

## ELABORATE EXPRESSIONS IN DAI LUE\*

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**Abstract:** The Dai Lue language, in common with other Southeast Asian languages, has many elaborate expressions: four-syllable units that often have idiomatic and colourful meanings. Using data from a corpus of Dai Lue texts, this paper explains seven strategies that are used for creating elaborate expressions. These range from those that are flexible and open to creative manipulation, to those that form fixed lexemes. The most flexible strategy, and the most common, is based on the large number of coordinate compound words in Dai Lue. Coordinate compounds are expanded upon in several ways to form a four-syllable expression. Other strategies involve reduplication and the heaping up of synonyms.

Elaborate expressions that are lexemes are distinguished from those that are not. Listing of elaborate expressions based on their canonical structure has proved to be a dead end typologically. An exploration of these seven formation strategies in Southeast Asian languages holds promise for new insights into their morphology.

**Keywords:** elaborate expression; coordinate compound; rhyming middle; reduplication; Dai Lue; Tai Lue

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asian languages are known for their ‘elaborate expressions’: four-syllable compound expressions that sometimes have idiomatic and colourful meanings. This is an area of creativity in communication, in which people enjoy playing with language and saying enjoyable and interesting things. Elaborate expressions range from ones that are highly flexible and open to creative manipulation, to those that are fixed.

Amara, in a recent paper on elaborate expressions in Tai Lue, concludes that ‘Tai people value rhetoric ability, metaphor, and wordiness in their speech’ (2008:402). Continuing her discussion, this paper elaborates on ways in which wordiness is structured in Lue.

Elaborate expressions have been noted throughout mainland Southeast Asia,<sup>1</sup> and are sometimes catalogued at length. They probably appear in all Mainland Southeast Asian languages. It is possible that they developed under the influence

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance Karnchana 1976: 880, Wheatley 1990 (Burmese); Matisoff 1973: 81-82 (Lahu); Solnit 1995 (Kayah Li); Mortensen 2003, Pan 1972 (Hmong); Karnchana 1976: 880 (Khmer); Liem 1969 (Vietnamese); Phukan n.d. (Ahom); Haas 1964: xvii, Hudak 1990 (Thai); Purnell 1963: 119 (Northern Thai); Luo 1999: xxiii (Dehong Dai); Young 1985: 18 (Tai Mao); Somsong & Qin 2009: 49 (Zhuang); and Amara 2008 (Tai Lue).

of the Chinese ‘chengyu’ which are four-character idiomatic expressions.<sup>2</sup> It was Mary Haas who first used the term ‘elaborate expression’, a label that has gained in acceptance. Other authors have called them ‘four-syllable idiomatic expressions’ (Liem), ‘four-syllable coordinative constructions’ (Pan), and several other variations on this theme.

In a 130,000-word corpus of Dai Lue texts, covering mostly written materials, elaborate expressions (EEs) form over 1% of the total words. EEs occur in all genres including first person narratives, correspondence, folktales, ‘khap’ poetry, newspaper articles, cookery recipes, medicine, agriculture, electricity, proverbs, and children's reading primers.

In a 13,000-word dictionary of Dai Lue (Hanna 2012) over 730 elaborate expressions are listed.<sup>3</sup>

The pervasive nature of EEs in Dai Lue can be seen by comparing the Dai Lue dictionary with the article by Amara (2008). She lists twenty-one EEs, only six of which appear in the Dai Lue dictionary, indicating that the dictionary comes nowhere near to exhausting a list of all the EEs in the language.

## 2. THE DAI LUE LANGUAGE

There are approximately 300,000 Dai Lue people, mostly in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan province of China, but also in Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.

The traditional Dai Lue orthography has been in use for about seven-hundred years. In the 1950s the ‘new Lue’ orthography was developed by Chinese scholars as a simplification of the traditional one. Both have been taught to Dai Lue children in China over the last few decades. Among Dai Lue speakers in other countries there is little knowledge of either script except where the traditional script is preserved in the monasteries.

There is extensive Dai Lue literature including religious texts and ‘khap’ poetry. Many volumes of this have been set in the new Lue script and published in China in recent decades, along with other books including translated novels, agricultural and medical handbooks, history, etc.

## 3. MORPHOLOGY

The elaborate expression is one of the major compounding constructions in Dai Lue morphology. A clause in Dai Lue follows basically an SVO word order. Single-morpheme words in Dai Lue are largely monosyllabic. Single-morpheme words of more than one syllable occur, but they are typically loanwords, onomatopoeic words or sesquisyllabic words.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Four-character expressions in Chinese were extensively catalogued by Giles as early as 1873.

<sup>3</sup> The data in this paper is based on the Dai Lue language as spoken in Sipsongpanna (Xishuangbanna), Yunnan, China.

<sup>4</sup> Sesquisyllabic words have a minor syllable and a full syllable. Dai Lue minor syllables have /a/, /i/ and /u/ as the only possible vowels; they have no vowel length contrast, no final consonant, no consonant clusters and no contrastive tone. The full range of single initial consonants is found, e.g. *t<sup>h</sup>a-lii*<sup>1</sup> ‘to declare’; *sa-mɣɣ<sup>1</sup>* ‘regular’; *su-laa*<sup>4</sup> ‘liquor’; *pi-ti*<sup>2</sup> ‘glad’.

Words of more than one syllable always have stress on the final syllable. This is true not just of sesquisyllabic words but also of words with two or more full syllables. Thus the four-syllable EE is driven by a --- rhythm of two iambic feet.

Morphology in Dai Lue involves derivation, reduplication, compounding, and elaborate expressions. There are no inflectional affixes on words (such as the plural or tense endings of English).

### 3.1. Derivation

Derived words in Dai Lue are usually head-initial. There are several nominalising heads, and some for other parts of speech. A few examples of nominalising derivational prefixes are shown in Table 1.

Prefix		Example <sup>5</sup>	
kaan <sup>1</sup>	kaan <sup>1</sup> faaŋ <sup>6</sup>	NMLZ:protect	protection
nam <sup>6</sup>	nam <sup>6</sup> suŋ <sup>1</sup>	water:high	height
caaŋ <sup>5</sup>	caaŋ <sup>5</sup> k <sup>h</sup> am <sup>4</sup>	craftsman:gold	goldsmith
p <sup>h</sup> uu <sup>3</sup>	p <sup>h</sup> uu <sup>3</sup> kɔn <sup>2</sup> ʔɔn <sup>1</sup>	person:first:before	boss

Table 1. Some derivational prefixes in Dai Lue

### 3.2. Reduplication

Uses of reduplication include:

- onomatopoetic sounds: ʔoŋ<sup>5</sup>ʔoŋ<sup>5</sup> ‘growling sound’;
- repeated adjectives: suuu<sup>5</sup>suuu<sup>5</sup> ‘straight’, kæn<sup>2</sup>kæn<sup>2</sup> ‘tightly’ (from kæn<sup>2</sup> ‘hard, firm’);
- adverbs: caj<sup>3</sup>caj<sup>3</sup> ‘repeatedly, insistently’;
- repetition, with some sound changes used in many expressives: cɔŋ<sup>3</sup>cæŋ<sup>3</sup> ‘irregularly, randomly’.

### 3.3. Compound words

Compounding is the most important morphological process in Dai Lue. Compound words occur in all parts of speech.

In English, verb:verb compounds are rare (sleepwalk, stir-fry). In Dai Lue they are very common; examples include /kææ<sup>3</sup>k<sup>h</sup>aj<sup>1</sup>/ undo:open ‘explain’, /saan<sup>3</sup>pæŋ<sup>1</sup>/ build:make ‘produce’.

<sup>5</sup> Abbreviations used in glosses are consistent with the Leipzig Glossing Rules, with the following exceptions: ATT attendant word; FP final particle; LINK linker.

Superscript numbers mark the six tones of Dai Lue. The intonation of the tones varies from place to place, but they are approximately like this: Tone 1 (proto A1-3) high; Tone 2 (B1-3) high rising; Tone 3 (C1-3) low rising; Tone 4 (A4) low falling; Tone 5 (B4) mid; Tone 6 (C4) low falling creaky. The phonemic orthography used here is close to IPA. /c/ represents an alveo-palatal affricate [tʃ] before front vowels /i, e, æ/; and an alveo-dental affricate [ts] before back and rounded vowels. See Li 1964, Hartmann 1984, Nanthariya 1984 and Hanna 2012 for further description of Dai Lue phonology. See Kanita 2009 for more on Dai Lue tone variation.

## 4. TWO BUILDING BLOCKS FOR ELABORATE EXPRESSIONS

There are two features of Dai Lue morphological structure that are exploited for the creation of EEs. One is the high frequency of coordinate compound words. The other is the presence of attendant words.

### 4.1. Building Block 1: Coordinate Compounds

Coordinate compound words, what the Sanskrit grammarians called *dvandva*, are not common in Western languages, but occur frequently in Southeast Asian languages including Dai Lue, where they occur in all parts of speech.<sup>6</sup> Wälchli, who calls them ‘co-compounds’, says that ‘the parts express semantically closely associated concepts ... which are on the same hierarchical level, and the whole meaning is more general than the meaning of the parts’ (Wälchli 2005: 1). Scalise & Bisetto in a feature article in the *Oxford Handbook of Compounding* (2009: 45) argue that a three-way classification of compounds into Subordinate, Attributive and Coordinate is the most useful for cross-linguistic comparison.

