

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

The topic of this thesis is clause structure of the Lahu Shi language. This language is spoken by some groups of people in China, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Vietnam, and Thailand. Some linguists have studied the Lahu Shi language, but only some parts of the language have been studied, for example, the phonology and phonetics. Therefore the aim of the thesis is to describe the construction as well as the modification of the Lahu Shi clause.

This chapter is an introduction, presenting a brief overview of the Lahu Shi people, including the background and linguistic affiliation of the Lahu Shi people, an overview of Lahu Shi phonology, and a review of previous research. The scope and objective of this research, and methodology are also included in this chapter. The second chapter describes Lahu Shi noun phrases, followed by Lahu Shi verb phrases in chapter three. Chapter four is the analysis of the Lahu Shi clause structures, and how they are modified is presented in chapter five. The last chapter is a conclusion.

#### 1.1 Background

This section provides brief background information about the Lahu Shi people in general. The discussion includes their history, population, life style, and means of making a living.

##### 1.1.1 History

Lahu Shi (Lahu Shi Balan) is a subgroup of Lahu. Lahu is subdivided by linguists into two main groups; Black Lahu and Yellow Lahu. In each subgroup there are

further divisions and each of them has their own name, culture, and speech variety. The cultures and speech varieties are quite similar in some cases, however in some cases they are very different.

The Lahu Shi Balan people moved from Yunnan Province in China, eventually migrating to new locations including Thailand, Myanmar, the Lao PDR, and Vietnam. The purpose of migration was to find a more peaceful life. In the early part of the twentieth century, some of Lahu groups migrated from Myanmar to northern Thailand. The Lahu Shi people entered Thailand during the past forty years. They moved from Myanmar and the Lao PDR. Some Lahu Shi people have left Thailand to live in the United States (Cooper 2002).

### **1.1.2 Population**

According to Cooper (1995), the Lahu people live in a number of countries, spread over at least five nations in South East Asia. There is an autonomous territory of Lahu Shi in Yunnan Province. It is estimated that there are 250,000 Lahu people in south East Asia. Most of them are Black Lahu speakers. There are also a number of Lahu people in Myanmar, Thailand, and Lao as reported in mid 1983 by Lewis (1986) about 200,000 people in addition to the number of Lahu people in China.

The number of the Lahu Shi Balan people living in Thailand, Myanmar, the Lao PDR, Vietnam, and the United States is estimated to be 55,000. There are more than 50 villages of Lahu Shi Balan people spread in Thailand over the provinces of Chiangmai, Chiangrai, Tak, Mae Hong Son, and Lampang. Some villages are large with more than one hundred houses. An informal survey of villages reveals that there are nearly 15,000 Lahu Shi people in Thailand (Cooper 2002).

### 1.1.3 Life style

The Lahu Shi people have settled into a stable way of life in spite of having a history of migration. Although some families in the villages are from other Lahu groups or Akha people, most Lahu Shi villages are homogeneous. The membership in the villages is also relatively stable, being built around family ties. Kin relations among them are very important. The Lahu Shi people in Thailand from different background tend to live clustered together in different areas of the villages even though there is a mix of them, since Lahu Shi people in Thailand migrated from different villages or countries.

In Lahu Shi villages, there are two important men having different roles with the same status. One is the headman elected by the villagers, aged around thirty to fifty years old. He is a well-respected person. His responsibility is to interface with the outside, channel information, facilitate the discussion of matters relating to the village, coordinate village projects, and uphold and enforce village law. His traditional role fits with the corresponding Thai governing system in Thailand of having village headman. He has to report to the local government, and so he is also required to have some education in the Thai system. The headman has a village council to work with and assist him.

The second important man is a priest or shaman. He is a religious authority figure. The traditional Lahu belief system is a combination of animism over a nearly monotheistic base. The shaman has to deal with religious issues and traditional medicine. Most of the Lahu Shi people in Thailand and Myanmar are Christian. The person who takes the religious leader role is a chairman of the village or village pastor (Cooper 2002).

