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## Himalayan Linguistics

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*Issues of lexicon in South Central Tibeto-Burman (Kuki-Chin)*

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### ABSTRACT

This paper examines how the lexicon is organized in a typical South Central language. Items like nouns, verbs, and adverbial expressions belong to open classes; pronominals, demonstratives, numerals, quantifiers, interjections, and onomatopoeic words form closed classes. Middle markers, case markers, directionals, tense/aspect markers, valence-changing elements, verbal classifiers, elaborate expressions, and reduplicative patterns are treated as bound elements.

### KEYWORDS

Kuki-Chin, South Central, Tibeto-Burman, Trans-Himalayan, lexicon, word classes, noun, verb, pronoun, demonstrative, verbal classifier, applicative, causative.

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# *Issues of lexicon in South Central Tibeto-Burman (Kuki-Chin)*

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## **1 Introduction**

This paper investigates issues of lexicon in South Central (SC) Tibeto-Burman, also known as Kuki-Chin (KC).<sup>1</sup> It includes discussion on the organization of lexical materials in terms of phonological necessities, and considers how word classes such as nouns and verbs are determined. It also deals with widespread SC phenomena such as psycho-collocations, relational nouns, exclusive vs. inclusive personal pronouns, preverbal directionals, valence-increasing markers such as causatives and applicatives, elaborate expressions, reduplication, and verbal classifiers. Additionally, it covers the issue of adjectives and adverbials (often expressed by highly specific post-verbal particles).

This paper follows the definition of lexicon as “a mental list of lexical items together with detailed information about each one” (Clark 1993:2).

## **2 Phonology**

Most SC languages have the syllable structure of  $[C_1(C_2)V(:)(C_3)(C_4)]^T$ . The minimal main syllable type consists of just a single vowel. Table 1 illustrates the possible syllable types with examples from Monsang (Northwestern), Hyow (Southeastern), Tedim (aka Tiddim, Northeastern), and Hakha Lai (Core Central). Note that “-” indicates lack of data, e.g., in Tedim (Henderson 1965), whereas no marking indicates a systematic gap, as seen in Hyow (Zakaria 2018), Hakha Lai (Hyman and Van Bik 2004) and Monsang (Konnerth and Wanglar 2014).

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<i>Syllable types</i>	<i>Monsang</i>	<i>Hyow</i>	<i>Tedim</i>	<i>Hakha Lai</i>
V	é ‘crab’	ô ‘good smell’	-	
VV	śu ‘brother /sister-in-law’		-	èè ‘defecate’
VC	in ‘look’	ák ‘one’	ip ‘sleep’	it ‘sleep <sub>B</sub> ’
VVC	ìn ‘call’		a:k ‘fowl’	aat ‘cut <sub>B</sub> ’
CV	pè ‘give’	bì ‘work’	ba ‘owe’	
CVV	t <sup>h</sup> śu ‘oil’			sàa ‘meat’
CCV		klǝ ‘fall’		
CVC	kùm ‘crooked’	bút ‘cook’	dam ‘be well’	dam ‘be well’
CVVC	bà:r ‘eat with palm of hand’		ba:k ‘twig’	laak ‘take <sub>D</sub> ’
CCVC		blúnj ‘sound of jumping’	-	
VCC		é?j ‘unactualized event’	-	
CVCC		bǝ?l ‘mingle/mix- II’	-	
CCVCC		kló?j ‘burn-II’	-	

Table 1. Syllable types in SC languages

Note that in some SC languages the open syllable has only CVV structure. For example, in Hakha Lai, the only morphemes with CV structure are pronominal clitics (e.g., *ka-* ‘my’), or reduced syllables in compounds (e.g., *sa-khü* ‘deer’, *sa-* being a reduced form of *sàa* ‘animal’). Interestingly, the reduced syllables lose their tone, but maintain their vowel quality. For example, the F tone of *kâa* ‘mouth’ and the R tone of *kêe* ‘leg’ are neutralized when they are first members in compounds, *a-ka-hmâa* ‘his mouth wound’ (*ka-* < *kâa* ‘mouth’) and *a-ke-hmâa* ‘his leg wound’ (*ke-* < *kêe* ‘leg’). Similarly, the long vowels of pronominal reflexives (e.g., *àa* ‘himself’) have an L tone, whereas its reduced syllable *a-* ‘his’ bears no tone.

Lexical tones in SC languages range from two (Thlantlang, Hyman 2007) to five (Khumi, Peterson 2019), as shown in Table 2.

<i>2 Tones</i>	<i>3 Tones</i>	<i>4 Tones</i>	<i>5 Tones</i>
Bawm, Daai Thlantlang	Hakha Lai, Hyow, Mara, Senthang, Tedim, Thado, Kuki, Zophei	Falam Chin, Mizo	Khumi

Table 2. Distribution of tones in SC languages

The phenomenon of tone sandhi is an important feature of SC languages. These sandhi rules may be analyzed as language specific phenomena. For example, in Mizo, a rising (R) tone becomes a low (L) tone when followed by a high (H) tone, that is,  $R + H \rightarrow L + H$  (Chhangte 1993:56). In Lai, when a rising tone is followed by a rising tone, the result is F + F, that is,  $R + R \rightarrow F + F$ . (See Hyman and Van Bik (2004) for a detailed analysis of tone sandhi in Lai.) Zakaria (2018) also presents an analysis of tone sandhi in Hyow. For more discussion on tonal phenomena, see Lotven (2023).

### 3 Word classes (lexical categories)

SC languages display both open and closed word classes. Nouns, verbs, and adverbial expressions are considered open classes, whereas closed classes include pronouns, demonstratives, numbers and quantifiers, case markers, and interjections.

This paper also discusses bound elements such as preverbal directionals, elaborate expressions, reduplicative patterns, valence-increasing suffixes such as causative and applicative markers, and verbal classifiers.

#### 3.1 Open word classes

Nouns, verbs, and adverbial expressions are considered open word classes in SC.

##### 3.1.1 Nouns

A word's nominal status may be determined by several criteria in SC languages. First, demonstratives often follow or precede a noun (or NP) in SC languages, and therefore may serve as a good criterion in testing "nounhood". The examples in (1a-d) illustrate where demonstratives follow nouns and (1e) exemplifies an instance where a demonstrative precedes a noun. Note that demonstratives may be used as discourse markers, or information status markers, which are fully illustrated in section 3.2.2.

- (1) a. Daai (So-Hartman 2009: 122)  
*hnashen sun*  
 child DEM  
 'the child'

- b. Falam Chin (King 2010: 64)  
*naam cu*  
knife DEM  
'that knife'
- c. Senthang (Par 2016: 35)  
*ʔin khi*  
house DEM  
'that house'
- d. Hakha Lai (H. Van Bik 2018: 61)  
*Lasi siangpahrangnu hi*  
*Lasi siaŋ.pa.hrâaŋ-nùu hĩ*  
Lasi king-lady (queen) DEM  
'this Lasi queen'
- e. Hyow (Zakaria 2018: 160)  
*èy khô=â=tsæ*  
ANAPH.DEM time=LOC=TOP  
'at that time'

Secondly, quantifiers, e.g., *some, little, many*, may serve to test nominal status since they follow the noun in SC, as illustrated in (2a-d).

- (2) a. Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 78)  
*kpa:mi akhak*  
man some  
'some men'
- b. Hyow (Zakaria 2018: 106)  
*táá óbóng*  
money many  
'a lot of money'
- c. Mizo (Chhangte 1986: 96)  
*aar<sup>1</sup> tleem<sup>1</sup> tee<sup>2</sup>*  
hen few little  
'few hens'
- d. Senthang (Par 2016: 35)  
*ʔin tám pś*  
house many AUG  
'many houses'

Thirdly, as shown in (3a-d), another test for nounhood (and verbhood), for example in Hakha Lai, is if a word could be possessed (preceded in the case of verbhood) by a pronominal clitic. This diagnostic is helpful if a word is at least a N or a V, excluding the possibility of other lexical categories.