Subordinate	ʔɔk <sup>2</sup> kam <sup>4</sup>	put_forth:word = ‘announce’
Attributive	ʔim <sup>2</sup> caj <sup>1</sup>	full:heart = ‘satisfied’
Coordinate	k <sup>h</sup> aw <sup>3</sup> nam <sup>6</sup>	rice:water = ‘food’

A sampling of Dai Lue coordinate compounds in several parts of speech are listed below.

(1)	pɔɔ <sup>5</sup> mææ <sup>5</sup>	father:mother	‘parent’
(2)	caj <sup>1</sup> k <sup>h</sup> ɔɔ <sup>4</sup>	heart:throat	‘emotion’
(3)	waan <sup>1</sup> lam <sup>4</sup>	sweet:delicious	‘delicious’
(4)	cuʔ <sup>2</sup> laaj <sup>5</sup>	deceive:lie	‘to deceive’
(5)	dɔj <sup>3</sup> kin <sup>1</sup>	eat:eat	‘to eat’
(6)	taj <sup>3</sup> laaŋ <sup>5</sup>	under:under	‘under’
(7)	tuu <sup>1</sup> k <sup>h</sup> ɔj <sup>3</sup>	1PL:1(DEFERENTIAL)	‘we (deferential)’
(8)	kap <sup>2</sup> taŋ <sup>4</sup>	and:also	‘in addition’
(9)	suuu <sup>4</sup> huuu <sup>4</sup>	why:why	‘why’

Coordinate compound words are frequently taken as the foundation for elaborate expressions.<sup>7</sup> A creative speaker can expand on a coordinate compound in many ways to create interesting and enjoyable speech. Building on the word /k<sup>h</sup>aw<sup>3</sup>nam<sup>6</sup>/ rice:water = ‘food’ for instance, one might say:

(10)	kin <sup>1</sup> k <sup>h</sup> aw <sup>3</sup> kin <sup>1</sup> nam <sup>6</sup>	eat:rice:eat:water	‘to eat’
(11)	jaak <sup>2</sup> k <sup>h</sup> aw <sup>3</sup> jaak <sup>2</sup> nam <sup>6</sup>	hungry:rice:hungry:water	‘hungry’
(12)	mii <sup>4</sup> k <sup>h</sup> aw <sup>3</sup> mii <sup>4</sup> nam <sup>6</sup>	have:rice:have:water	‘to have food’

<sup>6</sup> English coordinate compounds are rare. The adjective ‘bitter-sweet’ is one. If you imagine an English sentence, ‘She is my brother-sister,’ meaning ‘She is my sibling,’ it will give you a feel for Dai Lue coordinate compounds.

<sup>7</sup> Thanks to Ken Manson (pc) for this observation. See also Haas (1964: xvii), who discusses this issue.

- |      |   |                      |                    |
|------|---|----------------------|--------------------|
| (13) | haa <sup>1</sup> k <sup>h</sup> aw <sup>3</sup> haa <sup>1</sup> nam <sup>6</sup> | seek:rice:seek:water | ‘to look for food’ |
| (14) | huŋ <sup>1</sup> k <sup>h</sup> aw <sup>3</sup> huŋ <sup>1</sup> nam <sup>6</sup> | boil:rice:boil:water | ‘to cook’          |

Expanded forms of this kind are not lexemes. They could never be listed exhaustively in a dictionary; they are inherently creative and the possibility of new ones is open-ended. This kind of expansion of coordinate compounds happens in every part of speech including nouns, pronouns, verbs, secondary verbs, adverb-auxiliaries, conjunctions and classifiers.

#### 4.2. Building Block 2: Attendant Words

A category of words that is similar to coordinate compounds is what some have called attendant words.<sup>8</sup> These words look like compounds, but one of the elements is not an independent morpheme.

The Dai Lue word /faaw<sup>6</sup>fiw<sup>6</sup>/ ‘hurry’ shows an example of an attendant word. The word /faaw<sup>6</sup>/ means ‘hurry’. The word /fiw<sup>6</sup>/ is not used independently but if pressed a Lue speaker will say, ‘It means the same as /faaw<sup>6</sup>/’. These quasi-compounds are used in the same way as other coordinate compounds and form a building block for EEs in the same way as other coordinate compounds.

- |      |  |                       |                      |
|------|--|-----------------------|----------------------|
| (15) | baw <sup>2</sup> faaw <sup>6</sup> baw <sup>2</sup> fiw <sup>6</sup>                             | not:hurry:not:ATT     | ‘not in a hurry’     |
| (16) | jaa <sup>2</sup> faaw <sup>6</sup> jaa <sup>2</sup> fiw <sup>6</sup>                             | don’t:hurry:don’t:ATT | ‘don’t hurry’        |
| (17) | k <sup>h</sup> aj <sup>5</sup> faaw <sup>6</sup> k <sup>h</sup> aj <sup>5</sup> fiw <sup>6</sup> | want:hurry:want:ATT   | ‘want to go quickly’ |

Sometimes the attendant word is at the beginning of the compound. The word /dɔk<sup>2</sup>daaj<sup>1</sup>/ means ‘in vain.’ The word /daaj<sup>1</sup>/ can mean either ‘alone’ or ‘in vain’ and thus is the core of this compound. The word /dɔk<sup>2</sup>/ is homophonous with the word for ‘flower’ but in /dɔk<sup>2</sup>daaj<sup>1</sup>/ it is merely an attendant word. /dɔk<sup>2</sup>daaj<sup>1</sup>/ can be used as a building block for EEs such as the following.

- |      |  |                             |                               |
|------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (18) | fæt <sup>2</sup> dɔk <sup>2</sup> fæt <sup>2</sup> daaj <sup>1</sup> | discard:ATT:discard:in_vain | ‘throw it away as<br>useless’ |
| (19) | het <sup>5</sup> dɔk <sup>2</sup> het <sup>5</sup> daaj <sup>1</sup> | do:ATT:do:in_vain           | ‘do in vain’                  |

Attendant words are usually alliterative or bear some other phonological similarity to the word that they pair with. Other examples of attendant words include:

- |      |                                       |           |         |
|------|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| (20) | jɔŋ <sup>5</sup> jɔŋ <sup>4</sup>     | tease:ATT | ‘tease’ |
| (21) | dii <sup>1</sup> daa <sup>1</sup>     | good:ATT  | ‘good’  |
| (22) | sapaŋ <sup>5</sup> sapet <sup>5</sup> | all:ATT   | ‘all’   |
| (23) | sæn <sup>2</sup> saaj <sup>1</sup>    | shake:ATT | ‘shake’ |

<sup>8</sup> See Watson 2001: 389 and Ayako 2010, both of which discuss this phenomenon in Khmer. Attendant words are similar to expressives (Aikhenvald 2007: 43) in their sound symbolism. However expressives have semantic content, bringing some kind of attribution to the expression: e.g. /baaŋ<sup>1</sup>jeŋ<sup>5</sup>jeŋ<sup>5</sup>/ thin:EXPRESSIVE ‘translucently thin’. Attendant words are ‘semantically empty’ (Ayako 2010: 42) and function as a dummy coordinate compound.

- |      |                                    |            |          |
|------|------------------------------------|------------|----------|
| (24) | jaaw <sup>3</sup> hɿn <sup>4</sup> | ATT:house  | ‘house’  |
| (25) | ɗɔk <sup>2</sup> wan <sup>4</sup>  | flower:ATT | ‘flower’ |

## 5. STRATEGIES FOR FORMING ELABORATE EXPRESSIONS

There are seven different strategies that Lue speakers use to form EEs. This presentation begins with the ways that are most productive for forming new and innovative expressions, and that often are not lexical. It moves on toward strategies that are likely to involve fixed lexemes and idiomatic expressions in the language.

### 5.1. Expansion of a Coordinate Compound

The most common strategy for forming EEs is to build them from a coordinate compound word or from an attendant word.

The basic word for ‘money’ is /ŋuun<sup>4</sup>/ literally ‘silver’, but there is also a coordinate compound /ŋuun<sup>4</sup>k<sup>h</sup>am<sup>4</sup>/ silver:gold meaning ‘money’ or ‘wealth’. A word like this can be expanded on in many ways by a creative speaker. If we take the compound as having the form Aa, then the expansion has the form xAxa, or less commonly Axax.