### **1.1.4 Economic**

The Lahu Shi people live on agricultural cultivation such as growing rice, corn, and vegetables. Usually the husband and wife work together in the fields. In Thailand the Lahu Shi people raise not only cash crops (ginger, various fruits), but also animals such as chickens, pigs, and cows. The hills and the forests which surround Lahu Shi villages are also an economic center for the community. Some of the forest products are harvested for personal use. However, some products are offered for sale outside the community. They sell their products and buy some resources for the village. The Lahu Shi women weave on back-strap looms and sew the cloth into useful objects. The purpose is either for sale or for their own needs. Nowadays, some men and women go to work in town for period of time. They work as laborers in construction projects or plant and harvest rice and other crops for lowland farmers.

Some Lahu Shi people leave their villages for education even though most of the villages have a school for grades one through six. The Lahu Shi try to provide education for their children because they think that education is very important. Some educated Lahu Shi people stay in town because they have spent years in school for better economic options, but they still maintain strong ties with Kin in their home villages (Cooper 2002).

## **1.2 Linguistic affiliation of Lahu Shi**

Lahu Shi Balan is a Tibeto-Burman language that is under the Sino-Tibetan stalk. Under the Tibeto-Burman there is Lolo-Burmese which is divided into three branches including Northern Lolo, Central Lolo, and Southern Lolo. Under Central Lolo, there are Lisu, Lahu, and Akha. Lahu is divided into Lahu Na and Lahu Shi. There are five speech varieties of Lahu Shi; Ahpubele, Bakeo, Balan, Mikeng, and Nakeo (Cooper 1995). Below in the figure 1 is a tree illustrating the position of Lahu Shi Balan in the Sino-Tibetan language family.

