ADPOSITIONS IN LUTUV

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the adpositional marking and case marking systems in Lutuv. This investigation finds that the basic adpositional phrase consists of a noun and a simplex or complex postposition. Complex postpositions are often used to convey information about both movement and location, whereas simplex postpositions are usually limited to expressing one of the two. The findings of this investigation are useful for highlighting potential future areas of research in Lutuv.

Key Terms— Lutuv, adpositions, deixis, Kuki-Chin languages

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates case marking and adpositional marking in Lutuv[1] (also known as Lautu), a Kuki-Chin language from the Tibeto-Burman language family (Eberhard et al 2020). Lutuv is spoken in Chin State in western Burma/Myanmar and in diaspora communities around the world. Indiana, where the fieldwork that informs this paper was conducted, is home to more than 25,000 Burmese refugees, many of whom are from Chin State (Berkson et al. 2019). Data in this study come from elicitation sessions with a native speaker of Lutuv who is in her early 20s and a member of the Indianapolis Chin community.

The noun marking system in Lutuv appears to be very complex, and the information contained herein should be considered preliminary. This paper presents preliminary data on noun marking, specifically on adpositions. We provide an overview of common adpositions in Lutuv and discuss some basic constructions which use simplex and complex adpositions. We conclude by identifying areas for further analysis and research.

Glossing conventions used herein are provided in Appendix A.

2. BACKGROUND

Lutuv is a Kuki-Chin language of the Tibeto-Burman language family mainly spoken in western Burma/Myanmar and diaspora communities in Indianapolis and elsewhere (Eberhard et al 2020). To our knowledge, linguistic work on Lutuv is nonexistent outside of the work being conducted here in Indiana. Lutuv was the language of focus in a field methods class taught by Kelly Berkson at Indiana University

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** The work for this paper was conducted in an undergraduate Field Methods class at Indiana University Bloomington in Spring 2020. We are responsible for any errors or inconsistencies.
[1] This report is written in Lutuv orthography, which was developed by the language consultant. While Lutuv has an extensive tone system, no tonal features have been included in this report.

in Spring 2020. Lutuv is a head-final language and the basic word order is SOV, although variation seems possible in many situations.

3. METHODS

The data presented here comes from direct elicitation with a native speaker of Lutuv who was in her early 20s at the time of data collection. Fieldwork was conducted over a period of approximately four months. Early sessions were conducted in person on the Indiana University Bloomington campus. The COVID-19 pandemic then forced a shift to online elicitation sessions conducted via Zoom.

4. BASIC ADPOSITIONAL PHRASES IN LUTUV

As noted, Lutuv is a head-final language. The main adposition appears after the noun phrase as a postposition. A complete adpositional phrase in Lutuv consists of the noun phrase and one or more postposition(s). This structure is schematized and exemplified in (1).

(1)   NOUN + POSTPOSITION(S) + NOMINAL MARKER(S)
    cabya   raw   lie
    table   under   LOC
    "under the table"

    Table 1 outlines the eight most frequently observed adpositions in Lutuv. English glosses are also included.

Table 1. Basic Simplex Adpositions in Lutuv

Lutuv (IPA)	Lutuv (Orthography)	Approximate English Gloss
1. ʦoŋ	cung	on top of/above/up
2. ʦʰoŋ	chung	inside of
3. nə̥ŋkaa	hnangkaa	behind
4. m̥ie	hmie	in front of
5. ə tʰə	a tha	near/by/next to/beside
6. rɔɔ	raw	below/under/down
7. ələləlie	alalalie	in between
8. lee	lee	outside of

    Predictably, the different semantic domains of each particular adposition in English and Lutuv make an exact one-to-one translation impossible; the closest approximate translations have been provided in the table above. Further work could help define the specific semantics of each postposition.

5. SIMPLEX ADPOSITIONS

Simplex adpositions express either movement or location, but not both. One of the most common and basic uses of simplex adpositional phrases is to express the static location of an object. In these instances, the adpositional phrase, usually headed by one of the postpositions presented in Table 1, is used along with the verb *aw* 'to be located'. Examples (2-9) below demonstrate these constructions using each of the adpositions outlined in Table 1. Adpositional phrases are generally marked with a case particle, often the locative case marker *lie*.

(2) Chinghna   ca   tiy   cung   lie   na   a   aw
     leaf   TOP   water   on top   LOC   FOC   3SG.SBJ   to be located
     "The leaf is on top of the water."

(3) Sui   ca   ruo   chung   lie   na   a   aw
     Sui   TOP   forest   inside   LOC   FOC   3SG.SBJ   to be located
     "Sui is inside the forest."

(4) Caauv   ca   cabya hnangkaa   lie   na   a   aw
     book   TOP   table behind   LOC   FOC   3SG.SBJ   to be located
     "The book is behind the table"

(5) Capapaa   ca   ing   hmie   lie   na   a   aw
     man   TOP   house   in front of   LOC   FOC   3SG.SBJ   to be located
     "The man is in front of the house."

(6) Bawlung   ca   thlepie a tha   lie   na   a   aw
     ball   TOP   wall   next to   LOC   FOC   3SG.SBJ   to be located
     "The ball is next to the wall."

(7) Alung cavaa tiy   raw   lie   na   a   aw
     rock   lake   water   below   LOC   FOC   3SG.SBJ   to be located
     "The rock is at the bottom of the lake."

(8) Capapaa   ca   ing   lee   lie   na   a   aw
     man   TOP   house outside   LOC   FOC   3S.SBJ   to be located
     "The man is outside the house."