- |      |  |                         |  |
|------|--|-------------------------|--|
| (26) | mii <sup>4</sup> ŋuun <sup>4</sup> mii <sup>4</sup> k <sup>h</sup> am <sup>4</sup>                             | have:silver:have:gold   | ‘to have money, be rich’                     |
| (27) | haa <sup>1</sup> ŋuun <sup>4</sup> haa <sup>1</sup> k <sup>h</sup> am <sup>4</sup>                             | seek:silver:seek:gold   | ‘to look for employment, seek one’s fortune’ |
| (28) | loo <sup>2</sup> ŋuun <sup>4</sup> loo <sup>2</sup> k <sup>h</sup> am <sup>4</sup>                             | want:silver:want:gold   | ‘to wish for money’                          |
| (29) | daj <sup>3</sup> ŋuun <sup>4</sup> daj <sup>3</sup> k <sup>h</sup> am <sup>4</sup>                             | get:silver:get:gold     | ‘to acquire wealth’                          |
| (30) | k <sup>h</sup> oo <sup>4</sup> ŋuun <sup>4</sup> k <sup>h</sup> oo <sup>4</sup> k <sup>h</sup> am <sup>4</sup> | thing:silver:thing:gold | ‘jewellery’                                  |
| (31) | ŋuun <sup>4</sup> laaj <sup>1</sup> k <sup>h</sup> am <sup>4</sup> laaj <sup>1</sup>                           | silver:lots:gold:lots   | ‘lots of money’                              |

Dai Lue spoken and written discourse is full of EEs of this nature. Some such expressions are frozen and lexical; /k<sup>h</sup>oo<sup>4</sup>ŋuun<sup>4</sup>k<sup>h</sup>oo<sup>4</sup>k<sup>h</sup>am<sup>4</sup>/ is a common word for ‘jewellery’. But most EEs of this kind are non-lexical and spontaneous.

The coordinate compounds around which EEs are built can be of any part of speech. Verbs and adjectives are as common as nouns. The compound word /dii<sup>1</sup>ŋaam<sup>4</sup>/ good:beautiful ‘beautiful’ might be expanded to:

- |      |  |                          |                           |
|------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| (32) | haaŋ <sup>5</sup> dii <sup>1</sup> haaŋ <sup>5</sup> ŋaam <sup>4</sup> | body:good:body:beautiful | ‘beautiful, good looking’ |
| (33) | caat <sup>5</sup> dii <sup>1</sup> caat <sup>5</sup> ŋaam <sup>4</sup> | very:good:very:beautiful | ‘very beautiful’          |
| (34) | baw <sup>2</sup> dii <sup>1</sup> baw <sup>2</sup> ŋaam <sup>4</sup>   | not:good:not:beautiful   | ‘not beautiful’           |

The compound word /sam<sup>6</sup>seŋ<sup>3</sup>/ completely:completely ‘completely’ might expand to:

- |      |   |                                 |                 |
|------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| (35) | kin <sup>1</sup> sam <sup>6</sup> kin <sup>1</sup> seŋ <sup>3</sup> | eat:completely:eat:completely   | ‘eat all of it’ |
| (36) | waa <sup>5</sup> sam <sup>6</sup> waa <sup>5</sup> seŋ <sup>3</sup> | tell:completely:tell:completely | ‘to tell all’   |

- (37) baw<sup>2</sup>sam<sup>6</sup>baw<sup>2</sup>seŋ<sup>3</sup> not:completely:not:completely ‘not completely’

Elaborate expressions of this nature are commonplace. They roll off people’s tongues readily in speech, and appear frequently in writing. There are also EEs built on this principle that are fixed or cliché-like. The compound /caj<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ɔɔ<sup>4</sup>/ heart:throat is used for emotions. EEs built around it are typically idiomatic and lexemes.

- (38) tim<sup>1</sup>caj<sup>1</sup>tim<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ɔɔ<sup>4</sup> full:heart:full:throat ‘emotional, full of emotion’  
 (39) taŋ<sup>3</sup>caj<sup>1</sup>taŋ<sup>3</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ɔɔ<sup>4</sup> establish:heart:establish:throat ‘to intend’  
 (40) sɔŋ<sup>1</sup>caj<sup>1</sup>sɔŋ<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ɔɔ<sup>4</sup> two:heart:two:throat ‘undecided, of two minds’

The following are some EEs extracted from the corpus and shown in their context.

- (41) lɣk<sup>5</sup> ʔaw<sup>1</sup> pɔp<sup>5</sup> ʔan<sup>4</sup> **hum<sup>1</sup>** ʔaan<sup>2</sup> **hum<sup>1</sup>** tɔŋ<sup>4</sup>  
 choose take book which like read like look  
 nan<sup>6</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> tam<sup>4</sup> k<sup>h</sup>aaj<sup>1</sup>  
 that come place sell  
 They chose books that (people) **like to read** and set them out for sale.

In Example (41) the EE is built around the coordinate compound /ʔaan<sup>2</sup>tɔŋ<sup>4</sup>/ read:look ‘read’. This EE is purely compositional and could not be construed as a lexeme of the language.

- (42) maa<sup>4</sup> t<sup>h</sup>uŋ<sup>1</sup> tii<sup>5</sup>ʔɔɔk<sup>2</sup> kun<sup>4</sup>ʔaw<sup>1</sup>kaan<sup>1</sup> han<sup>3</sup> maa<sup>4</sup>  
 come to exit officer there come  
 saa<sup>6</sup> kaan<sup>3</sup> saa<sup>6</sup> kɔɔ<sup>1</sup>  
 examine document examine document  
 ‘When we got to the exit, the officers there **examined** our **documents**.’

The EE in Example (42) is built around /kaan<sup>3</sup>kɔɔ<sup>1</sup>/ stem:plant ‘document’ (from the palm leaves that traditional documents were written on).

- (43) fɣɣ<sup>1</sup> maak<sup>2</sup>moŋ<sup>5</sup> lun<sup>2</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> kɔɔ<sup>6</sup> kuu<sup>4</sup>  
 leaf mango fall come LINK 1SG  
**daj<sup>3</sup>** **p<sup>h</sup>ew<sup>3</sup>** **daj<sup>3</sup>** **k<sup>w</sup>aat<sup>2</sup>**  
 ACHIEVEMENT clean\_up ACHIEVEMENT sweep  
 ‘When the mango leaves fall I **have to clean them up**.’

This EE expands on /p<sup>h</sup>ew<sup>3</sup>k<sup>w</sup>aat<sup>2</sup>/ clean\_up:sweep ‘to clean up’.

- (44) mii<sup>4</sup>    sɔŋ<sup>1</sup>    kɔɔ<sup>6</sup>    sɔŋ<sup>1</sup>    sew<sup>2</sup>    paj<sup>1</sup>    kaa<sup>6</sup>    naŋ<sup>3</sup>kan<sup>1</sup>  
 exist    two    friend    two    friend    go    sell    together  
 ‘There were **two friends** who went selling together.’

In Example (44) the EE is expanded from /kɔɔ<sup>6</sup>sew<sup>2</sup>/, a common compound for ‘friend’, from /kɔɔ<sup>6</sup>/ ‘classifier for friends, relatives’ and /sew<sup>2</sup>/ ‘friend’.

## 5.2. Merger of Two Coordinate Compounds

Another common strategy for forming EEs is to blend together two coordinate compounds. For instance, the word /cæt<sup>2</sup>nap<sup>5</sup>/ count:count ‘to count’ can be merged with /sam<sup>6</sup>seŋ<sup>3</sup>/ completely:completely ‘completely’ as in Example (45). If the two compounds are taken as Aa and Bb, then the merger becomes ABab.

- (45) cæt<sup>2</sup>sam<sup>6</sup>nap<sup>5</sup>seŋ<sup>3</sup>    count:completely:count:completely    ‘to count  
 all of it’

Unlike the first kind, EEs of this kind are difficult to form spontaneously. A person who can think quickly and produce creative ones is considered to be a clever and /moon<sup>5</sup>/ ‘fun’ speaker. Other examples follow.

- (46) sɔŋ<sup>5</sup>ŋuun<sup>4</sup>haa<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>am<sup>4</sup>    seek:silver:seek:gold    ‘to look for work,  
 seek one’s fortune’

The word /sɔŋ<sup>5</sup>haa<sup>1</sup>/ in (46) is formed from two synonyms seek:seek ‘seek’. The word /ŋuun<sup>4</sup>k<sup>h</sup>am<sup>4</sup>/ is formed from silver:gold ‘money’. These coordinate compounds merge to form the elaborate expression.

- (47) haan<sup>5</sup>dii<sup>1</sup>too<sup>1</sup>ŋaam<sup>4</sup>    body:good:body:beautiful    ‘beautiful’

The word /haan<sup>5</sup>too<sup>1</sup>/ is formed from two synonyms for ‘body’. The word /dii<sup>1</sup>ŋaam<sup>4</sup>/ is formed from good:beautiful ‘beautiful’.

- (48) sɔŋ<sup>5</sup>dɔj<sup>3</sup>haa<sup>1</sup>kin<sup>1</sup>    seek:eat:seek:eat    ‘to look for food, earn  
 a living’

The word /dɔj<sup>3</sup>kin<sup>1</sup>/ in Example (48) is formed from two synonyms for ‘eat’.

- (49) cɔŋ<sup>5</sup>dɔj<sup>3</sup>taan<sup>4</sup>kin<sup>1</sup>    space:eat:path:eat    ‘food’

The word /cɔŋ<sup>5</sup>taan<sup>4</sup>/ is a coordinate compound space:path ‘path’.