- (3) a. Hakha Lai  
*ka-tsòo*  
 1SG.POSS-cow  
 ‘my cow’
- b. Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 81)  
*kah*            *ksi:m*  
 1SG.POSS      knife  
 ‘my knife’
- c. Hyow (Zakaria 2018: 413)  
*kú-tsúhnú*  
 1SG.POSS-daughter  
 ‘my daughter’
- d. Paite (Singh 2006: 81)  
*ká-in*  
 1SG.POSS-house  
 ‘my house’

### 3.1.1.1 Relational noun

Relational nouns are a subclass of nouns in SC. These nouns express locational, positional, and temporal meanings. In Hakha Lai, these relational nouns, such as *cung* /tsùŋ/ ‘above (top)’, *tang* /tàn/ ‘under (beneath)’, *hmai* /hmây/ ‘front’, *hnu* /hnùu/ ‘back’, *lei* /lây/ ‘towards’, and *karlak* /kà:lak/ ‘between’, etc. exhibit the two characteristics of nounhood discussed in section 3.1.1, as illustrated in (4a-c).

- (4) Hakha Lai relational nouns
- a. *na cung khi zoh tuah*  
*na-tsùŋ*            *khĩ*      *zaw?*    *tua?*  
 2SG.POSS-*top*    DEM    look<sub>INV</sub>    IMP  
 ‘Please look above you’
- b. *kan karlak hi zoh tuah*  
*kân-kàrlak*            *hĩ*      *zaw?*    *tua?*  
 1PL.POSS-*between*    DEM    look<sub>INV</sub>    IMP  
 ‘Please look between us’

- c. *na hmailei ca hi ruat tuah*  
*na-hmàylây tsàa hñi ruat tua?*  
 2SG.POSS-*future* for DEM think<sub>s</sub> IMP  
 ‘Please think about your future’

The grammatical labels applied to this subclass of nouns are not uniform in the SC literature. For example, Singh (2006) labels these nouns as “Noun Bound Roots”. So-Hartmann (2009) calls them “Location Nouns”, and Zakaria (2018) uses the term “Locative Nouns”. Further examples illustrating these nouns are provided in (5)–(7).

(5) Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 88)

- a. *Msäai nu: sun khuui-pei su ngshut=kti.*  
 Msäai GEND DEM cave-*beside* DEM sit=NON.FUT  
 ‘The Msäai woman sat beside the cave.’
- b. *Ksoong-hnu su shangpho nglin=kti=e.*  
 hut-*behind* DEM chilly (sic. chilli) plant=NON.FUT=PL  
 ‘They plant chilli behind the hut.’

(6) Hyow (Zakaria 2018: 114)

- a. *shí?-ní èy hnûng=â ǰ-kól shó-éy-â?*  
 pluck.II-TEMP ANAPH.DEM time=LOC GRP-*under* look.I-MID-3SG.NEG  
 ‘When he was plucking (the pears), he did not look down at that time.’
- b. *thîng kól=â kêy ká-â-kó?l-âl*  
 tree *under*=LOC 1SG 1A-DIR-pick.II-DEP  
 ‘I went to pick up that (bird) under the tree.’

(7) Paite (Singh 2006: 24)

- a. *tuy* ‘on, upon’  
 b. *núŋ* ‘behind’  
 c. *læk* ‘among’  
 d. *tæk* ‘right’  
 e. *vøy* ‘left’

It appears that the term ‘relational noun’ best captures the varied locational and temporal meanings of this subclass.

### 3.1.2 Verbs

Verbs form an open class in SC languages. The best criterion for testing verbhood appears to be negation since nouns and adverbs cannot be negated compared to verbs, as shown in (8a–d).

(8) Negation of verbs in SC

- a. Falam Chin (King 2010: 108)  
*Hai ka ei dah lo*  
 mango 1SG.NOM eat ever NEG  
 ‘I never eat mangoes’
- b. Paite (Singh 2006: 152)  
*ámá? káp ləw áhí*  
 3SG.PRO weep.1 NEG COP  
 ‘He does not weep’
- c. Daai (So-Hartmann 2008: 96)  
*Ahin ta am do.*  
 DEM.PRO TOP NEG good  
 ‘This is not good!’
- d. Sentshang (Par 2015: 2)  
*Abawi thw veh*  
 Name sit.I NEG  
 ‘Abawi did not sit’

In many SC languages, it would appear that there is no distinction made between adjectives and verbs. For instance, what correspond to the English adjective ‘cold’ and to the intransitive verb ‘laugh’ show identical grammatical behavior, as exemplified in Falam Chin (9a-b). Thus, morphemes which correspond to English adjectives are generally treated as stative verbs in such SC languages (see also the discussion in Zakaria 2018: 173).

(9) Pattern of verb and “adjective” in Falam Chin

- a. *Cinte a dai* (King 2010: 160)  
 Cinte 3SG.NOM cold.1  
 ‘Cinte is cold’
- b. *Cinte a hni* (King 2010: 156)  
 Cinte 3SG.NOM laugh.1  
 ‘Cinte laughs’

Additionally, the examples (10a-b) in Hakha Lai illustrate the syntactic similarity of adjectives and intransitive verbs. Note that *puan sen* ‘red blanket’ (10a) and *lo kal* ‘farm goer’ (10b) are noun compounds.

- (10) a. *puan sen khi ka ta a si*  
*púan-sèn khī ka-tǎa a-sīi*  
 blanket-red<sub>b</sub> DEM 1SG.POSS-own 3SG.SBJ-COP  
 ‘The red blanket is mine’

- b. *nihin lo kal an um ma?*  
*nihîn lâw-kâl ân-um mǎa*  
 today farm-go<sub>B</sub> 3PL.SBJ-exist<sub>B</sub> Q  
 ‘Are there any farm-goers today?’

On the other hand, verbs are distinguished from adjectives in some SC languages, exemplified by Daai (So-Hartmann 2009).

Verbal alternations, (also known as Form 1/2 or Stem 1/2 or A/B) are one of the hallmarks of SC languages. The form alternation may also be described as base vs. derived (see Bedell et al. (2023), who use Base (B) and Derived (D)). It appears that, on the one hand, the syntactic function of this alternation tends to be more robust when the language has a variety of coda consonants (e.g., Daai, Hyow, Hakha Lai, Mizo, Tedim, etc.). On the other hand, SC languages which have fewer coda consonants (e.g., Khumi, Mara, etc.) show little to no alternation of the different verbal forms in different syntactic contexts. This may be due to inadequate description of what is going on with tone in (some of) these languages, however.

Verbs in SC languages often bear participant markers (also called argument indexation, agreement markers, etc.) as shown by the third person singular marking in (11a) from Falam Chin. However, this is not a fool-proof diagnostic for the category of verb, as seen by the absence of explicit marking for third person subject in Sizang (11b).

(11) Intransitive clause in Falam Chin and Sizang

- a. Falam Chin (King 2010: 196)

*Cinte a tap*  
 Cinte 3SG.NOM cry.1  
 ‘Cinte cried’

- b. Sizang (Davis 2017: 25)

*uĩ-sĩ:a thi: hĩ*  
 dog-ABS die be  
 ‘The dog died’

*3.1.2.1 Psycho-collocation*

Psycho-collocation, a term coined by Matisoff (1986), is a type of noun-verb collocation which expresses a psychological state or disposition, usually expressed with a body-part and a stative verb. Psycho-collocation is very common in SC languages. The lexical items, noun and verb, involved in a collocation act as a unit and therefore should be listed together in the lexicon because of their idiomatic meanings. The robust nature of psycho-collocation is exemplified by Daai, Hyow, Hakha Lai, and Sizang in (12)-(15).

(12) Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 85)

- a. *Kah she nu:=a mik=a le-naa:k ni*  
 POSS:1S cow GEND=GEN eye=GEN blackness-reason EMP  
 ‘This is the reason that my cow is sad.’ (lit: ‘has black eyes’)
- b. *Ka: ah mlung ta am shou: khiin.*  
 no POSS:3S heart FOC NEG angry MOD:proper  
 ‘No, he should not be angry.’

