*-tsəkona*	Benefactor
Comitative	*-nzɔ*	Company
Instrumental	*-kʰi* *-na*	Instrument
Locative	*-i* *-ina* *-lɔ*	Location

Table2 – Case markers in Lotha

2.1 Ergative

The A argument in Lotha receives an ergative marking *-na* for both nouns and pronouns if the construction is in the past or the future, which can be seen in the following illustrations:

(1)   *ombɔ-na*   *jotʰi*   *tsɔ-tʃɔ.*
       3SG-ERG   banana   eat-PST
       'He ate a banana.'

(2)   *a-na*   *jotʰi*   *tsɔ-tʃɔ*
       1SG-ERG   banana   eat-PST
       'I ate a banana'

(3)   *n-na*   *jotʰi*   *tsɔ-tʃɔ*
       2SG-ERG   banana   eat-PST
       'You ate a banana'

(4) *nini-na*   *jotʰi*   *tsɔ-tʃɔ*
     2DU-ERG   banana   eat-PST
     'You (two) ate banana'

(5) *mhasen-na*   *jotʰi*   *tsɔ-tʃɔ*
     Mhasen-ERG   banana   eat-PST
     'Mhasen ate a banana'

(6) *kaka-na*   *kagɔ-dʒə*   *ombɔ* *pi-əʔ*
     Kaka-ERG   book-DEF.SG   3SG   give-FUT
     'Kaka will give the book to him'

(7) *a-na*   *kagɔ-dʒə*   *ombo* *pi-əʔ*
     1SG-ERG   book-DEF.SG   3SG   give- FUT
     'I will give the book to him'

The general case marking rule in Lotha is that the marker *-na* marks mainly the A argument of a transitive clause if it is in past tense or future. However, it is not confined only to transitive clause of the past and the future because it can also be found in intransitive sentences, when the referent is perceived as being extremely volitional or powerful as in the following:

(8) *o-bvə-i-na*   *tsa-ta*
     VOC-AUG-NMLZ-ERG come-3PL
     'The lord is coming'

(9) *jesu-na*   *tʲa-tʃɔ*
     Jesus-ERG   cry-PST
     'Jesus wept'

The A argument of a transitive verb is assigned with *-na* and the O argument of a transitive verb and the S argument of an intransitive verb which is not highly volitional or powerful are marked by a zero realization (ø) indicating a zero morpheme i.e., unmarked absolutive case, as seen in the following illustrations:

(10) *doro-na*   *kaka-ø*   *həŋ-tʃɔ*
     Doro-ERG   Kaka-ABS   see-PST
     'Doro saw Kaka'

(11) *doro-ø*   *rɔ-tʰaka*
     Doro-ABS   come-PFV
     'Doro has arrived'

In the causative construction in Lotha, no matter if the verbal morphology is perfective or imperfective, the ergative marker -*na* is obligatory as seen in the following illustrations:

(12) *ò-jɔ-na*　　　　*ŋarɔ-dʒə*　　*o-tsʰə*　　　　*tsɔ-tʰɔk-a-la*
　　　VOC-mother-ERG　　child-DEF.SG　RL-rice　　　eat-CAUS-NMLZ-NPST
　　　'The mother is making the child eat'

(13) *onte-na*　　　*o-li*　　　*tʃɔ-tʰɔk-tʃɔ*
　　　3PL-ERG　　　RL-field　　toil-CAUS-PST
　　　'They made them toil the field'

2.2　*Absolutive*

The absolutive case is unmarked, i.e., it has a zero realization (ø) in Lotha, as illustrated in the construction below:

(14) *ò-bɔ-na*　　　　　*ò-jɔ̀-ø*　　　　　*huŋ-tʃɔ*
　　　VOC-father-ERG　　VOC-mother-ABS　see-PST
　　　'Father saw mother'

In the above sentences the A argument of a transitive verb is assigned with an agentive case marker -*na* as opposed to the O argument of a transitive verb and the S argument of an intransitive verb which do not get any case markers but are assigned with a null sign 'ø' indicating zero morpheme which is assumed as the absence of case marker.