- (50) juu<sup>2</sup>haaj<sup>6</sup>kin<sup>1</sup>jaak<sup>5</sup>    stay:bad:eat:difficult    ‘to have a difficult  
 life’

The word /juu<sup>2</sup>kin<sup>1</sup>/ is formed from stay:eat ‘to live’, and the word /haaj<sup>6</sup>jaak<sup>5</sup>/ is formed from bad:difficult ‘difficult’.

- (51) seep<sup>2</sup>tɔŋ<sup>6</sup>cep<sup>2</sup>pum<sup>1</sup>    stick\_into:stomach:hurt:stomach    ‘stomach ache’

The word /seep<sup>2</sup>cep<sup>2</sup>/ in Example (51) is formed from stick\_into:hurt ‘to hurt’, and the word /təŋ<sup>6</sup>pum<sup>1</sup>/ is formed from two synonyms for ‘stomach’.

(52) k<sup>h</sup>ɔɔ<sup>3</sup>hak<sup>5</sup>k<sup>h</sup>waam<sup>4</sup>pæŋ<sup>4</sup> item:love:content:love ‘love (noun)’

The coordinate compound /k<sup>h</sup>ɔɔ<sup>3</sup>k<sup>h</sup>waam<sup>4</sup>/ is formed from item:content ‘content’, and /hak<sup>5</sup>pæŋ<sup>4</sup>/ is formed from two synonyms for ‘love’. EEs of this kind are hard to form creatively, and there are many that are lexemes with meanings that are not predictable.

(53) ?aw<sup>1</sup>cit<sup>2</sup>saj<sup>2</sup>caj<sup>1</sup> take:heart:put\_in:heart ‘to take an interest in’

Example (53) is formed from /?aw<sup>1</sup>saj<sup>2</sup>/ take:put\_in ‘put in’, and two synonyms for ‘heart’.

(54) cit<sup>2</sup>kwaan<sup>3</sup>caj<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>waan<sup>1</sup> heart:wide:heart:ATT ‘generous’

This EE is formed from /cit<sup>2</sup>caj<sup>1</sup>/ ‘heart’, and /kwaan<sup>3</sup>k<sup>h</sup>waan<sup>1</sup>/ wide:ATT ‘wide’. The compound /kwaan<sup>3</sup>k<sup>h</sup>waan<sup>1</sup>/ involves an attendant word.

Following are some ‘merger’ EEs from the corpus shown in their context.

(55) taan<sup>5</sup> naa<sup>3</sup> saw<sup>3</sup> taa<sup>1</sup> mɔŋ<sup>1</sup> naŋ<sup>5</sup> juu<sup>2</sup> him<sup>4</sup>taan<sup>4</sup> waj<sup>6</sup>  
 3SG face sad eye sad sit stay edge\_of\_road away  
 ‘He was sitting **sadly** by the side of the road.’

In Example (55) the EE is formed from the merger of /naa<sup>3</sup>taa<sup>1</sup>/ face:eye ‘face’ and /saw<sup>3</sup>mɔŋ<sup>1</sup>/ sad:sad ‘sad’.

(56) taŋ<sup>4</sup>laaj<sup>1</sup> p<sup>h</sup>ɔm<sup>5</sup> pin<sup>1</sup> cit<sup>2</sup> nuŋ<sup>5</sup> caj<sup>1</sup> dew<sup>1</sup>  
 everybody together be heart one heart single  
 kan<sup>1</sup> pæŋ<sup>1</sup> k<sup>h</sup>oo<sup>1</sup> maj<sup>2</sup> lim<sup>3</sup> nuŋ<sup>5</sup>  
 each\_other make bridge new CLF:bridge one  
 ‘They all worked together **in unity** to build a new bridge.’

This EE is formed by a merger of /cit<sup>2</sup>caj<sup>1</sup>/ heart:heart ‘heart’, and /nuŋ<sup>5</sup>dew<sup>1</sup>/ one:single ‘one’.

(57) mii<sup>4</sup> sæŋ<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>oo<sup>4</sup> k<sup>h</sup>ɣŋ<sup>5</sup> nuŋ<sup>5</sup> taan<sup>4</sup> baj<sup>1</sup>  
 exist shop thing wear path drape  
 mii<sup>4</sup> soj<sup>3</sup> təŋ<sup>4</sup> laan<sup>4</sup> k<sup>h</sup>am<sup>4</sup>  
 exist necklace bronze earring gold  
 mii<sup>4</sup> cɔŋ<sup>5</sup> dɔj<sup>3</sup> taan<sup>4</sup> kin<sup>1</sup> sapa?<sup>5</sup>  
 exist space eat path eat all\_kinds  
 ‘There were shops that had **clothing, jewellery** and **food** of all kinds.’

In Example (57) there are three EEs for ‘clothing’, ‘jewellery’ and ‘food’.

### 5.3. Two Compound Words in Apposition

The EEs shown above are formed by merging two coordinate compounds, but sometimes two compound words are simply set together to form a new EE. These can be any kind of compound words, not restricted to coordinate compounds. Usually these expressions are fixed, as ones of this type are not as easy to create *de novo*. If the two compounds are taken as Aa and Bb, then this new form can be expressed as AaBb.

(58) kam<sup>4</sup>paak<sup>2</sup> lik<sup>5</sup>too<sup>1</sup>      speech:writing      ‘language, writing’

The word /kam<sup>4</sup>paak<sup>2</sup>/ in Example (58) is formed from word:speak ‘speech’. The word /lik<sup>5</sup>too<sup>1</sup>/ is formed from number:letter ‘writing’. When used together they form an elaborate way of saying ‘language’ or ‘writing’.

(59) k<sup>h</sup>ii<sup>3</sup>fun<sup>2</sup> hoo<sup>4</sup>k<sup>h</sup>waaj<sup>4</sup>      fertiliser:cattle      ‘cow manure’

The word /k<sup>h</sup>ii<sup>3</sup>fun<sup>2</sup>/ is formed from shit:fertiliser ‘fertiliser’. The word /hoo<sup>4</sup>k<sup>h</sup>waaj<sup>4</sup>/ is formed from cattle:water\_buffalo ‘bovines’ in general. The common way to say ‘cow manure’ would be a simple /k<sup>h</sup>ii<sup>3</sup>k<sup>h</sup>waaj<sup>4</sup>/ shit:cow; the longer expression refers to manure used as fertiliser.

(60) kin<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ææk<sup>2</sup> mii<sup>4</sup>mee<sup>4</sup>      married:married      ‘married (of a man)’

The word /kin<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ææk<sup>2</sup>/ in Example (60) is formed from eat:guest which is the common adjective for ‘married’. The word /mii<sup>4</sup>mee<sup>4</sup>/ have:wife can also be used for ‘married’ and together they form a longer more elaborate expression.

Following are some ‘apposition’ EEs shown in their context from the corpus.

(61) daj<sup>3</sup>      pin<sup>1</sup> p<sup>h</sup>uu<sup>3</sup>      nɿɿ<sup>6</sup>too<sup>1</sup>      kaa<sup>1</sup>jaa<sup>4</sup>      kæn<sup>2</sup>k<sup>h</sup>an<sup>1</sup>      mɿɿ<sup>4</sup>naa<sup>3</sup>  
 ACHIEVEMENT be person flesh body strong future  
 ‘(Children who get good medical care) will be people with strong  
**bodies** in the future.’

This EE combines the Tai coordinate compound /nɿɿ<sup>6</sup>too<sup>1</sup>/ flesh:body ‘flesh’, and the Indic loan /kaa<sup>1</sup>jaa<sup>4</sup>/ ‘body’ which is a two-syllable, single-morpheme word.

(62) jon<sup>6</sup>waa<sup>5</sup>      k<sup>h</sup>ii<sup>3</sup>k<sup>h</sup>aan<sup>6</sup>      jaan<sup>3</sup>kaan<sup>1</sup>      p<sup>h</sup>ɔŋ<sup>5</sup>      tok<sup>5</sup>k<sup>h</sup>a<sup>ʔ</sup><sup>2</sup>      lam<sup>4</sup>baak<sup>2</sup>  
 because lazy afraid\_of\_work quite poor difficult  
 ‘Because he was quite **lazy**, he was **poor**.’

In Example (62) there are two EEs: /k<sup>h</sup>ii<sup>3</sup>k<sup>h</sup>aan<sup>6</sup>jaan<sup>3</sup>kaan<sup>1</sup>/ ‘lazy’, and /tok<sup>5</sup>k<sup>h</sup>a<sup>ʔ</sup><sup>2</sup>lam<sup>4</sup>baak<sup>2</sup>/ ‘poor’.

A four-syllable expression formed from two compounds in apposition is a common strategy for forming technical terms in Dai Lue. Several examples follow.