(13) Hyow (Zakaria 2018: 307)

- tsét-sng-ú-lá=tsê èy í-ní-hówêy-hí=tsê*  
 go-STAT-3PL-SEQ=TOP ANAPH.DEM 3A-PL-search.II-COND=TOP
- èybó èydô í-ní-lò-âl-ní tsú=tsê ú-lung*  
 like.that then 3S-PL-come-DEP-TEMP DIST=TOP 3SG.POSS-heart
- pû-hnóʔ=tí*  
*feel.II-ULT=R.EVID*

‘After they went for a while, when they searched that like that, then when they came back, she (the younger sister) was worried (she felt her heart)’

(14) Hakha Lai (Van Bik 1998)

- a. *ka mit a thi*  
*ka-mit a-thûi*  
 1SG.POSS-eyes 3SG.S-die<sub>B</sub>  
 ‘I like it’ (lit: ‘my eyes are fixated on it’)
- b. *ka lung a hring*  
*ka-lûŋ a-hrîŋ*  
 1SG.POSS-heart 3SG.S-green<sub>B</sub>  
 ‘I am suspicious’ (lit: ‘my heart is green’)

(15) Sizang (Davis 2017: 13)

- mi: zɔ:ŋ=pǎ: luŋ-kim ŋól a:*  
 person be.poor=MASC heart-content NEG NF  
 ‘The poor man was not pleased, and...’

### 3.1.3 Adverbial expressions

Adverbial expressions with a postposition (PP) adverbializer may be regarded as an open word class since they can be formed from an open class of stative verbs. For example, in Daai, a PP morpheme =*a* is attached to stative verbs to form adverbial expressions, as exemplified in (16b).<sup>2</sup>

- (16) Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 119)
- |    |                   |           |
|----|-------------------|-----------|
| a. | <i>jaa.ng</i>     | ‘quick’   |
| b. | <i>akjaa.ng=a</i> | ‘quickly’ |

Sizang also has adverbial expressions with a PP suffix *-in*, as seen in (17).

- (17) Sizang (Davis 2017: 72)
- |             |                      |                    |             |            |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|------------|
| <i>tu:a</i> | <i>á=hi:maân=in</i>  | <i>tši:.pí:=in</i> | <i>tu:a</i> | <i>dôŋ</i> |
| that        | 3=that.being.said=PP | lion=ERG           | that        | until      |
- 
- |             |             |                |            |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|------------|
| <i>sí:a</i> | <i>kâ:i</i> | <i>nôn-ŋǎl</i> | <i>hí:</i> |
| tax         | collect.I   | anymore-NEG    | be         |
- ‘Because of that, to this day, lions don’t collect taxes anymore’

Similarly, Falam Chin has a productive suffix *-in* which is glossed as an adjunct clause marker (AJC). This suffix is used to form adverbial expressions in Falam Chin; the suffix is often accompanied by an augmentative marker (AUG) *pi* or a diminutive marker (DIM) *te*, as illustrated in (18b) and (18c), respectively.

- (18) Falam Chin
- a. Adverbial clause (King 2010: 103)
- |               |             |          |               |                    |
|---------------|-------------|----------|---------------|--------------------|
| <i>zamlam</i> | <i>khua</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>sim=in</i> | <i>tlangval-pa</i> |
| evening       | cosmos      | 3SG.NOM  | dark=AJC      | young.man-MASC     |
- 
- |             |                |                |          |           |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------|-----------|
| <i>cu=n</i> | “ <i>Tlung</i> | <i>uhsi,</i> ” | <i>a</i> | <i>ti</i> |
| TOP=ERG     | return.1       | COH.PL         | 3SG.NOM  | say.INV   |
- ‘... as the evening was become dark, the young man said “Let’s go home,” ...’

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<sup>2</sup> As explained by So-Hartmann (2009: 119), a prefix *ak-* (the *-k-* may be an additional segmentable element—see So-Hartmann 2009: 53) is also involved in this derivation.

- b. Adverbial clause with AUG (adapted<sup>3</sup> from King 2010: 107)

*ring-pi=in      au      hlah      aw*  
 loud-AUG=*AJC* shout NEG.IMP      SG.POL.IMP  
 ‘Please don’t shout so loudly.’

- c. Adverbial clause with DIM (King 2010: 79)

*ih-nak      khan=ah      zamrang-te=n*  
 sleep.2-NMLZ room=LOC      quick-DIM=*AJC*

*a      va      lut*  
 3SG.NOM      go      enter.1  
 ‘He went quickly to his bedroom’

Note that SC lexicographers should pay attention the grammatical labels that involve “adverbs” or “adverbials” because lexical items marked as such in one language may not be treated similarly in another language. For example, time adverbials in Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 116) such as *tuh-ngooi*: ‘today’ or *kho-ngooi*: ‘tomorrow’ may be analyzed as a subclass of noun, namely temporal nouns in Hakha Lai: *nihin* /ni-hîn/ ‘today’ *thaizing* /thàay.ziìŋ/ ‘tomorrow’ since they meet the criteria for membership in the class of nouns. Namely, they may be possessed by pronominal clitics (e.g. *na thaizing* ‘your tomorrow’) and can be flanked by deictic demonstratives (*cu thaizing cu* ‘that next day’).

### 3.2 Closed word classes

SC closed lexical classes include pronouns, demonstratives, numbers and quantifiers, case markers, and interjections.

#### 3.2.1 Pronouns

Personal pronouns are a closed lexical class in SC languages. In natural discourse, agreement (participant) markers usually get used in place of these personal pronouns. SC systems of pronouns fall into two groups. On the one hand, Daai, of the Southeastern subgroup, represents those which have an inclusive vs. exclusive distinction in first person dual and plural, exemplified in Table 3. (One element includes the person being spoken to, and the other excludes the person being spoken to.) Tables 4 and 5 list the corresponding verbal participant markers: subject and object agreement paradigms, respectively. The verb stem occurs following the participant marker.

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<sup>3</sup> In the speech of Falam town, the two sequence of morphemes *aw hlah* (as recorded by King) should be *hlah aw*. Also, *aw* is a singular polite imperative marker (Run Cung Mang 2017: 201) as opposed to *u* which is a plural one. For example, *Siar aw* ‘Please read’ vs. *Siar u* ‘Please you (PL) read’. The gloss of the morpheme *hlah* is a negative imperative, e.g. *Feh hlah* ‘Don’t go’; *Feh hlah aw* ‘Please don’t go’ (PC: Rev. Dr. Joseph Run Cung Mang, March 3, 2022).

		<i>1st Person</i>	<i>2nd Person</i>	<i>3rd Person</i>
Singular		<i>kei:</i>	<i>na:ng</i>	<i>ah-nih</i>
Dual	<i>excl</i> <i>incl</i>	<i>kei-nih</i> <i>nih-nih</i>	<i>na:ng-nih</i>	<i>ah-nih-nih</i>
Plural	<i>excl</i> <i>incl</i>	<i>kei-nih-e</i> <i>nih-nih-e</i>	<i>na:ng-nih-e</i>	<i>ah-nih-nih-e</i>

Table 3. Personal pronouns in Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 140)

		<i>1st Person</i>	<i>2nd Person</i>	<i>3rd Person</i>
Singular		<i>kah</i>	<i>nah</i>	<i>ah</i>
Dual/Plural	<i>excl</i> <i>incl</i>	<i>kah-nih</i> <i>nih-nih</i>	<i>nah-nih</i>	<i>ah-nih</i>

Table 4. Subject agreement paradigm in Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 233)

	<i>1st Person</i>	<i>2nd Person</i>	<i>3rd Person</i>
Singular	<i>nah</i>	<i>ni:ng</i>	--
Dual/Plural	<i>jah</i>	<i>ni:ng-jah</i>	<i>jah</i>

Table 5. Object agreement paradigm in Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 233)

On the other hand, Hakha Lai represents those languages which lack an exclusive vs. inclusive distinction in first person, as displayed in Table 6, with the corresponding participant markers in Table 7. The verb stem usually occurs following the participant marker in Lai. The only word class that can occur between the participant markers and verb stems is the preverbal directionals. For detailed discussion on participant markers, see the paper by DeLancey in this volume (DeLancey 2023).