2.3　*Nominative*

The nominative case usually indicates the subject of a finite verb. In Lotha, only pronouns, not nouns, can take a nominative case marker. The nominative case marker occurs in three different shapes, conditioned by person and number of the pronoun: -*jɔ*, -*ɔ* and -*nɔ*. Nominative case marking may occur with perfective and imperfective aspect, on the A argument (transitive) and S argument (intransitive). The form -*jɔ* marks exclusively first person singular, -*nɔ* marks second person singular and first, second and third person plural, -*ɔ* marks first, second and third person dual whereas the third person singular either receives null marking or is marked by the topic marker -*dʒɔ*. The following illustrations show how the nominatives behave in Lotha:

(15) *a-jɔ*　　　*odʒəja*　　*jì-ǎ-la*
　　　1SG-NOM　　tomorrow　go-SG-NPST
　　　'I am leaving tomorrow.'

(16) *a-jɔ*   *jəb-tʃɔ*
      1SG-NOM   sleep-PST
      'I slept'

(17) *nini-ɔ*   *o-tsʰə*   *tsɔ-ta*   *van-tʃɔ*
      2DU-NOM   RL-rice   eat-PL   PROG-PST
      'You two were eating food'

(18) *etə-nɔ*   *m̥on* *m̥on-te*   *pi-tʃɔ*
      1PL-NOM   good   good-only   give-PST
      'We gave the good ones only'

(19) *ontə-nɔ*   *jì-ta-tʰaka*
      3PL-NOM   go-PL-PFV
      'They have left'

(20) *ŋarɔ-dʒə-dʒɔ*   *jəb-tʰaka*
      child-DEF.SG-TOP   sleep-PFV
      'The child has slept'

(21) *ombɔ-ø*   *jəb-tʰaka*
      3SG-NOM   sleep-PFV
      'He slept'

The paradigm of how the nominative case markers *-jɔ, -ɔ* and *-nɔ* attach to the personal pronouns is shown below in Table 3:

Person\number	SG	DU	PL
1	*-jɔ*	*-ɔ*	*-nɔ*
2	*-nɔ*	*-ɔ*	*-nɔ*
3	*-ø [-dʒɔ]*	*-ɔ*	*-nɔ*

Table3 – Incorporation of nominative markers on personal pronouns in Lotha

2.4   Possessive

In Lotha, the genitive has two types of constructions: i) where the possession is not marked overtly and ii) where the possession is marked overtly by the possessive marker

etʃə. The following examples show the first type of genitive construction in Lotha which is not marked overtly but expressed by personal pronouns:

(22) *a*   *kagɔ*
      1SG   book
      'My book'

(23) *nte*   *kagɔ*
      2PL   book
      'Your book'

(24) *ete*   *kagɔ*
      1PL   book
      'Our book'

(25) *ontə*   *kagɔ*
      3PL   book
      'Their book'

The following examples how the second type of possessive pronoun where the possession is overtly marked by the possessive marker *etʃə* or *-tʃə*:

(26) *kàgɔ̀*   *dʒə-dʒɔ*   *a-tʃə*
      book   DEF.SG-TOP   1SG-POSS
      'That book is mine'

(27) *kàgɔ̀*   *dʒə-dʒɔ*   *ni-tʃə*
      book   DEF.SG-TOP   2SG-POSS
      'That book is yours'

(28) *kàgɔ̀*   *dʒə-dʒɔ*   *ete*   *etʃə*
      book   DEF.SG-TOP   1PL   POSS
      'That book is ours'

(29) *kàgɔ̀*   *dʒə-dʒɔ*   *ntə*   *etʃə*
      book   DEF.SG-TOP   2PL   POSS
      'That book is yours'

The genitive in Lotha is marked through a possessive marker *etʃə* when it is overtly inflected for possession as seen in the above given sentence constructions. However, in the first person singular (26) and the second person singular (27) the vowel /*e*/ is dropped, resulting in the form *-tʃə*.

2.5   Allative

The allative marker in Lotha marks the spatial goal of a movement. It has two forms -*tʰeŋi* and -*tʰəŋwe*, which literally translate into 'to' and 'towards' respectively. The form, -*tʰeŋi*, which is associated with 'to' appears only on animate referent whereas -*tʰəŋwe* which is associated with 'towards', appears on both the animate and inanimate referent. This can be illustrated in the following sentences below:

(30)   *a-tʰəŋi   rɔ́-ằ*
      1SG-ALL   come-SG
      'Come to me'

(31)   *a-thəŋwe   rɔ̀-ằ*
      1SG-ALL   come-SG
      'Come towards me'

(32)   *o-ki-dʒə-thəŋwe   rɔ̀-ằ*
      RL-house-DEF.SG-ALL   come-SG
      'Come towards the house'

(33)   **oki-dʒə-thəŋi   rɔ́-ằ*
      house-DEF.SG-ALL   come-SG
      'Come to the house'

2.6   Ablative

In Lotha, the ablative -*lona* marks a source of a movement. It is partially composed of the morpheme -*na* which encodes ergative and instrumental cases. In Lotha, the principal function of the ablative is to show motion away from a location in space or a point in time as illustrated in the following sentences.