(63)	ʔaa <sup>4</sup> kaan <sup>1</sup> baan <sup>3</sup> mɿŋ <sup>4</sup>	situation:politics	‘affairs of state’
(64)	nam <sup>6</sup> man <sup>4</sup> t <sup>h</sup> oo <sup>2</sup> din <sup>1</sup>	oil:peanut	‘peanut oil’
(65)	naŋ <sup>1</sup> suuu <sup>1</sup> kaw <sup>6</sup> kɿŋ <sup>4</sup>	document:primary	‘constitution’
(66)	kuŋ <sup>1</sup> kwen <sup>1</sup> saam <sup>1</sup> lɔɔ <sup>6</sup>	bicycle:three_wheels	‘tricycle’
(67)	k <sup>h</sup> ɿn <sup>6</sup> lek <sup>2</sup> kip <sup>2</sup> bææ <sup>3</sup>	hammer:goat_hoof	‘claw hammer’
(68)	sak <sup>h</sup> iŋ <sup>2</sup> kɿŋ <sup>4</sup> caa <sup>1</sup>	proof:custom:speak	‘evidence, proof’
(69)	mɔɔ <sup>1</sup> jaa <sup>1</sup> hap <sup>5</sup> luuk <sup>5</sup>	doctor:receive_baby	‘midwife’

#### 5.4. Rhyming Middles

There are a large number of Dai Lue EEs in which the second and third syllables rhyme. These are typically fixed expressions, but ones in which people take delight. People are aware of their rhyming nature, and this writer has heard conversations about how new ones could be formed.

The rhyme is important to these expressions, and often the rhyme overrides the need for semantic consistency. A word in the second or third position of an EE may have only a vague connection to the meaning of the expression, but is there by convention solely because it rhymes.

(70)	p <sup>h</sup> ak <sup>2</sup> maj <sup>6</sup> saj <sup>3</sup> k <sup>h</sup> ɿŋ <sup>4</sup>	vegetable:wood:intestine:vine	‘edible greens’
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Example (70) is a typical EE with a rhyming middle. The components /p<sup>h</sup>ak<sup>2</sup>/ ‘vegetable’ and /k<sup>h</sup>ɿŋ<sup>4</sup>/ ‘vine’ can be readily understood in the context. The word /maj<sup>6</sup>/ ‘wood’ is a component of almost any word referring to plants and vegetation. The word /saj<sup>3</sup>/ ‘intestines’ however seems to be there solely because it rhymes with /maj<sup>6</sup>/.<sup>9</sup>

(71)	maŋ <sup>5</sup> mun <sup>4</sup> tun <sup>5</sup> taw <sup>6</sup>	rich:round:calm:support	‘to have plenty, be well provided for’
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This is a collocation of four disparate words. The word /maŋ<sup>5</sup>/ ‘rich’ is an obvious choice for the context. The word /taw<sup>6</sup>/ ‘support’ can also have the sense of ‘piled up’ which may draw it to this place. The word /mun<sup>4</sup>/ ‘round’ can have the sense of ‘abundance, fullness.’ The word /tun<sup>5</sup>/ ‘calm’ is here primarily because it rhymes with /mun<sup>4</sup>/. Note that it also creates a pleasing alliteration of /m-m-t-t/ in the initial sounds.

(72)	hoo <sup>1</sup> mɿn <sup>5</sup> tɿn <sup>5</sup> dɿj <sup>1</sup>	head:hill:section:mountain	‘mountainous’
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This has as its semantic core the coordinate compound /mɿn<sup>5</sup>dɿj<sup>1</sup>/ hill:mountain ‘mountain’. The word /hoo<sup>1</sup>/ ‘head’ at the beginning has a possible connection to mountains rising up. The word /tɿn<sup>5</sup>/ ‘section’ can be used for

<sup>9</sup> Note that tone is not taken into account when seeking a rhyme.

sections of bamboo, logs, or pieces of land. Its primary claim to a place in this expression is that it rhymes with /møn<sup>5</sup>/.

(73) waa<sup>5</sup>nøn<sup>4</sup>søn<sup>1</sup>ŋaaj<sup>5</sup>      speak:lie\_down:teach:easy      ‘teachable’

Example (73) is built around the last two words /søn<sup>1</sup>ŋaaj<sup>5</sup>/ teach:easy ‘easy to teach.’ The word /waa<sup>5</sup>/ is literally ‘speak’ but sometimes has the sense of ‘give directions to’ or ‘scold’. The word /nøn<sup>4</sup>/ ‘lie down’ is used in contexts of ‘easy’ or ‘a sure thing’, but its primary attraction to this context is that it rhymes with /søn<sup>1</sup>/.

(74) kin<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ææk<sup>2</sup>bææk<sup>2</sup>lɿɿ<sup>5</sup>      eat:guest:carry:saw      ‘to get married’  
 (75) kin<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ææk<sup>2</sup>tææk<sup>2</sup>ŋaan<sup>4</sup>      eat:guest:split:feast      ‘to get married’

The most common term for ‘married’ in Dai Lue is /kin<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ææk<sup>2</sup>/ eat:guest which makes reference to the major feast involved in a wedding. The question ‘Are you married?’ is commonly expressed as /kin<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ææk<sup>2</sup>læw<sup>6</sup>læɿ<sup>5</sup>/ eat:guest:already:yet ‘Have you had your guests yet?’ The EEs (74) and (75) build on /kin<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ææk<sup>2</sup>/ and depend on an interior rhyme for their unity. /bææk<sup>2</sup>lɿɿ<sup>5</sup>/ carry:saw brings a humorous touch with reference to the burden of raising a family. /tææk<sup>2</sup>ŋaan<sup>4</sup>/ split:feast refers again to the wedding. The word /tææk<sup>2</sup>/ ‘split’ may evoke the practice of the groom leaving his family, but it is there primarily because of its rhyme.

EEs with rhyming middles are common. Several more are listed below without detailed comment.

(76) huu<sup>1</sup>dap<sup>2</sup>tap<sup>2</sup>maj<sup>3</sup>      ear:extinguish:liver:burn      ‘vigorously (as in dancing)’  
 (77) k<sup>h</sup>ap<sup>2</sup>k<sup>h</sup>aj<sup>5</sup>taj<sup>2</sup>haa<sup>1</sup>      drive:want:crawl:seek      ‘to search for’  
 (78) k<sup>h</sup>uun<sup>3</sup>dɔj<sup>1</sup>lɔj<sup>4</sup>liŋ<sup>2</sup>      ascend:mountain:swim:steep      ‘to go up and down mountains’  
 (79) paak<sup>2</sup>hɔɔ<sup>5</sup>p<sup>h</sup>ɔɔ<sup>2</sup>naa<sup>3</sup>      speak:toward:look:face      ‘to speak to each other’  
 (80) pan<sup>1</sup>ʔun<sup>2</sup>tun<sup>5</sup>caj<sup>1</sup>      give:warm:calm:heart      ‘to comfort’  
 (81) sɔɿ<sup>5</sup>kwaa<sup>2</sup>haa<sup>1</sup>dɔj<sup>3</sup>      seek:go:seek:eat      ‘to earn one’s living’  
 (82) taŋ<sup>3</sup>hɔɔ<sup>1</sup>jɔɔ<sup>4</sup>hɿn<sup>4</sup>      establish:hall:raise:house      ‘to establish a home’  
 (83) tæp<sup>2</sup>taj<sup>1</sup>saj<sup>3</sup>pum<sup>1</sup>      liver:gizzard:intestines:stomach      ‘innards’  
 (84) tok<sup>2</sup>caj<sup>1</sup>laj<sup>1</sup>tun<sup>2</sup>      fall:heart:flow:awaken      ‘frightened’  
 (85) tok<sup>2</sup>mææ<sup>5</sup>p<sup>h</sup>ææ<sup>5</sup>luuk<sup>5</sup>      fall:mother:spread:child      ‘to have children’

Some ‘rhyming middle’ EEs are illustrated in context in the examples that follow.

(86) tak<sup>2</sup> nam<sup>6</sup> huuu<sup>3</sup> kun<sup>4</sup>t<sup>h</sup>aw<sup>3</sup> baw<sup>2</sup> mii<sup>4</sup> luuk<sup>5</sup>laan<sup>1</sup>  
 dip water BEN elderly not have child:grandchild

ʔan<sup>4</sup> too<sup>1</sup> dew<sup>1</sup> pew<sup>2</sup> pɔj<sup>4</sup> nan<sup>6</sup>  
 who body single alone ATT that

‘They draw water for the elderly who have no children and who **live alone.**’

The EE in Example (86) includes the attendant word compound /pew<sup>2</sup>pɔj<sup>4</sup>/ alone:ATT.

(87) tɤk<sup>5</sup> wat<sup>5</sup> mahalaat<sup>5</sup> kaw<sup>2</sup> jaŋ<sup>4</sup> hak<sup>5</sup>saa<sup>1</sup> waj<sup>6</sup> huuu<sup>3</sup>  
 line monastery Mahalat old still maintain away for

kun<sup>4</sup> taŋ<sup>4</sup>laaj<sup>1</sup> ʔæw<sup>2</sup> lɔɔ<sup>5</sup> p<sup>h</sup>ɔɔ<sup>2</sup> tɔŋ<sup>4</sup>  
 person all travel try look look

‘The traces of the old Maharat Monastery are still maintained for everybody to **go and see.**’

The EE /ʔæw<sup>2</sup>lɔɔ<sup>5</sup>p<sup>h</sup>ɔɔ<sup>2</sup>tɔŋ<sup>4</sup>/ means ‘to sightsee, go on a tourist trip’.

### 5.5. Double Reduplication

Another strategy for elaborate expressions is to reduplicate both parts of a coordinate compound word with the structure AABB. This is limited to verbs and gives a connotation of continuously repeated activity, or of vigorous, persistent activity.