	<i>1st Person</i>		<i>2nd Person</i>		<i>3rd Person</i>	
	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
Neutral	<i>kây-ma?</i>	<i>kân-ma?</i>	<i>nâŋ-ma?</i>	<i>nân-ma?</i>	<i>a-ma?</i>	<i>ân-ma?</i>
Contrastive	<i>kây</i>	<i>kân-ni?</i>	<i>nâŋ</i>	<i>nân-ni?</i>	<i>a-ni?</i>	<i>ân-ni?</i>

Table 6. Pronouns in Hakha Lai

	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Object</i>	<i>Reflexive</i>
1SG	<i>ka</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>kaa</i>
2SG	<i>na</i>	<i>in/n</i> <i>with</i> <i>sg.</i> <i>subj.</i>	<i>naa</i>
3SG	<i>a</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>aa</i>
1PL	<i>kan</i>	<i>kan +</i> <i>hnaa</i>	<i>kan i</i>
2PL	<i>nan</i>	<i>in / n</i> <i>with</i> <i>sg.</i> <i>sbj. +</i> <i>hnaa</i>	<i>nan i</i>
3PL	<i>an</i>	$\emptyset +$ <i>hnaa</i>	<i>an i</i>

Table 7. Participant markers in Hakha Lai

Interrogative pronouns also form a closed lexical class in SC languages. Table 8 lists those pronouns in Daai (Southeastern), Falam Chin (Central), and Sizang (Northeastern). Note that in some of these cases there is arguably more going on than simple pronominalization. Some of these involve relational nouns (*tik* ‘time’, *ruang* ‘reason’, see section 3.1.1.1), as well as the adverbialization construction (*tin* ‘every time’, see section 3.1.3).

<i>Interrogative pronouns</i>	<i>Daai</i> (So-Hartmann 2009: 308)	<i>Falam Chin</i> (King 2010: 127)	<i>Sizang</i> (Naylor 1925: 19)
who	<i>u</i>	<i>zo</i>	<i>koi</i>
what	<i>i</i>	<i>ziang</i>	<i>bang</i>
why	<i>ilü</i>	<i>ziang ruang ah</i>	<i>a bang hang</i>
when	<i>itüh</i>	<i>ziang tik</i>	<i>a bang hun Chiang</i>
how	<i>ihokba</i>	<i>ziang tin</i>	<i>koi bang</i>
where	<i>ho</i>	<i>khoi</i>	<i>koi lai</i>
how much	<i>ikän</i>	<i>ziang zat</i>	

Table 8. Interrogative pronouns in SC languages

Indefinite pronouns in SC are usually formed with a combination of morphemes. For example, the word for ‘some’ in Hakha Lai is *cheukhat* /tshêw-khat/, a combination of *cheu* ‘half’ and *khat* ‘one’. In Daai, the negative indefinite pronouns are formed by suffixing the morpheme *phi* to the

interrogative pronouns. For example, the word *u-phi* ‘nobody’ is a combination of *u* ‘who’ and the inclusive particle *phi* ‘also’ (So-Hartmann 2009: 127).

### 3.2.2 *Demonstratives*

Demonstratives (DEM), which have the function of pointing or deictic reference (Diessel 1999) constitute a small lexical class in SC, ranging from two in Hyow (*ni* ‘proximal’, *tsú* ‘distal’ (Zakaria 2018: 127)) to six in Mizo, as shown in (19). For more discussion on demonstratives, see the paper by Baclawski in this volume (Baclawski 2023).

(19) Demonstratives in Mizo (Chhangte 1986: 162)

- a. *hei<sup>3</sup> hi<sup>1</sup>* ‘this (near speaker)’
- b. *khaa<sup>3</sup> kha<sup>1</sup>* ‘that (near addressee)’
- c. *khi<sup>3</sup> khi<sup>1</sup>* ‘that (up there)’
- d. *khuu<sup>3</sup> khu<sup>1</sup>* ‘that (down there)’
- e. *soo<sup>3</sup> so<sup>1</sup>* ‘that (far)’
- f. *cuu<sup>3</sup> cu<sup>1</sup>* ‘that (out of sight)’

As illustrated by Hyow in (20a) and (20b), demonstratives are deictic, and often may follow or precede a noun or a noun phrase.

(20) Demonstratives in Hyow

- a. *eydö á-hnámǎŋ tun-bala=cæ ey muy=ni con*  
then 3S=trunk straighten-SUB=TOP DX elephant=DX run  
‘Then, straightening its trunk, that elephant ran.’ (Baclawski 2012:31)
- b. *ni s’möycá u-nuy-sá*  
DX boy 3S-laugh-REAL  
‘This boy laughs.’ (Baclawski 2012:51)

Hakha Lai, which has four demonstratives, as seen in (21), has received the most scholarly attention, namely Barnes (1998), Bedell (2001), and Wamsley (2019 and 2020).

(21) Demonstratives in Hakha Lai (adapted from Barnes 1998)

- a. *mah /maʔ/* general DEM
- b. *hi /hii/* proximal to speaker
- c. *kha /khää/* proximal to addressee
- d. *khi /khii/* distal to both speaker and addressee
- e. *cu /tsüu/* reference to non-visible (remote)

In Hakha Lai, these demonstratives are often used in (what Wamsley 2019 calls “circumnominal”) pairs, as exemplified in (22a-d). Note that the general DEM *mah /maʔ/* could replace the first DEM without any change in meaning.

(22) Demonstratives in Hakha Lai (adapted from Barnes 1998: 71)

- a. *hi/mah... hi* (proximal to speaker)  
*hi thingkung hi ka pu nih a rak cin mi a si*  
*hii thìnkùŋ=hii ka-pûu=ni? a-rak-tsün=mìi*  
 DEM tree=DEM 1SG.POSS-grandpa=ERG 3SG.S-PAST-plant<sub>D</sub>=REL  
  
*a-sii*  
 3SG.S-COP  
 ‘This tree (near me) is the tree that was planted by my grandpa.’
- b. *kha/mah... kha* (proximal to addressee)  
*kha inn kha Ni Hu nih a rak sak mi a si*  
*khàa ìn=khàa Nii Hũu=ni? a-rak-sak=mìi a-sii*  
 DEM house=DEM Ni Hu=ERG 3SG.S-PAST-build<sub>D</sub>=REL 3SG.S-COP  
 ‘That house (near you) is the house that was built by Ni Hu.’
- c. *khi/mah... khi* (distal to both speaker and addressee)  
*khi caw khi aho caw dah a si ?*  
*khii tsòo=khii ahàw tsòo da? a-sii*  
 DEM cow=DEM who cow WH.Q 3SG.S-COP  
 ‘That cow (seen together by speaker and hearer from one place) is whose cow?’
- d. *cu/mah... cu* (remote reference)  
*cu pa cu a sualnak ka phuan*  
*tsuu pàa=tsuu a-sùal-naak ka-phuan*  
 DEM male=DEM 3SG.POSS-be sinful<sub>D</sub>-NOM 1SG.S-REVEAL<sub>D</sub>  
 ‘I revealed that man’s (already mentioned in the discourse) guilt.’

### 3.2.3 Numbers and quantifiers

As discussed in Van Bik (2021), cardinal number in SC languages might have no prefix<sup>4</sup> as in *hma* ‘five’ (Mindat K’Cho) or up to two prefixes as in *pao-pa-ngaw* ‘five’ (Mara). Table 9 shows examples from Mindat K’Cho (Jordan 1969: 23), Hakha Lai, and Mara (Savidge 1908: 6).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
K’Cho	<i>tumat</i>	<i>hngih</i>	<i>thum</i>	<i>phi’li</i>	<i>hma</i>	<i>chuk</i>	<i>chih</i>	<i>cheit</i>	<i>ko</i>	<i>gha</i>
Hakha Lai	<i>khat</i>	<i>hni?</i>	<i>thûm</i>	<i>lîi</i>	<i>ŋâa</i>	<i>ruk</i>	<i>sa-ri?</i>	<i>riat</i>	<i>kûa</i>	<i>hrâa</i>
Mara	<i>khâ</i>	<i>nang</i>	<i>thao</i>	<i>lî</i>	<i>ngaw</i>	<i>ru</i>	<i>sa-ri</i>	<i>cha-ri</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>hraw</i>

Table 9. Numbers in SC (1-10)

<sup>4</sup> These prefixes are “lexical prefixes” which strictly accompany certain word classes such as numerals.