(9) Capapaa   ca   ing   hne   bienaing   a lalalie   na   a
     man   TOP   house and   church   between   FOC   3SG.SBJ

     aw
     to be located

     "The man is in between the house and the church."

A similar structure involving a simplex adpositional phrase is observed in adposition constructions expressing directionality or movement with a verb of motion. Note that the simplex postpositions in the following examples do not provide information about location.

(10) | Uv | ca | Kelly | luo | na | a | | cakuo |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dog | TOP | Kelly | to | FOC | 3SG.SBJ | | to walk |

"The dog walked to Kelly."

(11) | Capapaa | ca | ing | lee | | lie | na | a | | cakuo |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Man | TOP | house | outside | | LOC | FOC | 3SG.SBJ | | to walk |

"The man walked outside of the house."

(12) | Kelly | ca | Italy | taa-ta | | na | France | luo | a | | vaa |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kelly | TOP | Italy | from-? | | FOC | France | to | 3SG.SBJ | | to go |

"Kelly went from Italy to France."

6. COMPLEX ADPOSITIONS

Adpositions in Lutuv may be used together to form complex adpositions. These complex constructions seem to be more common when expressing movement as opposed to static locations as in (13-15),. All examples of complex adpositions thus far include either *luo* 'to' or *taa* 'from'. These complex adpositions express both movement and direction. As seen in (10) and (12) above, the morphemes *luo* and *taa* can stand alone as the adposition in a sentence. However, as seen in (13-16), they can also work in conjunction with the other common adpositions to create a complex adpositional phrase.

(13) | Sui | ca | ruo | chung | luo | ta | na | a | | cakuo |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sui | TOP | forest | inside | to | ? | FOC | 3SG.SBJ | | to walk |

"Sui walked through the forest."

(14) | Tiypalaw | ca | cavaa | cung | taa | ta, | a | | za |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| boat | TOP | river | top | from | ? | 3SG.SBJ | | downwards |

shie	le
to leave	?

"The boat went down the river."

(15) | Uv | ca | cavaa | | a tha | luo | na | a | | ruo |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| dog | TOP | river | | next to | to | FOC | 3SG.SBJ | | to run |

"The dog ran to the river."

(16) | Capapaa | ca | a raw | luo | na | a | | mang |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| man | TOP | down | to | FOC | 3SG.SBJ | | to look |

"The man looked down."

These specific adpositions are complex because they require the simplex adposition to be used in conjunction with an additional morpheme. As noted, these complex adpositions often provide information on both movement and location in a way that simplex adpositions do not.

As seen in examples 13-14, these complex adpositions sometimes add additional particles, such as 'ta'. These particles could be additional noun case marking or they could be something outside of this area of investigation, such as focus. The morpheme 'ta' is further discussed in Section 7.

7. AREAS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Although the data and analysis above provide a description of the fundamentals of adposition behavior in Lutuv, much more work remains to be done. Additional elicitation may reveal more adpositions than those listed here, as well as instances of complex adpositions that include neither *luo* 'to' nor *taa* 'from'.

Perhaps more importantly, at this point we cannot confidently gloss some of the morphemes that commonly occur in utterances with adpositions. We are still investigating the grammatical role of the morpheme 'ta'. In written elicitations, our language consultant wrote this morpheme variably, sometimes as one word with *taa* 'from' as in (12), repeated in (17) below, and sometimes as a separate word, as seen in (18-19). It is unclear whether the variation is grammatically relevant or the product of a non-standardized orthography.

(17) | Kelly | ca | Italy | taa-ta | | na | France luo | a | | vaa |
| Kelly | TOP | Italy | from-? | | FOC | France to | 3SG.SBJ | | to go |

"Kelly went from Italy to France."

(18) | Sui | ca | bienaing | hnangkaa | luo | ta | na | a | |
| Sui | TOP | church | behind | to | ? | FOC | 3SG.SBJ | |

cakuo.
to walk

"Sui walked behind the church."

(19) | Capapaa | ca | ingkuo | taa | ta | na | a | | pya |
| man | TOP | room | from | ? | FOC | 3SG.SBJ | | to exit |

"The man walked out of/exited the room."

We do not yet have an analysis at present with regards to the function of this morpheme, we provide additional examples in (19-20) below as additional pieces to the puzzle. In (20), *ta* is absent and the sentence is expressing a stative location verb. However, in (21), motion is encoded by the verb and the utterance includes the morpheme *ta*.

(20) | Sui | ca | Kelly | hmie | lie | na | a | | aw |
| Sui | TOP | Kelly | in front of | LOC | FOC | 3SG.SBJ | | to be located |

"Sui is in front of Kelly."

(21)

Sui	ca	Kelly	hmie	lie	ta	na	a	cakuo
Sui	TOP	Kelly	in front of	LOC	?	FOC	3SG.SBJ	to walk

"Sui walked in front of Kelly."

8. CONCLUSION

This article presented an overview of the basic adpositions in Lutuv. This system includes both simplex and complex adpositions that occur alongside the noun phrase and its relevant markers to form an adpositional phrase expressing location and/or direction. As discussed in Section 7, the identity of some of these additional morphemes remains unclear, and further research into related literature as well as more opportunities for data collection and analysis will likely reveal more about the roles of these morphemes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Appendix A

Glossing Key
LOC - Locative
3 - 3rd Person
SG - Singular Person
SBJ - Subject
FOC - Focus marker
TOP - Topic marker