(88) paj<sup>1</sup>paj<sup>1</sup>maa<sup>4</sup>maa<sup>4</sup> go:go:come:come ‘coming and going’

The prototypical example of this kind of EE is /paj<sup>1</sup>paj<sup>1</sup>maa<sup>4</sup>maa<sup>4</sup>/. The compound word /paj<sup>1</sup>maa<sup>4</sup>/ means ‘come and go’. When it is expanded into an EE it builds on the basic meaning to emphasize the randomness, repetition and continuity of the activity. /paj<sup>1</sup>paj<sup>1</sup>maa<sup>4</sup>maa<sup>4</sup>/ is a secondary verb following a main verb of movement. People may ‘cross **back and forth** over a bridge’, ‘walk **milling around** a fallen meteorite’, or ‘go **in and out** of a marketplace’.

(89) sæn<sup>2</sup>sæn<sup>2</sup>saaj<sup>1</sup>saaj<sup>1</sup> shake:shake:ATT:ATT ‘to shake’

The EE in Example (89) is built on the attendant word compound /sæn<sup>2</sup>saaj<sup>1</sup>/ shake:ATT. As a four-syllable expression it emphasizes the continuous nature of shaking from fear, or shivering from cold.

(90) hok<sup>2</sup>hok<sup>2</sup>cæk<sup>5</sup>cæk<sup>5</sup> jump:jump:rear:rear ‘to jump around (with excitement)’

Example (90) is built on the coordinate compound /hok<sup>2</sup>cæk<sup>5</sup>/. /cæk<sup>5</sup>/ is to ‘rear up’ as a horse might do. As a coordinate compound it refers to exuberant jumping and might be used of a horse, a dog or even a person.

Some other examples are shown without comment.

(91) hon<sup>5</sup>hon<sup>5</sup>moo<sup>4</sup>moo<sup>4</sup> shout:shout:chatter:chatter ‘to make a racket (as an audience that continues chattering)’

(92) k<sup>h</sup>ap<sup>2</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ap<sup>2</sup>hoo<sup>6</sup>hoo<sup>6</sup> sing:sing:shout:shout ‘to sing one’s heart out’

(93) taan<sup>5</sup> koo<sup>6</sup> haj<sup>3</sup>haj<sup>3</sup>saam<sup>3</sup>saam<sup>3</sup> waa<sup>5</sup> coon<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> lak<sup>5</sup> paj<sup>1</sup>  
3s LINK cry:cry complain:complain say robber come steal go  
‘He **kicked up a fuss** claiming that a robber had come and stolen it.’

(94) sop<sup>2</sup> man<sup>4</sup> baw<sup>2</sup> saw<sup>4</sup> læ<sup>?</sup> hoo<sup>6</sup>hoo<sup>6</sup> paaw<sup>2</sup>paaw<sup>2</sup>  
mouth 3SG not rest FP:thus call:call announce:announce

p<sup>h</sup>aj<sup>1</sup> k<sup>h</sup>aj<sup>5</sup>daj<sup>3</sup> maa<sup>6</sup> koo<sup>6</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> suu<sup>6</sup> nɣɣ<sup>4</sup>  
whoever want horse LINK come buy FP:seeks\_affirmation  
‘His mouth never rested. He **called out**, “Whoever wants a horse come and buy.”’

(95) baw<sup>2</sup> k<sup>h</sup>ii<sup>1</sup>moo<sup>1</sup> mɣn<sup>1</sup> paaj<sup>4</sup>?on<sup>1</sup> læw<sup>6</sup> man<sup>4</sup> ?æp<sup>2</sup>  
not sad like before any\_more 3SG accompany

koo<sup>6</sup>hen<sup>4</sup> din<sup>3</sup> læ<sup>?</sup> paak<sup>2</sup>paak<sup>2</sup> k<sup>h</sup>oo<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>oo<sup>1</sup>  
friends play and talk:talk laugh:laugh  
‘He wasn’t sad any more like he had been before. He played with his friends and **chattered and laughed**.’

## 5.6. Four Synonyms

Four synonyms, or near synonyms, can be put together into an expression that forms a more elaborate way of expressing an idea. These EEs are typically fixed. Only a clever person can create new ones, but there are many stock phrases of this kind in the language that a quick speaker knows and uses.

(96) kaan<sup>2</sup>koŋ<sup>6</sup>laaj<sup>4</sup>lin<sup>4</sup> striped:bend:pattern:stripe ‘striped, patterned’

The EE /kaan<sup>2</sup>koŋ<sup>6</sup>laaj<sup>4</sup>lin<sup>4</sup>/ is a typical example of this strategy. It may be used to describe patterned clothing or bas-relief carving in a monastery panel. Note that the middle syllables usually do not rhyme in an EE of this kind, although there is alliteration and other phonically pleasing patterns.

(97) siŋ<sup>2</sup>k<sup>h</sup>oo<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>oo<sup>4</sup>k<sup>h</sup>am<sup>4</sup> thing:thing:thing:gold ‘things, possessions’

This EE illustrates a noun that is formed out of four synonyms. The first three words are generic words for ‘thing’ and the final word /k<sup>h</sup>am<sup>4</sup>/ ‘gold’ is drawn to this context at least partly by the alliteration created by the repetition of /k<sup>h</sup>/.

Other examples of this kind of EE are listed without comment.

- (98) kən<sup>2</sup>nam<sup>4</sup>?ən<sup>1</sup>naa<sup>3</sup> first:lead:before:face ‘before’  
 (99) kuɪ<sup>5</sup>het<sup>5</sup>paan<sup>2</sup>pəŋ<sup>1</sup> think:do:do:plan ‘to make plans’  
 (100) p<sup>h</sup>ew<sup>3</sup>kwaat<sup>2</sup>laat<sup>5</sup>juu<sup>4</sup> clean:sweep:pour:broom ‘to clean up’  
 (101) saa<sup>2</sup>jɻm<sup>4</sup>mon<sup>5</sup>din<sup>3</sup> happy:happy:fun:play ‘to have fun, rejoice’

- (102) bək<sup>2</sup>sən<sup>1</sup> wisaa<sup>4</sup> paat<sup>2</sup>jaan<sup>1</sup> huuu<sup>3</sup> pii<sup>3</sup>nəŋ<sup>6</sup> pasaa<sup>1</sup>taj<sup>4</sup>  
 teach method tap\_rubber to sibling Dai\_people

?an<sup>4</sup> juu<sup>2</sup> kaj<sup>3</sup> kim<sup>2</sup> him<sup>4</sup> cam<sup>1</sup> kan<sup>1</sup> nan<sup>6</sup>  
 who live near near edge near each\_other that  
 ‘They taught their rubber-tapping method to the Dai who live **nearby**.’

- (103) pəŋ<sup>1</sup> pəŋ<sup>2</sup> kəw<sup>3</sup> wəæt<sup>5</sup> waj<sup>6</sup> kii<sup>3</sup> saj<sup>1</sup> waan<sup>4</sup> lɻm<sup>3</sup> səŋ<sup>2</sup>  
 make window glass around away quickly clear bright shiny shine  
 ‘He put in glass windows all around (the house) and it quickly became **well-lighted**.’

A variation on the ‘four synonyms’ strategy is to form an EE from four members of a set that taken together typify the set.

- (104) pet<sup>2</sup>kaj<sup>2</sup>muu<sup>1</sup>maa<sup>1</sup> duck:chicken:pig:dog ‘domestic animals’

Example (104) is an EE used to describe domestic animals in general. Other examples are listed below.

- (105) maak<sup>2</sup>k<sup>h</sup>aw<sup>3</sup>met<sup>5</sup>nam<sup>6</sup> fruit:rice:seed:water ‘crops, edible plants’  
 (106) paa<sup>1</sup>kuŋ<sup>3</sup>həj<sup>1</sup>puu<sup>1</sup> fish:shrimp:snail:crab ‘aquatic animals’  
 (107) pəɔ<sup>5</sup>mæ<sup>5</sup>luuk<sup>5</sup>mee<sup>4</sup> father:mother:child:wife ‘family’

### 5.7. Onomatopoeic Words

Onomatopoeic words in Dai Lue are typically filled out to have four syllables, and thus are driven by the same iambic dimetre rhythm of other EEs. Onomatopoeic words can describe sounds (bang, splash) and also actions, especially rhythmic, repetitive ones. These most commonly take the form ABAB, but can be AABB.

- (108) kə?<sup>5</sup>nə?<sup>5</sup>kə?<sup>5</sup>nə?<sup>5</sup> ‘bouncing sound of a person with a carrying pole’

A common sight in Southeast Asia is a woman (rarely a man) walking with a /haap<sup>2</sup>/ stick over her shoulder and a load hanging from each end of the stick. The stick and the load give a squeak and a bounce, which in Dai Lue is described as /kə?<sup>5</sup>nə?<sup>5</sup>kə?<sup>5</sup>nə?<sup>5</sup>/.