Additionally, as shown in Table 10, featuring Hakha Lai, the higher numbers are formed by adding certain prefixes. For example, for the numbers 11-19, the prefix *hlel* ‘extra’ is used; and for the numbers 30 and above, the prefix *sawm* ‘ten’ is used. But *sawm* is obligatory only for the multiples of 10 (30, 40, 50, etc.). For example *sawm* is optional for the numbers 31 ‘(*sawm*) *thum khat* (lit. three one)’ and 82 ‘(*sawm*) *riat hnih* (lit. eight two)’. Note that the word *kul* ‘20’ is not used in forming higher numbers such as *za-hnih* ‘200’.

11	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
<i>hlây-khat</i>	<i>kül</i>	<i>sóom-thúm</i>	<i>sóom-lüi</i>	<i>sóom-ŋâa</i>	<i>sóom-ruk</i>	<i>sóom-sa-ri?</i>	<i>sóom-riat</i>	<i>sóom-kûa</i>	<i>za-khat</i>

Table 10. Numbers in Hakha Lai (11-100)

Quantifiers follow the noun in SC languages, as illustrated in (2a-d). It is possible to analyze the internal source of some quantifiers. For example, in Hakha Lai, the quantifier *tampi* ‘many’ is a combination of *tam* ‘be plentiful’ and *pi* ‘AUG’. Similarly, the quantifier *tlawnte* ‘little’ is a combination of *tlawn* ‘be small in number’ and *te* ‘DIM’. Note also that in Hakha Lai, one cannot use the nominal quantifier *tampi* ‘many’ to modify the whole sentence, e.g., \**rian a t̄uan t̄ampi /r̄ian a t̄uan t̄ampi/* ‘he works a lot.’

### 3.2.4 Interjections

Interjections are mostly monosyllabic morphemes in SC languages. Table 11 lists some types of interjections in Daai, Hyow, and Hakha Lai. The examples in (23a-d) illustrate how these interjections are used in Daai.

Interjection types	Daai (So-Hartmann 2009)	Hyow (Zakaria 2018)	Hakha Lai
Agreement	<i>ä!</i>	<i>ó!</i>	<i>aw! /ôo/</i>
Disagreement	<i>ka:!, a:!</i>	<i>òhó!</i>	<i>eih! /ây?/</i>
Surprise	<i>ee:!</i>	<i>óh!</i>	<i>ai.ze! /âay.zêe/</i>

Table 11. Types of interjection in SC

(23) Types of interjection in Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 130-131)

- a. Agreement  
*Ä, ä, asän ni.*  
*yes, yes DEM.PRO COP*  
 ‘Yes, yes, this is it!’

b. Disagreement

*A:!*    *nah*                      *khyah=a.*  
*No!*    O.AGR:1S            release=IMP  
 ‘No! Let me go!’

c. Surprise

*Ee:!*    *kho.khi-in*                      *lo*    *ve.*  
*oh!*    wind.blow-MIR            ASP    ASP  
 ‘Oh, the wind is starting to blow!’

### 3.2.5 Onomatopoeic words

Onomatopoeic words are ones by which speakers of a language imitate motions and sounds. Table 12 illustrates onomatopoeic words in Khumi, Hyow, and Hakha Lai. Note that the gap indicates lack of data.

<i>Onomatopoeic words</i>	<i>Khumi</i> <i>(Peterson 2013)</i>	<i>Hyow</i> <i>(Zakaria 2018)</i>	<i>Hakha Lai</i>
Human spitting	<i>thuy</i> <sup>5</sup>	<i>thú?thú?thú?</i>	<i>phui</i>
Human sound of irregular breathing	<i>hüing<sup>l</sup>hüing<sup>5</sup></i>	-	<i>hui-hui</i>
Rooster’s crow	<i>kã<sup>l</sup>k<sup>l</sup>’õ<sup>5</sup></i>	<i>kókkãlãkók</i>	<i>ok.ka.li.ok</i>
Dog’s barking	<i>bu<sup>l</sup>’ung<sup>l</sup></i>	<i>wáw</i>	<i>ou</i>
Sound of something falling	<i>paw</i> <sup>5</sup>	<i>krûng</i>	<i>pung</i>

Table 12. Examples of onomatopoeic words in SC

## 3.3 Bound elements

Bound elements in SC include certain morphemes whose occurrence depends on free morphemes, such as nouns and verbs.

### 3.3.1 Middle markers

The middle construction in SC languages involves the use of either prefixal or suffixal middle markers. By middle marker is meant a single formal marker which is involved in the expression of certain intransitive events, e.g., grooming, positional, or mental state, etc., or a variety of reciprocal, reflexive, and anticausative, etc. events. Middle marking only happens for verbs and so can be used

as a diagnostic. Languages that use middle prefixes include Hakha Lai, Mizo, Lawmtuk-Ruawghawn in Central Chin, Sizang and Tedim in Northeastern, and Daai and Mindat K'Cho in Southeastern. On the other hand, Falam Chin (Central) and Hyow (Southeastern) use middle suffixes in their middle construction. Examples of these middle constructions are provided for languages with prefixal marking in (24a-e) and for languages with suffixal marking in (25a-b).

(24) Prefixal middle construction in SC languages

- a. Hakha Lai (adapted from Smith 1997)

*kan hmai kan i phiah*  
*kân-hmàay kân-i-phia?*  
 1PL.POSS-face 1PL.SBJ-MID-wash<sub>INV</sub>  
 'We washed our faces'

- b. Mizo (Chhangte 1986: 152)

*a'-in-meet<sup>3</sup>*  
 3SG.SUB-MID-shave  
 'he is shaving'

- c. Lawmtuk-Ruawghawn (Peterson and Van Bik's field notes, Jan.2020)

*m'khan di a-tsot tikkhan phe-*  
 then thatch 3SG.SBJ-pull2 when false.start

*gom-puy he khan k'-tong a-ca*  
 bear-AUG COM DEIC.OBL MID-meet 3PL.SBJ-say  
 'When he was pulling thatch, Rab- (false start) he met with bear they say'  
 (*Gompuy le Pheto* 'Bear and Rabbit')

- d. Sizang (Davis 2017: 36)

*áma:=tɛː tʰiɣkú:ɣ=tɛː ní: á=dɔːn*  
 3s=PL tree=PL two 3.POSS=tree.top

*kɪ=kɔai hí:*  
 MID=embrace.I be  
 'They, the two trees, their treetops hug each other'  
 (*Tei le Zuang thu*).

- e. Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 206)<sup>5</sup>

*Ng-khyu:-ng-la=kti=xooi.*  
 MID-wife-MID-take=NON.FUT=DU  
 'They marry each other'

<sup>5</sup> Clearly more than simple prefixation is going on in this example. Perhaps this is an elaborate expression (see below), and the first root, here glossed as 'wife', previously had a verbal meaning expressing what the wife does in the act of marrying (the man "takes" a wife in many SC languages).

(25) Suffixal middle construction in SC languages

a. Falam Chin (King 2010: 276)

*Mang cu amah le amah*  
Mang TOP 3SG.PRON and 3SG.PRON

*a-at-aw pang*  
3SG.SBJ-cut.1-MID accidentally  
'Mang cut *himself* accidentally'

b. Hyow (Zakaria 2018: 291)

*èydá ú-lúki hángháng khá?-êy-âl=tí*  
then 3SG.POSS-head all shave.II-MID-DEP=R.EVID  
'Then he shaved all his head himself'

3.3.2 Case markers

Case markers, such as genitive, ergative, and locative (see Peterson (2023) for further discussion of a subset of these markers), belong to a closed class in SC. Table 13 lists selected clitic postpositions for Daai (Southeastern), Mizo (Central), and Sizang (Northeastern). Detailed illustrations are provided for Daai in (26a-f) and Hakha Lai in (27a-c). It is noteworthy that Daai has a polysemy of genitive and locative marker *-a*, as exemplified in (26d-e).