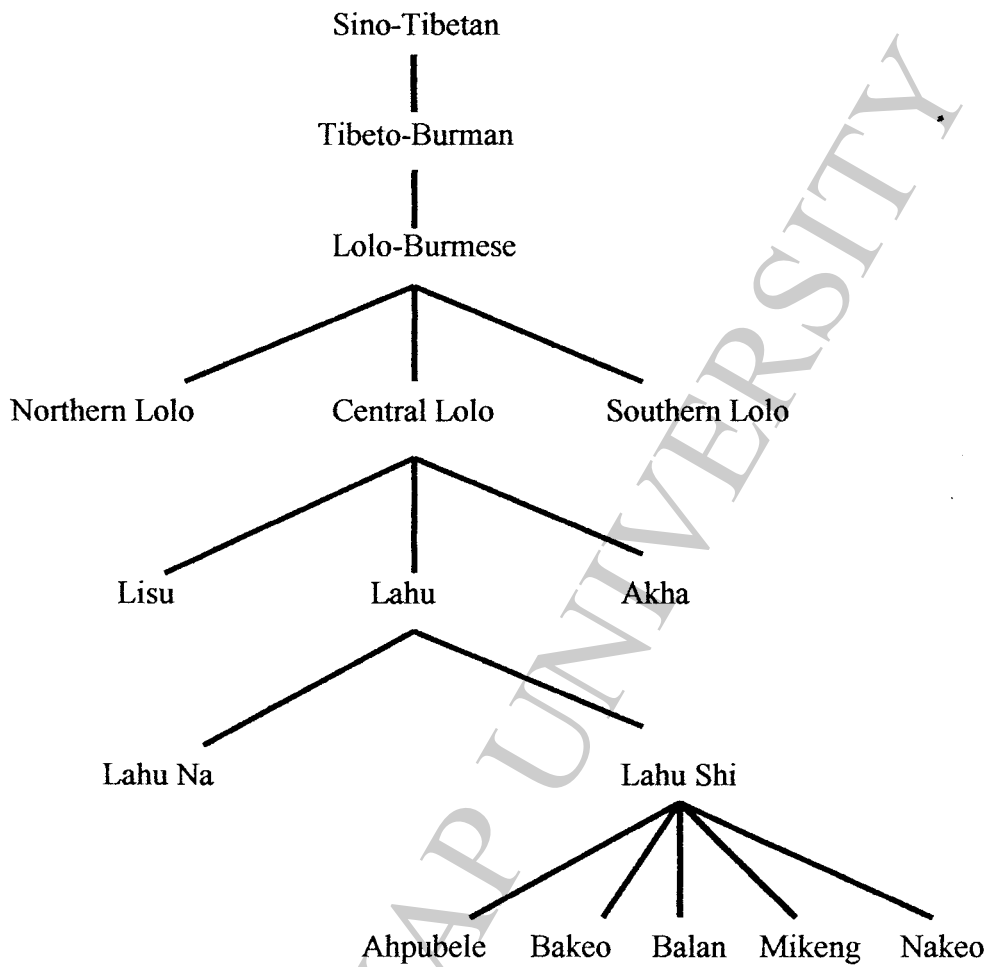


Figure 1. Language Family Tree showing Lahu Shi Banlan (Cooper 2002)

### 1.3 Overview of Lahu Shi phonology

Based on Cooper's research (1995), the Yellow Lahu or Lahu Shi word structure consists of an optional consonant followed by an obligatory vowel and tone. The Lahu Shi language has no consonant clusters. The following sections illustrate Lahu Shi syllable structure, consonants, vowels, tones, and an orthography based on the phonology.

#### 1.3.1 Syllable structure

There are two possible shapes of Lahu Shi syllable. They are CV and V with a tone mark. See example below:

<u>CV</u>		<u>VT</u>	
[kæ <sup>3</sup> ]	“mountain”	[a <sup>3</sup> tæ <sup>3</sup> ]	“knife”
[jɛ <sup>3-2</sup> ]	“house”	[ɔ <sup>1</sup> ]	“cooked rice”
[tʃɔ <sup>3</sup> ]	“person”	[a <sup>3</sup> .kɣ <sup>1</sup> ]	“head”
[yaʔ <sup>5</sup> ]	“chicken”	[uʔ <sup>3</sup> .tʃɣʔ <sup>1</sup> ]	“hat”
[phi <sup>5</sup> ]	“dog”	[ɣ <sup>3-2</sup> ]	“four”

### 1.3.2 Consonants

There are 22 phonemic consonants in Lahu Shi Balan as follows in figure 2:

/p/	/t/	/k/	
/p <sup>h</sup> /	/t <sup>h</sup> /	/k <sup>h</sup> /	
/b/	/d/	/g/	
/tʃ/			
/tʃ <sup>h</sup> /			
/f/	/s/	/dʒ/	/h/
/v/	/j/		/ɣ/
/m/	/n/	/ŋ/	
/l/			

Figure 2: Lahu Shi Balan consonants (Cooper 2000)

### 1.3.3 Vowels

There are 8 phonemic vowels in Lahu Shi Balan as in figure 3 below:

<i>/i/</i>		<i>/u/</i>
<i>/ɛ/</i>		<i>/o/</i>
<i>/æ/</i>	<i>/ɤ/</i>	<i>/ɔ/</i>
	<i>/ɑ/</i>	

Figure 3: Lahu Shi Balan vowels (Cooper 2000)



### 1.3.4 Tones

There are 7 phonemic forms of tone in Lahu Shi Balan as follows:

high level	/ a <sup>5</sup> /
mid level	/ a <sup>3</sup> /
low level	/ a <sup>1</sup> /
rising (low or mid)	/ a <sup>2-4</sup> / or / a <sup>3-5</sup> /
falling (mid or high)	/ a <sup>3-2</sup> / or / a <sup>5-4</sup> /
(extra) high stopped	/ aʔ <sup>5</sup> /
mid (or low stopped)	/ aʔ <sup>3</sup> / or / aʔ <sup>1</sup> /

Figure 4: Lahu Shi Balan tones (Cooper2000)

### 1.3.5 Orthography

There is a Lahu Shi orthography (Cooper 2000) based on a linguistic analysis of the Balan dialect and with input from the Lahu Shi people. Cooper says that there are two developed orthographies for Lahu Shi. They are Lahu Shi (developed by SIL) and Roman Catholic Lahu Shi. Nowadays the Roman Catholic orthography is not used. The following figure shows orthography used in this thesis.