(109) məŋ<sup>1</sup>ciŋ<sup>1</sup>məŋ<sup>1</sup>ciŋ<sup>1</sup> ‘sound of a band’

A procession with a band is commonly seen at temple festivals, ordinations, etc. The throbbing /məŋ<sup>1</sup>/ of the drums and the tinkling /ciŋ<sup>1</sup>/ of the cymbals are expressed in this elaborate expression.

A sampling of other onomatopoeic expressions that come in four syllables is shown below.

(110) ʔam<sup>6</sup>ʔuu<sup>6</sup>ʔam<sup>6</sup>ʔut<sup>5</sup> ‘sound of stuttering’

(111) ʔun<sup>1</sup>lun<sup>1</sup>ʔun<sup>1</sup>lun<sup>1</sup> ‘sound of a large object rolling (a boulder, a car turning over)’

(112) hoo<sup>6</sup>hoo<sup>6</sup>haa<sup>6</sup>haa<sup>6</sup> ‘sound of a roaring fire’

(113) taʔaw<sup>1</sup> dun<sup>3</sup>fun<sup>4</sup> maa<sup>4</sup> bup<sup>2</sup> hoo<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>1</sup> maa<sup>1</sup> kɔɔ<sup>6</sup>  
take firewood come hit head dog dog LINK

tin<sup>3</sup>kʰk<sup>2</sup> paj<sup>1</sup> hɔŋ<sup>6</sup> koj<sup>2</sup>ŋoj<sup>2</sup>koj<sup>2</sup>ŋoj<sup>2</sup>  
writhe go cry koy-ngoy-koy-ngoy

He took a piece of firewood and hit the dog on the head; the dog writhed and yelped ‘**koy-ngoy-koy-ngoy**’.

Some onomatopoeic expressions do not involve sound, but evoke a repetitive motion or sensation. Several examples are shown below.

(114) ciʔ<sup>2</sup>ciʔ<sup>2</sup>cɔʔ<sup>2</sup>cɔʔ<sup>2</sup> ‘feeling of numbness, pins and needles’

(115) maap<sup>5</sup>meŋ<sup>1</sup>maap<sup>5</sup>meŋ<sup>1</sup> ‘flashing (as of a firefly)’

(116) see<sup>1</sup>naa<sup>4</sup> taŋ<sup>4</sup>laaj<sup>1</sup> coo<sup>4</sup>kan<sup>1</sup> waj<sup>3</sup>saa<sup>1</sup> ɲup<sup>2</sup>ɲup<sup>2</sup>ɲap<sup>2</sup>ɲap<sup>2</sup>  
courtier all together bow bobbing

tɔɔp<sup>2</sup> waa<sup>5</sup> caj<sup>5</sup> k<sup>h</sup>ɔj<sup>3</sup> læʔ<sup>2</sup>  
answer say yes 1SG(DEFERENTIAL) FP:thus

‘All the courtiers bowed together **bobbing up and down** and answered, “Yes, your majesty.”’

### 5.8. Miscellaneous Elaborate Expressions

The impulse to express oneself in four syllables in Dai Lue extends beyond EEs proper to include idioms, slogans, names (/sip<sup>2</sup>sɔŋ<sup>1</sup>pan<sup>4</sup>naa<sup>4</sup>/ ‘Sipsongpanna’ is the name of the Dai Lue homeland), and many other collocations. Idiomatic expressions are usually stripped of conjunctions, modals and other functor words unless they are needed to fill out a fourth syllable.

(117) cim<sup>3</sup>cii<sup>3</sup>cim<sup>3</sup>cɔk<sup>2</sup> spear:poke:spear:roof ‘rock, paper, scissors game’

The rock-paper-scissors game played by Dai Lue children is /cim<sup>3</sup>cii<sup>3</sup>cim<sup>3</sup>cɔk<sup>2</sup>/. The etymology of this word is not known, but the syllables provide a pleasing alliteration and, as can be seen, there are four syllables.

(118) k<sup>h</sup>aj<sup>1</sup>cɔŋ<sup>5</sup>daj<sup>3</sup>jaj<sup>2</sup>      open:space:until:big      ‘to expand’

The expression ‘to expand’ in (118) is not formed out of a coordinate compound word and does not follow any of the major strategies listed above. However it does fill out to the rhythm of four syllables (even though the meaning would do as well without the word /daj<sup>3</sup>/ ‘until’), and there is a pleasing rhyme in three of the four syllables.

(119) hop<sup>5</sup>caŋ<sup>6</sup>haŋ<sup>5</sup>mæw<sup>4</sup>      picture:elephant:body:cat      ‘not as good as it seems’

The idiom in (119) is formed around the common coordinate compound /hop<sup>5</sup>haŋ<sup>5</sup>/ picture:shape ‘appearance’. Something that has the ‘picture of an elephant but the body of a cat’ could refer to deceptive advertising, or to something that is not as good as its first appearance indicated. Note that any large animal such as a horse or tiger could have done as well as an elephant, but that ‘elephant’ creates an internal rhyme.

(120) saaj<sup>1</sup>baw<sup>2</sup>pin<sup>1</sup>laaj<sup>4</sup>      line:not:be:pattern      ‘trouble is coming, things aren’t going well’

This writer has heard no good explanation of the etymology of this idiom, but there is a pleasing external rhyme (1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> words), and there are four syllables.

(121) sii<sup>2</sup>cɣɣ<sup>6</sup>nap<sup>5</sup>seŋ<sup>3</sup>      four:kind:count:complete      ‘Four kinds is enough!’

This public awareness slogan, probably a translation from Chinese, urges self-sufficiency and avoiding dependence on luxuries.

(122) juu<sup>2</sup>baw<sup>2</sup>mii<sup>4</sup>tii<sup>5</sup>      -      paj<sup>1</sup>baw<sup>1</sup>mii<sup>4</sup>hun<sup>1</sup>      ‘aimless, without purpose’  
stay:not:have:place      -      go:not:have:path

There are times when an idiom may be difficult to express in only four words, and is expanded to eight. Example (122) has a clear internal structure of two four-word sections. Several other examples are listed below without comment.

(123) baw<sup>2</sup>huu<sup>6</sup>kam<sup>4</sup>kun<sup>4</sup>      not:know:word:person      ‘immature, ignorant’  
(124) faa<sup>6</sup>dææt<sup>2</sup>daaw<sup>1</sup>dii<sup>1</sup>      sky:sunshine:star:good      ‘good weather’  
(125) k<sup>h</sup>aw<sup>3</sup>k<sup>h</sup>am<sup>5</sup>ɔk<sup>2</sup>naj<sup>1</sup>      in:evening:out:morning      ‘all day long’  
(126) lup<sup>5</sup>maa<sup>6</sup>cɔm<sup>4</sup>k<sup>h</sup>un<sup>1</sup>      stroke:horse:follow:hair      ‘don’t go against the grain (stroke the horse the way its hair lies)’

## 6. BEYOND FOUR SYLLABLES

Since single-morpheme words in Dai Lue are predominantly monosyllabic, there is a tendency to equate the syllable with the word. EEs are often called ‘four-syllable expressions,’ and prototypically they have four words. But these boundaries (like most boundaries in language) are plastic and exceptions can be found.

### 6.1. Four Syllables, Three Words

(127) lam<sup>6</sup>baak<sup>2</sup>jaak<sup>5</sup>caj<sup>1</sup>      difficult:difficult:heart      ‘difficult, burdensome’

The word /lam<sup>6</sup>baak<sup>2</sup>/ is a single-morpheme word meaning ‘difficult’. The full four-syllable expression has an internal rhyme, making it an attractive one despite there being only three ‘words’.

(128) p<sup>h</sup>ajaa<sup>4</sup>caw<sup>3</sup>mɔŋ<sup>4</sup>      king:lord:city      ‘king of a city’  
 (129) salaa<sup>2</sup>caaj<sup>5</sup>hɔŋ<sup>4</sup>      artisan:artisan:house      ‘house builder’

Examples (128) and (129) include the words /p<sup>h</sup>ajaa<sup>4</sup>/ ‘king’ and /salaa<sup>2</sup>/ ‘artisan’ that have an unstressed minor syllable, making them technically two-syllable words. In the context of an EE these could be treated either way. In these examples they are treated as if they were full two-syllable words, and will tend to be pronounced with a little extra stress on the minor syllable.

### 6.2. Four Words, Five Syllables

There are other words in which the minor syllable is an awkward fit into the four-syllable pattern, and will be pronounced with the minimum of stress.

(130) katam<sup>4</sup>bun<sup>1</sup>suu<sup>2</sup>p<sup>2</sup>kun<sup>4</sup>      do:merit:continue:goodness      ‘do good’

Example (130) follows the strategy of merging two coordinate compounds. /bun<sup>1</sup>kun<sup>4</sup>/ merit:goodness is a common compound for ‘goodness’. /katam<sup>4</sup>/ has a minor syllable which in this context is treated as if it is not a syllable. The EEs in Examples (131) and (132) follow this same strategy of ignoring the minor syllable.

(131) taaj<sup>4</sup>lawaj<sup>4</sup>paj<sup>1</sup>maa<sup>4</sup>      path:rapid:go:come      ‘public transport’  
 (132) met<sup>5</sup>hak<sup>5</sup>sahaaj<sup>1</sup>dii<sup>1</sup>      friend:love:friend:good      ‘friend’

## 7. SUMMARY CHART

Seven strategies for forming elaborate expressions in Dai Lue are summarised below, ranging from the more compositional to those that are fixed in their form.