(34)   *abraham-lona   bɔk-tʃɔ*
      Abraham-ABL   born-PST
      'Born from Abraham'

(35)   *o-kì-lona   tʃə́jì-tʰɔk-tʃɔ*
      RL-house-ABL   out-CAUS-PST
      'Chased out from the house'

(36)   *ʃi-lona   ntə   kì- dʒə-na   ndaŋ*
      DEM-ABL   2PL   house-DEF.SG-INS   till
      'From here till your house'

(37)   *obvəi-dʒə-aŋ*   *kʰe-lona*   *ʃandʒɔ-tʃɔ*
       master-DEF-PL   hand-ABL   save-PST
       'Rescued from the hands of the masters'

The ablative *-lona* is also used to convey the comparative statements as illustrated in (38) and (39).

(38)   *jotʰi-ʃi-dʒɔ*   *tsakicə-lona* *neŋ-ka*
       banana-DEM-TOP   honey-ABL   sweet-CMPR
       'This banana is sweeter than the honey'

(39)   *ni-lona*   *nɔŋ̊ɔ-ka*
       2SG-ABL   young-CMPR
       'Younger than you'

When the agentive *-na* is dropped, *-lo* marks a duration in time as seen in the following sentences.

(40)   *zəmɔ-lɔ*   *te*   *zo-a-la*
       night-ABL   only hear-NMLZ-PROG
       'Can be heard during the night only'

(41)   *etsək-lɔ*   *van-tʃɔ*
       winter-ABL   born-PST
       'Was born during the winter'

2.7   *Instrumental*

Instrumental case is used to indicate that a noun is the instrument or means by or with which the subject achieves or accomplishes an action. The noun may either be a physical object or an abstract concept. In Lotha, an instrument can appear with the marker *-kʰi* as in (42) or with instrumental *-na* as in (43):

(42)   *aben-na*   *kipəŋ-dʒə*   *cabi* *ethan-dʒə-kʰi̥*   *tʃɔntʃə-tʃɔ*
       Aben-ERG   door-DEF.SG key new-DEF.SG-INS   open-PST
       'Aben opened the door with the new key'

(43)   *cabi* *ethan-dʒə-na*   *kipəŋ-dʒə*   *tʃɔntʃə-tʃɔ*
       key new-DEF.SG-INS   door-DEF.SG open-PST
       'The new key opened the door' (Lit. 'by the new key')

Instrumental *-na* may also indicate someone or something accompanying an action as seen in (44) below:

(44) *doro-dʒɔ*   *kaka-na*   *pʰana*   *vo-tʃɔ*
      Doro-TOP   Kaka-INS   company   go-PST
      'Doro was accompanied by Kaka'

In Ao (Coupe 2008), the instrumental case can mark a body part that is the source of an unpleasant physical sensation. Similarly, Lotha -*na* can be used to mark a body part which is source of unpleasant physical activity, as illustrated in (45).

(45) *odʒɔ-na*   *ánò-a-la*
      leg-INS   pain-NMLZ-NPST
      'My leg is hurting'

2.8   Benefactive

A Benefactive situation is one that occurs to the benefit of a participant, (Lehmann et.al. (2008: 68). Normally, only animate participants are cabable of making use of benefit bestowed upon them. In Lotha, the benefactive -*tsəkona* apperas to the right of its head.

(46) *ombo-na*   *a-tsəkona*   *a*   *tsɔji-tʃɔ*
      3SG-ERG   1SG-BEN   1SG   do-PST
      'He did it for me'

(47) *ni-tsəkona*   *rɔ-tʃɔ*
      2SG-BEN   come-PST
      'I came because of you/for you'

In Ao, as stated by Coupe (2008), in addition to marking the benefactor of an activity denoted by the predicate, the benefactive case expresses a purposive meaning equivalent to 'for the purpose of, being for'. It is compatible with both animate and inanimate referents of nominal heads. Lotha functions in the same way as Ao: the benefactive case express a purposive meaning equivalent to 'for the purpose of or being for', as illustrated in sentence (48).