## Lahu Shi orthography (Cooper 2001)

## Vowels

Orthographic Symbol	Phonemic Sound	Example		
i	i	ti	[ti <sup>3</sup> ]	‘do’
e	e	te	[te <sup>3</sup> ]	‘one’
ch	æ	a thch	[a <sup>3</sup> t <sup>h</sup> æ <sup>3</sup> ]	‘machete’
u	u	tu	[tu <sup>3</sup> ]	‘stand’
o	o	tod che	[to <sup>5</sup> t <sup>h</sup> e <sup>3</sup> ]	‘walk’
aw	ɔ	awr	[ɔ <sup>1</sup> ]	‘rice’
a	ɑ	ta	[tɑ <sup>3</sup> ]	‘don’t’
uh	ɣ	uh	[ɣ <sup>3</sup> ]	‘four’

Figure 5: Vowel orthography (Cooper 2001:44)

## Vowel Sequences

Orthographic Symbol	Phonemic Sound	Example		
ea	ea	kea	[keɑ <sup>3</sup> ]	‘please give’
eo	eo	keo	[keo <sup>3</sup> ]	‘put it down’
eha	æa	yad nehax	[yɑ <sup>5</sup> næɑ <sup>2-4</sup> ]	‘baby’
ua	ua	yuax	[yua <sup>1</sup> ]	‘please grab/reach’
ao	o	laox	[lao <sup>1</sup> ]	‘come’
awa	ɔa	tawa	[tɔɑ <sup>3</sup> ]	‘please pour’
uha	ɣa	huhd-az	[hɣ <sup>5</sup> ɑʔ <sup>5-6</sup> ]	‘go selling’
io	io	chid-oq	[tʃ <sup>h</sup> i <sup>5</sup> oʔ <sup>4</sup> ]	‘pick it up’
awe	ɔe	ngawx-eq	[ŋɔ <sup>5</sup> eʔ <sup>4</sup> ]	‘look’
eaw	eɔ	ceawgle	[tʃeɔ <sup>4-2</sup> e <sup>3</sup> ]	‘what kind?’

Figure 6: Vowel Sequences: with bound morphemes (particles) (Cooper2001: 45)

## Consonants

Orthographic Symbol	Phonemic Sound	Example		
p	p	par	[pa]	'frog'
p <sup>h</sup>	ph	phid	[p <sup>h</sup> i]	'dog'
t	t	ter tud	[te tu]	'pestle'
t <sup>h</sup>	th	thux pu	[t <sup>h</sup> u pu]	'sack (large)'
k	k	keh	[kæ]	'mountain'
k <sup>h</sup>	kh	khaz	[k <sup>h</sup> a]	'cross bow'
b	b	bag che	[ba t <sup>h</sup> e]	'to throw'
d	d	daq	[da]	'good'
g	g	gaz laz	[ga la]	'rake'
tʃ	c	cir kox	[tʃi ko]	'crab'
tʃ <sup>h</sup>	ch	chez	[tʃ <sup>h</sup> e]	'deer'
dʒ	j	a jiz	[a dʒi]	'dirt'
f	f	faz	[fa]	'rodent'
s	s	suhz cehg	[sʌ tʃæ]	'tree'
v	v	vid	[vi]	'dry'
h	h	had	[ha]	'goat'
j	y	yehg	[jæ]	'house'
ɣ	gh	ghaz	[ɣa]	'chicken'
m	m	muhd	[mʌ]	'horse'
n	n	nud	[nu]	'cow'
ŋ	ng	ngag	[ŋa]	'I'
l	l	lag	[la]	'tea'

Figure 7: Main Syllable Consonants (Cooper2001: 47)

## Tone

Orthographic Symbol	Phonemic Sound	Example		
1 low	r	par	[pa <sup>1</sup> ]	'frog'
3 mid	no symbol	ca	[ca <sup>3</sup> ]	'seek'
5 high	d	cad	[ca <sup>5</sup> ]	'eat'
ʔ <sup>4</sup> mid-cut	q	caq-	[caʔ <sup>4</sup> ]	'machine'
ʔ <sup>5-6</sup> high-cut	z	caz keh	[caʔ <sup>5-6</sup> k <sup>h</sup> æ <sup>3</sup> ]	'rope/cord'
2-4 rising	x	cax che	[ca <sup>2-4</sup> tʃ <sup>h</sup> e <sup>3</sup> ]	'to join'
4-2 falling	g	cag sir	[ca <sup>4-2</sup> ʃi <sup>3</sup> ]	'rice seed'