Case	Daai (So-Hartmann 2009)	Mizo (Chhangte 1986)	Sizang (Davis 2017)
Genitive	<i>a</i>	<i>ii</i>	<i>in</i>
Ergative	<i>noh</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>nă:</i>
Locative	<i>â</i>	<i>a?</i>	<i>a:</i>

Table 13. Case markers in SC

(26) Case markers in Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 160-170)

a. Ergative

*Thang sun=noh pasong ah hnim=kti*  
Thang DEM=ERG important.man S.AGR:3S killed=NON.FUT  
'Thang killed an important man.'

b. Dative

*Ah mahpa=noh vok=üng buh-kkhyung ah mbei.*  
POSS:3S master=ERG pig=DAT rice-crust S.AGR:3S feed  
'The master fed rice crust to his pig.'

- c. Instrumental  
*Sisi=üing nana ngmäh=kti.*  
 older.sister=*INSTR* younger.brother is.carried=*NON.FUT*  
 ‘The younger brother is carried by the older sister.’
- d. Genitive  
*Ahin kei:=a i:m ni.*  
 DEM.PRON 1S=*GEN* house COP  
 ‘This is my house.’
- e. Locative  
*Joong sun thi:ng=a pa:m=a kaai=kti.*  
 monkey DEM tree=*GEN* top=*LOC* climb=*NON.FUT*  
 ‘The monkey climbed to the top of the tree.’
- f. Vocative  
*Mah-püi=o käh kyap=a.*  
 grandmother=*VOC* NEG cry=*IMP*  
 ‘Grandmother, don’t cry!’

(27) Case markers in Hakha Lai

- a. Comitative (Ni Kio 2014: 294; see also Peterson and Van Bik 2004)  
*Biakinn ah ka nu he kan kal*  
*biak-in=a? ka-nüu=hěe kân-kâl*  
 worship-house=*LOC* 1SG.POSS-mother=*COM* 1PL.SBJ-go<sub>B</sub>  
 ‘I go to the church with my mother.’
- b. Oblique (Ni Kio 2014: 801)  
*Phaisa na ka thenhmi kha hloh loin kaa ken rinren ko*  
*phây.sâa na-ka-then?=mìi khǎa hlaw?-lâw=în*  
 money 2SG.SBJ-1SG.OBJ-give<sub>D</sub>=*REL* DEIC spend<sub>D</sub>-*NEG=OBL*  
  
*kâa-kên rînrên kâw*  
 1SG.RFL-carry<sub>D</sub> P.RED (safely) *AFF*  
 ‘I keep the money you gave me safely without spending it.’
- c. Standard of comparison (Ni Kio 2014: 642)  
*Kan khua nakin nan khua a ngan deuh*  
*kân-khùa naak.in nân-khùa*  
 1PL.POSS-village *STAND* 2PL.POSS-village  
  
*a-ñân dew?*  
 3SG.SBJ-big<sub>B</sub> more  
 ‘Your village is bigger than our village.’

### 3.3.3 Preverbal directionals

Preverbal directionals are morphemes which describe how the participants are oriented in terms of position, distance, and movement (Van Bik and Tluangneh 2017). Languages have from one directional prefix, as in Hyow, where there is a single prefix, *á-* (Zakaria 2018: 344), to six in Daai (So-Hartmann 2008:284), as seen in Table 14.

<i>Directional</i>	<i>Gloss</i>	<i>Direction of Action</i>
<i>jän-</i>	upwards	towards higher level
<i>jäng-</i>	upwards	towards higher level
<i>juk-</i>	downwards	towards lower level
<i>ju-</i>	downwards	towards lower level
<i>va-</i>	forward	towards destination on same level
<i>hei-</i>	forward	across a hindrance on same level

Table 14. Preverbal directionals in Daai

It appears that these directionals were once full verbs which grammaticalized into directional morphemes (DeLancey 1981). The examples in (28)-(32), adapted from Osburne (1975: 166-172), illustrate that, in Falam Chin, what are historically the same elements may sometimes be used both as independent verbs and as bound prefixal directionals.<sup>6</sup> Once the independent verbs grammaticalize as directionals, they tend to develop additional semantic nuances which are only available for the bound elements.

(28) Functions of *ra* verb/directional

a. Independent verb

*hi-in-ah*                      *ka-ra*  
 DEM-ADV-LOC              1SG.S.-*come.1*  
 'I came here.'

b. Directional

*a-ra-thleng*                      *zo*  
 3SG.S-*DIR*-arrive.1      PRF  
 'He has already arrived here.'

---

<sup>6</sup> The glosses in these examples are provided elsewhere in Osburne's dissertation or in King (2010).

(29) Functions of *va* verb/directional

a. Independent verb

*khi-in-ah*                      *ka-va*  
 DEM-ADV-LOC              1SG.S.-go.1  
 ‘I went there.’

b. Directional

*khi tlaang-ih*                      *kan-va-thlen*                      *tikah kan-baang zet*  
 DEM mountain-LOC              1SG.S-*DIR*-arrive.2              when 1SG.S-tired.1 very  
 ‘When we went arriving at that hill we were very tired.’

(30) Functions of *rung* verb/directional

a. Independent verb

*hi-khaan-ah*                      *ka-rung*  
 DEM-room-LOC              1SG.S.-come down.1  
 ‘I came down to this room.’

b. Directional

*a-rung-ra*  
 3SG.S-*DIR*-come.1  
 ‘He came down.’

(31) Functions of *vung* verb/directional

a. Independent verb

*khi-khaan-ah*                      *ka-vung*  
 DEM-room-LOC              1SG.S.-go down.1  
 ‘I went down to that room.’

b. Directional

*a-vung-ra*  
 3SG.S-*DIR*-come.1  
 ‘He came down.’

(32) Functions of *hung* verb/directional

a. Independent verb

*thingkung-par-ah*                      *ka-hung*  
 tree-top-LOC              1SG.S.-go up.1  
 ‘I went up to the top of tree.’

b. Directional

*a-hung-feh*  
 3SG.S-*DIR*-go.INV  
 ‘He went up.’

In addition to the seminal work of DeLancey (1981), the phenomena of grammaticalization of full verbs to directionals in Falam Chin is well known from other SC languages (see Chelliah and Utt 2017 for Lamkang, Van Bik and Tluangneh 2017 for Lai, etc.).

### 3.3.4 Valence-increasing morphemes<sup>7</sup>

Valence-increasing morphemes include causative and applicative construction markers.

#### 3.3.4.1 Causative construction markers

Causative constructions in SC involve valence increasing morphemes which usually come in two types: non-productive vs. productive. (See also So-Hartmann and Peterson (2023).)

Non-productive causatives, which only occur with a limited number of base predicates, tend to involve a prefix, e.g., *m-* in Daai, as illustrated in (33a-c)<sup>8</sup>, or aspiration/devoicing of the initial consonant of the verbal root, shown for Falam Chin in (34a) vs. (34b).

(33) Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 55-56)

	Simplex	Causative
a.	<i>ei</i> 'eat'	<b><i>mbei</i></b> 'feed'
b.	<i>oo:k</i> 'drink'	<b><i>mbook</i></b> 'give to drink'
c.	<i>ooi</i> 'hand around the neck'	<b><i>mbooi</i></b> 'put over the neck of another person'

(34) Falam Chin (King 2010: 221)

a.	Non-causative					
	<i>ka</i>	<i>kawr</i>	<i>a</i>		<i>tlek.</i>	
	1SG	shirt	3SG.NOM		torn.INV	
	'My shirt is/got torn.'					
b.	Causative					
	<i>Thangte</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>kawr</i>	<i>a</i>	<b><i>thlek.</i></b>
	Thangte	ERG	1SG	shirt	3SG.NOM	tear.INV
	'Thangte tore my shirt.'					

<sup>7</sup> Some of the morphemes involved in these causatives no longer constitute a separate morpheme, especially the causative formation pattern that involves aspiration or devoicing of the onset. However, as shown in Matisoff (1976), the aspiration/devoicing of the onset resulted from an *\*s-* causative prefix. As recently suggested by Peterson (p.c.), a *\*p-* prefix might be an alternative source of the aspiration or devoicing of the onset.