(48) *oki-lɔ*   *eramo-dʒə*   *tsoəʔ-dʒə-tsəkona*   *ombo* *pi-tʃɔ*
      house-LOC   eldest-DEF.SG do-DEF.SG-BEN   3SG   give-PST
      'Being the eldest in the house he was given'

2.9   Locative

In Lotha, locatives are marked by the suffix -*i*, -*ina* and -*lɔ* which expresses spatial location and goal. The following examples show how location is expressed in the language:

(49) *shillong-i   van-a-la*
      Shillong-LOC stay-NMLZ-NPST
      'Staying in Shillong'

(50) *shillong-i   ji-a-la*
      Shillong-LOC go-NMLZ-NPST
      'Going to Shillong'

(51) *shillong-ina   tsa-ta*
      Shillong-LOC   come-NMLZ
      'Coming from Shillong'

(52) *o-lí-lɔ   vɔ̀-tʃɔ*
      RL-field-LOC go-PST
      'I went to the field'

2.10 *Comitative*

Comitative meaning is expressed in Lotha by the addition of the suffix *-nzɔ*, which indicates togetherness/company. The following example show the comitative marker in Lotha:

(53) *ò-ŋɔ́   oni-nzɔ   ji-tʃɔ*
      VOC-brother two-COM   go-PST
      'He went along with his brother'

(54) *ò-bɔ   oni-nzɔ   rɔ-tʃɔ*
      VOC-father two-COM   come-PST
      'He came along with his father'

3. Summary and conclusion

In Lotha, the ergative marker *-na* occurs mainly with the A argument of a transitive clause when it is in the past and the future while the nominative markers *-jɔ*, *-nɔ* and *-ɔ* occur with perfective and imperfective aspect clauses, on the A argument (transitive), and the S argument (intransitive). The nominative markers take different shapes on pronominals, where *-jɔ* marks exclusively first person singular, *-nɔ* marks second person singular and first, second and third person plural, *-ɔ* marks first, second and third person dual whereas the third person singular either recieves null marking or is marked by the topic marker *-dʒɔ*. The general case marking rule in Lotha is that the marker *-na* marks mainly the A argument of a transitive clause if it is in past tense or

future/irrealis aspect. However, it is not confined only to transitive clauses in the past tense or future irrealis aspect, because it can also be found in intransitive sentences when the referent is perceived as being extremely volitional or powerful. In causative constructions in Lotha, no matter if the verbal morphology is perfective or imperfective, the argument receives an ergative marker obligatory. Altogether, Lotha has nine case markers namely ergative *-na*, nominative *-jɔ, -ɔ* and *-nɔ*, genitive *-tʃə*, allative *-tʰəŋi* and *-tʰəŋwe*, ablative *-lona*, benefactive *-tsəkona*, comitative *-nzɔ*, instrumental *-kʰi* and *-na* and locative *-i, -ina* and *-lɔ*.

In Lotha, the genitive has two types of constructions: i) where the possession is not marked overtly and ii) where the possession is marked overtly by the possessive marker *etʃə or -tʃə*.

The allative marker in Lotha marks the spatial goal of a movement. It has two forms, *-tʰəŋi* and *-tʰəŋwe*, which literally translates into 'to' and 'towards' respectively. The form *-tʰəŋi* which is associated with 'to' appears only on animate referent whereas *-tʰəŋwe* which is associated with 'towards' appears on both the animate and inanimate referent

In Lotha, the ablative *-lona* marks a source of a movement. It is partially composed of the morpheme *-na* which encodes ergativite and instrumental cases. The principal function of the ablative is to show motion away from location (place), point in time or space. The ablative *-lona* is also used to convey the comparative statement. However, when the ergative *-na* is dropped, *-lo* marks the unspecified point in time in the language. In Lotha, instrumental case can be marked by *-kʰi* or *-na*.

Lotha is one of the more under-documented and under-explored languages among the Tibeto-Burman languages of Northeast India, therefore it is hoped that this work will open ways for more research works in the future. Though earlier works on case in Lotha claim that Lotha follow Nominative-Accusative alignment, this paper claims that Lotha exhibits aspectual split ergativity.

ABBREVIATIONS

1	first person		FUT	future
2	second person		INS	instrumental
3	third person		LOC	locative
ABL	ablative		NOM	nominative
ABS	absolutive		NPST	non-past
ALL	allative		NMLZ	nominalizer
AUG	augmentative		PFV	perfective
BEN	benefactive		PL	plural
CAUS	causative		POSS	possessive
CMPR	comparative		PROG	progressive
COM	comitative		PST	past
DEF.SG	definite singular		RL	relational prefix
DEM	demonstrative		SG	singular
DU	dual		TOP	topic
ERG	ergative		VOC	vocative

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