Figure 8: Tones (Cooper2001: 48)

## **1.4 Scope of this research and its limitations**

This thesis is a study of the clause structure of Lahu Shi Balan based on three Lahu Shi texts entitled “The cat and dog story”, “Male gives birth”, and “Shrew story”. The data was obtained from Cooper as well as by elicitation with native speakers. The scope of this research is restricted to an analysis of the data from these texts and insights about the texts gained in the elicitation sessions.

## **1.5 Grammatical theory**

There are many different theories of language and models used in order to analyze grammar. This thesis is based on the tagmemic theory. Pike (1977: 35) describes tagmeme as follows:

The tagmeme is a constituent of a construction seen from the point of view of its four general features: slot, class, role, and cohesion. Each feature is closely related to each other three. The class fills a slot that performs a specific role or function in a stream of speech. In addition, there sometimes are cohesion requirements of form for the tagmeme, which integrate it further into that stream of speech.

The analysis concerns the levels of clause, phrase, and word. These are the most usual constituents of not only independent but also dependent clauses. Therefore, the grammatical hierarchy theory should be applied to Lahu Shi.

Healey (1992: 9) says, “the concept of hierarchy is used to describe the structures of language and in the grammatical hierarchy, each smaller structure functions as a unit

of the next largest structure.” Given here are seven common levels in the grammatical hierarchy.

- Morpheme (smallest meaningful parts of words): It is a unit within a word.
- Word: It is a unit within a phrase.
- Phrase: It is a unit within a clause.
- Clause: It is a unit within a sentence.
- Sentence: It is a unit within a paragraph.
- Paragraph: It is a unit within a Discourse.

The diagram is illustrated below:

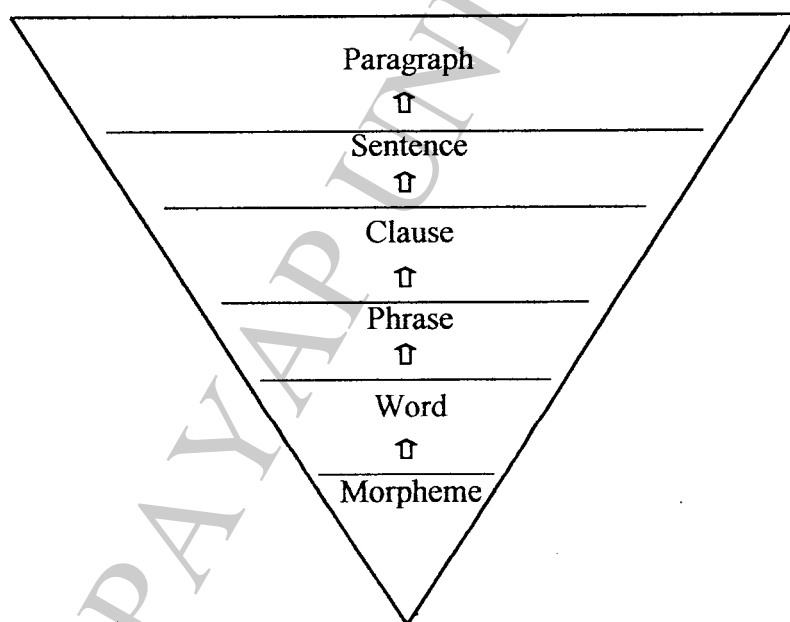


Figure 9: Grammatical hierarchy

## **1.6 Objectives of the research**

1. Describe Lahu Shi noun phrase characteristics.
2. Describe Lahu Shi verb phrase characteristics.
3. Describe Lahu Shi clause classes and types.
4. Describe the modification of Lahu Shi clauses.

## **1.7 Methodology**

I searched related books, articles, theses, and reports on Lahu and Lahu Shi together with other languages under Tibeto-Burman. In addition, I received data from Ajarn Arthur Cooper. He gave me three Lahu Shi glossed texts. They were “The cat and dog story”, “Male gives birth”, and “Shrew story”. I also conducted an informal group interview with two Lahu Shi people, a man and woman.