<sup>8</sup> With vowel-initial roots, such as those seen here, apparently there is an excrescent *b* associated with this prefix. Alternatively, the *b* here is an oral stop remnant from when this *m-* prefix was previously non-nasal: it presumably corresponds to a prefix *p-* seen elsewhere in SC. (See So-Hartmann and Peterson (2023).)

Productive causatives, which involve suffixes, are illustrated for three SC languages from different subgroups in (35)-(37): Falam Chin (Central), Sizang (Northeastern), and Hyow (Southeastern).

(35) Falam Chin (King 2010: 195)

*Parte in Cinte a hni-ter.*  
 Parte ERG Cinte 3SG.NOM laugh.1-CAUS  
 ‘Parte made Cinte laugh.’

(36) Sizang (Davis 2017: 35)

*á:ma:=na: t<sup>h</sup>ij.ŋa:=sĩa: á:=taĩ.nuĩ: sil=sâk hiâ:*  
 3SG=ERG fruit=ABS 3.POSS=daughter wash.I=CAUS be  
 ‘She made her daughter wash the fruit’ (Elicited).

(37) Hyow (Zakaria 2018: 378)

*tsú=â á-tsáng-nú im=â=ní*  
 DIST=LOC GRP-be.old-F house=LOC=FOC

*á-á-ní-ip-shók-hnó?=tí*  
 3A-DIR-PL-sleep-CAUS-ULT=R.EVID  
 ‘They went to make her sleep there in the old woman’s house.’

### 3.3.4.2 *Applicative construction markers*

Applicative morphemes constitute a functional class that involves valence increase in SC. Table 15 provides applicative morphemes found in three SC languages: Hakha Lai (Central), Sizang (Northeastern), and Daai (Southeastern), with illustrations from Hakha Lai in (38a-g).

	<i>Hakha Lai</i> (Peterson 1998)	<i>Sizang</i> (Naylor 1925)	<i>Daai</i> (So-Hartmann 2009)
Benefactive/ malefactive	-piak	-sak	-pee:t
Allative/ malefactive	-hno?		
Instrumental	-naak		-naa:k
Comitative/ associative	-pü	-pui	-pui
Relinquitive	-taak	-san	-taa:k
Priorative	-kan?		
Additional benefactive	-tsem?		

Table 15. Applicative morphemes in SC

(38) Applicative morphemes in Hakha Lai

- a. Benefactive/malefactive applicative  
*lo a ka thlawh piak*  
*lâw a-ka-thlo?-piak*  
 field 3SG.S-1SG.O-hoe<sub>D</sub>-BEN.APPL  
 ‘He hoed the field for me.’
- b. Comitative/associative applicative  
*Bawi a ka chawnh pi*  
*bôoy a-ka-tshon?-pîi*  
 officer 3SG.S-1SG.O-speak<sub>D</sub>-COM.APPL  
 ‘He spoke to the officer with me.’
- c. Additional benefactive applicative  
*Thil a ka suk cemh*  
*thil a-ka-suuk-tsem?*  
 thing (cloth) 3SG.S-1SG.O-wash<sub>D</sub>-ADD.BEN.APPL  
 ‘She washed the clothes for my benefit (in addition to her benefit).’
- d. Prioritive applicative  
*Sianginn a ka kai kanh*  
*sian-in a-ka-kây-kan?*  
 school 3SG.S-1SG.O-climb<sub>D</sub>-PRIOR.APPL  
 ‘He attended the school ahead of/before me.’
- e. Allative malefactive applicative  
*Kheng a ka tengh hnawh*  
*khêej a-ka-ten?-hno?*  
 plates 3SG.S-1SG.O-throw<sub>D</sub>-ALL.MAL.APPL  
 ‘He threw the plates at me to my detriment.’
- f. Relinquitive applicative  
*Rawl a ka ei taak*  
*rôol a-ka-ây-taak*  
 food 3SG.S-1SG.O-eat<sub>D</sub>-RELINQ.APPL  
 ‘He ate the food leaving me behind (not waiting for me).’
- g. Instrumental applicative  
*Ka naam thing a tan naak*  
*ka-nâam thîj a-tân-naak*  
 1SG.POSS-knife wood 3SG.S-cut<sub>D</sub>-INST.APPL  
 ‘He cut the wood with my knife.’

It is interesting to note that in Hakha Lai there are certain lexicalized pairs which are a combination of particular predicates and CAUS/APPL markers. For example, in *zah-pi /za?-pii/* (shy-

COM.APPL) ‘be ashamed of’, *thih-pi* /thiʔ-pii/ (die-COM.APPL) ‘be obsessed with’, *cawn-piak* /tsõn-piak/ (learn-BEN.APPL) ‘teach’, and *hmuh-sak* /hmuʔ-sak/ (see-CAUS) ‘show’, modern Lai speakers are no longer aware of the morpheme boundaries.

### 3.3.5 *Tense and aspect markers*

Tense and aspect markers include morphemes such as future, perfect, and progressive markers. Table 16 lists some aspectual morphemes in three SC languages.

	<i>Daai</i> ( <i>So-Hartmann 2009</i> )	<i>Falam Chin</i> ( <i>King 2010</i> )	<i>Paité</i> ( <i>Singh 2006</i> )
Future/Irrealis	<i>kkhai</i>	<i>ding</i>	<i>ding</i>
Perfect	<i>pääng</i>	<i>zo</i>	<i>ta</i>
Progressive	<i>k’um</i>	<i>lai</i>	<i>lay</i>

Table 16. Examples of aspectual markers in SC

In many cases, it might be possible to trace the diachronic path of these markers. For example, the perfect marker *zo* ‘PRF’ in Falam Chin in (39) obviously came from the Proto-Kuki-Chin (PKC) verb \**yaw* ‘finish, complete’ (Van Bik 2009: 283).

- (39) *Rawl na ei zo maw?* (King 2010: 110)  
 food 2SG.NOM eat PRF INTG  
 ‘Have you eaten?’

Heine and Kuteva (2002: 138) provide examples of how verbs with the meaning of ‘finish, complete’ grammaticalize into perfect markers.

### 3.3.6 *Reduplication*

Reduplication is very common in SC for the indication of intensification. For example, Mizo (Chhange 1986: 242–244) has several attributive types of reduplication with this function: *trhaa trhaa* ‘best one’ (“good good”); *a kal’ a kal’* ‘she went back and forth’ (“she went she went”); *tak tak* ‘very very’ (“INT INT”); *zong zong* ‘all’ (“also also”). The examples in (40) and (41) illustrate reduplication in Hakha Lai and Daai with the same function.

- (40) Reduplication in Hakha Lai (Adapted from Ni Kio 2015: 22)  
*a tha cemcem kan thimh*  
*a-thää tsêm-tsêm ka-n-thim?*  
 3SG.S-good<sub>B</sub> RED (*superlative*) 1SG.S-2SG.O-choose<sub>INV</sub>  
 ‘I chose THE BEST OF THE BEST for you’

- (41) Reduplication in Daai (So-Hartmann 2009: 122)  
*Hnashen sun lon-lon=a ngpyaang=kti.*  
 child DEM loudly=CF shout=NON.FUT  
 ‘The child shouted loudly.’

### 3.3.7 *Elaborate expressions*

An elaborate expression (EE) is prototypically defined as “a compound containing four (usually monosyllabic) elements, of which either the first and third or the second and fourth are identical (A-B-A-C or A-B-C-B)” (Matisoff 1982: 82), as illustrated by Burmese in (42a-b) and (43a-b).

- (42) A-B-A-C  
 a. *pwe: gji: pwe: gaun:* (MED: 293)  
 event big event good  
 ‘well-matched contest’

- b. *le’ shou’ le’ kain* (MED: 441)  
 hand grasp hand hold  
 ‘(be caught) red-handed’

- (43) A-B-C-B  
 a. *taun boun ja boun* (MED: 178)  
 hill heap hundred heap  
 ‘in abundance’

- b. *jei lai’ nga: lai’* (MED: 397)  
 water follow fish follow  
 ‘accommodatingly’

The investigation on the EE’s structures of ABAC or ABCB is not very prominent yet in the grammars of SC languages. For example, EEs are not included in the tables of contents for the grammars of Daai (So-Hartmann 2009), Hyow (Zakaria 2018), and Paite (Singh 2007), etc. It does not mean, however, that these structures do not exist in SC languages. Hakha Lai has a small number of these structures, as exemplified in (44a-b) and (45a-b).