After that I analyzed the Lahu Shi glossed texts, based on the data from the texts namely, “The cat and dog story”, “Male gives birth”, and “Shrew story”. Then I determined the noun phrase, verb phrase, and clause structure. Lastly I compiled syntax information from each text based on the tagmemic theory.

## **1.8 Literature review**

This section presents a review of literature related to this thesis. Many linguists have studied the Lahu languages. Bradley (1979) worked on comparison in the Lahu languages including Black Lahu (Black, Red, Shehleh), and Yellow Lahu (Banlan, Bakeo, Ahpubela). His work focused on phonetics and phonology.



Suknaphasawat (1999) studied the phonological system of the Lahu Bakeo. He explains that the Lahu Bakeo syllable is composed of an optional initial consonant, followed by an obligatory vowel and tone. Therefore its structure is CVT (consonant, vowel, tone). There are twenty-seven initial consonant phonemes, nine vowel phonemes, and seven tones in Lahu Bakeo. The language has no consonant clusters.

There are four different papers written on Lahu by Cooper. The first one is “A preliminary phonology of the Banlan dialect of Lahu Shi”. This research describes syllable structure in Lahu Shi. He illustrated the syllable structure of Lahu Shi as: CVT. C is optional whereas V and T are obligatory. Like Lahu Bakeo, there are no consonant clusters in Lahu Shi. The second topic is “Report on the development of a picture dictionary for the Balan dialect of Lahu Shi”. This research is an application of orthography of the Balan variety, consisting of 180 pictures of common things in the village. The third topic is “Lahu Shi orthography report”. The author described Lahu Shi Balan as a monosyllabic language. The syllable structure consists of an optional initial consonant followed by an obligatory vowel and tone. There are no consonant clusters. The last topic is “An acoustic analysis of the vowels and tones of Lahu Shi Banlan”. The paper presents the frequencies of the vowel phonemes and 7 tones. The data was digitized and analyzed. The CECIL acoustic phonetic analysis package was used in analysis.

Two other people have studied Lahu Na grammar. They are Matisoff and Manson. Their works play very important role in this thesis. Matisoff (1982) describes the structure of the syllable, noun phrases, verb phrases, clauses, and sentences. The syllable structure of Lahu Na is composed of an optional initial consonant followed by an obligatory vowel and tone (consonant, vowel or consonant, vowel, tone). The noun phrase contains the head noun optionally followed by some particles (noun particle, and unrestricted particle). Lahu Na verb phrase consists of an optional adverbial expression, followed by the obligatory particles (verb particle, unrestricted

particle). The head verb may be a simple head verb (contains a single verb) or a concatenated head verb (contains two or more verbs).

Matisoff (1982:39) says that a Lahu Na clause must consist minimally of a single VP, but may contain any number preceding associated NP's as well. He also describes four types of sentences in Lahu Na including simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and permuted sentences.

- A simple sentence contains only a final clause (independent clause).
- A compound sentence contains a final clause as well as at least one non-final clause (dependent clause).
- A complex sentence contains an embedded clause.
- A permuted sentence is a sentence in which certain major constituents are not in the normal positions.

Manson (1995) studied Lahu Na syntax focusing on the complement clause. He says that both relative clauses and complement clauses are formed by *ve*-nominalization. The distinction between them is Lahu Na relative clauses involve the relationship of "modifier" and "modified", but Lahu complement clauses involve the relationship of "specifier" and "specified". There are three types of complement clause, namely *ve*-clause, *tu<sub>v</sub>*-clause, and ILL.F clause.

- *ve*-clause is a clause which is nominalised by "ve". The clause has no universal particle. "ve" is a noun marker which adds no specific meaning to a clause.
- *tu<sub>v</sub>*-clause, "tu<sub>v</sub>" functions in a clause as an indicator of purpose clause and as an indicator of irrealis clause.
- ILL.F clause is a clause which carries an illocutionary force. It functions as the quotation of some matrix clauses. The clause is marked by the quotation particle "teh<sub>v</sub>" (or, by) and "hk'e" (thus, like).