- (44) A-B-A-C  
 a. *khua nu khua pa*  
*khua nu khua pa*  
 village mother village father  
 ‘village/town elders’

- b. *fial chuk fial cho*  
*fial chuk fial châw*  
 ask downward ask upward  
 ‘care taker of all errands’

(45) A-B-C-B

- a. *mi chaw mah chaw*  
*mî tshòo ma? tshôo*  
 person goods self goods  
 ‘something for everyone’
- b. *mei hu pa hu*  
*mây hùu pâa hùu*  
 fire power father power  
 ‘the power of fire and father give the same warmth’ (proverb)

Peterson 2010 identifies an additional way of recognizing the phenomenon of elaborate expressions in SC languages. Focussing on Khumi, Peterson defines EEs as “quasi-reduplicative, compound-like structures consisting of an element which imparts meaning to the whole expression, and a second element which ranges from a reduplicative template (e.g., *mi-maay*, ELAB(ORATION)-fire ‘fire’) to formally constrained nonce elements (*srúng-sraaw*, ELAB- tobacco ‘tobacco’), to otherwise meaningful elements which bear some semantic resemblance to their paired element (*uy-klaay*, dog-monkey ‘dog’). The main point of his article is that the use of EEs in discourse correlates with other sorts of things reduplication often does in languages in terms of indicating multiple participants, different subtypes of imperfective aspect, and intensification. He also notes that the use of elaborate expressions is regarded as a sign of good speaking that has aesthetic effect (Peterson 2013).

In Hakha Lai there seem to be some compounds that meet some criteria of Peterson’s EE definition, as shown in (46a-b).

- (46) a. *an i naih niam.*  
*ân-i-nay<sup>?</sup>-niam*  
 3PL.SBJ-MID-close<sub>INV</sub>-short<sub>B</sub>  
 ‘they are close’
- b. *a ka muaithai.*  
*a-ka-muây-thây*  
 3SG.SBJ-1SG.OBJ—caress<sub>SD</sub>-scratch<sub>B</sub>  
 ‘she caresses me’

In (46a), the verb *naih* ‘be close’ has the same meaning without the second element *niam*, and therefore the first element imparts the meaning of the whole expression. Similarly in (46b), the verb *muai* ‘caress’ has the same meaning without the second element *thai*, which elaborates the expression.

### 3.3.8 Verbal classifiers

Verbal classifiers are grammatical morphemes which describe the manner of verbal performance, such as what have been variously called ‘chiming’ adverbs in Tedim (Bhaskararao 1989), ideophonic elements Hakha Lai (Patent 1998), and adverbials involving sound symbolism in Mizo (Chhangte 1993), etc. These verbal classifiers often occur in large/small (AUG/DIM) pairs in the SC languages that have them. The large/small aspect of these are exemplified by Khumi and Hakha Lai in (47) and (48) respectively.

(47) Khumi verbal classifiers (Peterson 2008: 110-111)

- a. *ang-jeew=boeloe*      *ueeng moo='iee*      *beewng-puuy*      *cangpaay=aa*  
 3-come=WHEN      house front=GEN      banyan-AUG      branch=ALL

*ajuu=poe*      *coeng-paaw*      *jvoó=poe*      *coeng-paaw=te*  
 wife=also      land-AUGVCL      husband=also      land-AUG.VCL=EVID

‘When they came, the female bird and the male bird [=large eagles] landed on the branch of the big banyan tree in front of the house.’

- b. *toéng=te*      *toéng-maa=boeloe*      *ewkóo*      *sahueeng*  
 arrive=EVID      arrive-FIRST=WHEN      deck      fence

*coeng-poe=te*  
 land-DIM.VCL=EVID

‘It arrived, and after it arrived, it [=a small bird] landed on the deck fence.’

(48) Hakha Lai verbal classifiers (adapted from Ni Kio 2015: 52)

- a. *kan khuami khual ah an pem thluahmah.*  
*kân-khùamì*      *khùal=a?*      *ân-pèem*      *thlua?ma?*  
 3PL.POSS-villagers      foreign.land=LOC      3PL.SBJ-migrate<sub>B</sub>      AUG.VCL  
 ‘Our villagers migrate to foreign lands in *large* numbers.’

- b. *kan khuami cu khual ah an pem thliahmah.*  
*kân-khùamì*      *khùal=a?*      *ân-pèem*      *thlia?ma?*  
 3PL.POSS-villagers      foreign.land=LOC      3PL.SBJ-migrate<sub>B</sub>      DIM.VCL  
 ‘Our villagers migrate to foreign lands in *small* numbers.’

Notably, verbal classifiers have the typological characterization of such elements, including “optionality, occurrence of different predicates with different classifiers, occurrence of multiple classifiers with a single predicate, use of classifiers for maintenance of participant reference in discourse, and participant type that classifiers can refer to”, of which Peterson gives illustrations with data from Khumi and other SC languages (Peterson 2008: 112-120).

## 4 Conclusion

This work assumes that any serious attempt to deal with the infinite variety of sentences in a language must involve grouping its morphemes and words into a lexicon of a few large classes on the basis of certain salient distributional and semantic characteristics (Matisoff 1982: 42).

This paper adopts the conventional approach of recognizing open and closed classes of word in the investigation of the lexicon in SC languages. It has demonstrated that items like nouns, verbs, and adverbial expressions belong to open classes; pronominals, demonstratives, numerals, quantifiers, interjections, onomatopoeic words, and case markers form closed classes. Middle markers, case markers, directionals, tense/aspect markers, valence-changing elements, verbal classifiers, elaborate expressions, and reduplicative patterns are treated as bound elements.

It is hoped that the issues identified in this paper will be informative to researchers in SC as they make analytical decisions needed in formulating an account of a language's grammar, and in structuring lexical materials for a language.

## ABBREVIATIONS

1	first person	IPFV	imperfective aspect
2	second person	INCL	inclusive
3	third person	INST	instrumental
A	agent	INTG	interrogative
ABL	ablative	INV	invariant (verb form)
ABS	absolutive	LOC	locative
ADD	additional	MAL	malefactive
ADVZ	adverbializer	MASC	masculine
ADV	adverb	MED	Myanmar-English dictionary
AFF	affirmative	MID	middle
AJC	adjunct	MIR	mirative
ALL	allative	MOD	model
ANAPH	anaphoric	NEG	negative
AO	agent orientating	NF	non-final
APPL	applicative	NOM	nominative
ASP	aspect	NMLZ	nominalizer
AUG	augmentative	O	object
AUX	auxiliary	OBJ	object
B	base (verb form)	PERF	perfect
BEN	benefactive	PL	plural
CAUS	causative	PM	predicate marker
CF	constituent final	PP	post position
CLF	classifier	PRF	perfect tense
CLS	classifier	PROX	proximal
COH	cohortative mood	Pv	verb particle
COM	comitative	POL.IMP	polite imperative

COMP	complementizer	POSS	possessive
COP	copula	P.RED	partial reduplication
D	derived (verb form)	PRIOR	prioritive
DAT	dative	PRO	pronoun
DEM	demonstrative	Q	question marker
DEP	departative	QT	quotative particle
DIM	diminutive	R	recipient (indirect object)
DIR	directional	R.EVID	reported evidential
DP	discourse particle	REAL	realis
DU	dual	REL	relativizer
DX	deictic	RELINQ	relinquitive
ELAB	elaborate expression	RFL	reflexive
EMP	emphasis	S	subject; intransitive subject
ERG	ergative	S.AGR	subject agreement
EVID	evidential	SBJ	subject
EXC	exclusive	SG	singular
F	female	STAND	standard of comparison
FOC	focus	SUB	subject
FUT	future	SUB	subordinate
GEN	genitive	SUGG	suggestive
GRP	generic referential prefix	TOP	topic
IDEO	ideophone	VCL	verbal classifier
IMP	imperative	ULT	ultimative suffix

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