There are 738 elaborate expressions in the Dai Lue dictionary database. The percentage of the whole that uses each strategy is listed in the rightmost column. An additional 17% of the EEs cannot be matched to any strategy. Note that the ‘rhyming middles’ strategy often coincides with one of the others.

Elaborate expressions that are not lexemes are, of course, not in the dictionary. They are common in both spoken and written texts, and usually follow strategy #1: Expansion of a Coordinate Compound.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Example</i>		<i>%</i>
1. Expansion of a Coordinate Compound	daj <sup>3</sup> p <sup>h</sup> ew <sup>3</sup> daj <sup>3</sup> k <sup>w</sup> aat <sup>2</sup>	cleaned up	24%
2. Merger of Two Coordinate Compounds	haaŋ <sup>5</sup> dii <sup>1</sup> too <sup>1</sup> ŋaam <sup>4</sup>	a beautiful person	17%
3. Two Compounds in Apposition	kam <sup>4</sup> paak <sup>2</sup> lik <sup>5</sup> too <sup>1</sup>	language, writing	17%
4. Rhyming Middles	waa <sup>5</sup> nɔn <sup>4</sup> sɔn <sup>1</sup> ŋaaj <sup>5</sup>	teachable	16%
5. Double Reduplication	hok <sup>2</sup> hok <sup>2</sup> cæk <sup>5</sup> cæk <sup>5</sup>	jump around excitedly	4%
6. Four Synonyms	kaan <sup>2</sup> koŋ <sup>6</sup> laaj <sup>4</sup> lin <sup>4</sup>	striped, patterned	14%
7. Onomatopoeic Words	mɔŋ <sup>1</sup> ciŋ <sup>1</sup> mɔŋ <sup>1</sup> ciŋ <sup>1</sup>	band with drums and cymbals	2%

Table 2. Percentage of words by strategy in the Dai Lue dictionary

## 8. ELABORATE EXPRESSIONS IN DAI LUE

To the best of my knowledge there is no native Dai Lue term for elaborate expressions. When pressed one person said /kam<sup>4</sup>tɔɔ<sup>2</sup>tɔɔ<sup>2</sup>kan<sup>1</sup>/ word:join:join:each\_other, but admitted that it was more descriptive than a true name.<sup>10</sup>

In speech the EE is not marked by any particular phonation or emphatic quality beyond the rhythm of two iambic feet. Many are so standard and formulaic that they are produced with no more notice than any other word of the language.

### 8.1. Elaborate Expressions and Lexicality

To understand the ‘elaborate’ nature of the EE it is necessary to distinguish between EEs that are lexemes and those that are not.<sup>11</sup> As one of the standard morphological forms of the language, the lexical EE is ‘elaborate’ only in a limited sense. While they have some morphological complexity, the speaker usually utters them without any feeling he has accomplished something special in their utterance.

Many lexical EEs form what is essentially the only way to express a concept. The term /pɔɔ<sup>5</sup>haj<sup>5</sup>mææ<sup>5</sup>naa<sup>4</sup>/ father:field:mother:paddy (using strategy #2 Merger of Coordinate Compounds) is the most common way to say ‘farmer’. As such, there is little that is ‘elaborate’ about it: no added detail or ornateness. Other words like this are /ʔæw<sup>2</sup>lɔɔ<sup>5</sup>p<sup>h</sup>ɔɔ<sup>2</sup>tɔŋ<sup>4</sup>/ travel:try:look:look ‘be a tourist’,

<sup>10</sup> Hartmann, discussing narrative discourse, notes that many linguistic features lack a name, commenting on ‘the absence of a Lue term for distinctly different forms’ (1984: 59).

<sup>11</sup> As with any category in language, there are boundary examples for which it is hard to say whether or not they are lexemes.

/duuk<sup>2</sup>daaw<sup>3</sup>k<sup>h</sup>aaw<sup>3</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ɔɔ<sup>5</sup>/ bone:region:pole:joint ‘skeleton’, and /dɔɔk<sup>2</sup>doŋ<sup>1</sup>loŋ<sup>4</sup>laaj<sup>4</sup>/ flower:round\_thing:path:stripe ‘handicraft’.

Non-lexical EEs, however, form the hidden part of the EE iceberg. Amara makes the claim that EEs are ‘words, not phrases or clauses’ (2008: 401). This is true of the examples she presents, but actually a large body of this open-ended set of expressions are not words but are, in fact, phrases and clauses. The difficulty is that the non-lexical ones do not become visible for inspection in lists and lexicons. Amara’s claim that Tai people ‘value... wordiness in their speech’ (402) is most clearly evidenced in the EEs that are non-lexical. This is where what could readily be said in one or two words is routinely expanded to four, merely for the pleasure of elaboration.

Elaborateness does, however, spill over into the lexical EEs. Rhyme and alliteration is valued in all kinds of EEs, and EEs that are long and expressive occur in all seven of the formation strategies, and among even the most obviously lexical terms.

In Chinese and Vietnamese, four-syllable expressions are usually stand-alone ‘sayings’ or aphorisms. In Vietnamese ‘an indication of sophistication has always been that a person can quote, in a speech or writing, tetra-syllabic sayings and idiomatic expressions’ (Liem 1969: 2). EEs of this nature in Dai Lue are rare. Instead EEs are often commonplace, bread-and-butter words of the language.

## 8.2. *Some Statistics*

A corpus of Dai Lue text contains over 130,000 words, with 1389 specimens of EEs. Note that there are many EEs in a dictionary that do not appear in this corpus. Dividing the Dai Lue text corpus into six sub-corpora yields the word counts listed in Table 3 below.<sup>12</sup>

Elaborate expressions occur in all the different text genre in Dai Lue. Perhaps counter-intuitively the more prosaic texts have the highest density of EEs. The News sub-corpus comes highest (17 examples per 1000 words of running text), followed by Exposition and Advice. The high count in the News category is affected partially by the frequent use of the word ‘farmer’ in news accounts (see common words below).

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<sup>12</sup> This is a count of only the lexical elaborate expressions. In addition there are over 900 non-lexical EEs in the text corpus. They are marked in the corpus as four separate words and thus are not picked up by the software, and do not enter into these statistics. A large majority of non-lexical EEs are formed with Strategy #1: Expansion of a Coordinate Compound.

	<i>% of the whole corpus</i>	<i># of types (unique words)</i>	<i># of tokens (total words)</i>	<i># of EEs</i>	<i># of EEs per 1000 words</i>
Total corpus	100%	8853	134596	1389	10.3
1 <sup>st</sup> Person Narrative <sup>13</sup>	9%	1787	11533	112	9.7
3 <sup>rd</sup> Person Narrative	57%	5758	77009	648	8.4
Advice	8%	1940	10650	144	13.5
Exposition	13%	2869	17333	236	13.6
Poetry/Proverbs	5%	1711	6597	61	9.2
News	8%	2151	11173	188	16.8

Table 3. Frequency of elaborate expressions in a Dai Lue text corpus

Conversely the more expressive genres have a lower density of EEs. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Person Narrative corpus has eight examples per 1000 words of running text, and Poetry/Proverbs and 1<sup>st</sup> Person Narrative are similarly low. Dai Lue ‘khap’ poetry is characterized by rhyme and alliteration, but does not have rigid rhyming or rhythm schemes such as Thai poetry has (Hartmann 1984: 78). Apparently it does not depend heavily on elaborate expressions either.

	<i>% of the whole corpus</i>	<i># of types (unique words)</i>	<i># of tokens (total words)</i>	<i># of EEs</i>	<i># of EEs per 1000 words</i>
Men authors (24)	17%	3432	23261	241	10.4
Women authors (8)	2%	831	3295	39	11.8

Table 4. Frequency of elaborate expressions by sex of author

A small part of the corpus can be attributed to either male or female authors. Table 4 above shows that texts by 24 different men have ten examples of EEs per 1000 words. The eight different women use twelve examples per 1000 words. Neither of these is exemplary.

Table 5 shows the ten most common EEs in the text corpus.

<sup>13</sup> ‘1<sup>st</sup> Person Narrative’ includes autobiography and correspondence.

‘3<sup>rd</sup> Person Narrative’ includes fiction, biography and history.

‘Advice’ includes agriculture, health and cookery.

‘Exposition’ includes science, electricity, agriculture, orthography, and forewords of books.

‘Poetry/Proverbs’ includes ‘khap’ poetry and Dai Lue proverbs.

‘News’ includes news articles from the Dai Banna newspaper and internet sites.

	# in whole corpus	Formation strategy	1st person narrative	3rd person narrative	Advice	Exposition	Poetry/proverbs	News
pɔɔ <sup>5</sup> haj <sup>5</sup> mææ <sup>5</sup> naa <sup>4</sup> 'farmer'	67	#2	1	6	4	1	1	54
p <sup>h</sup> ajaa <sup>4</sup> caw <sup>3</sup> mɔŋ <sup>4</sup> 'king'	56	#3	-	56	-	-	-	-
k <sup>h</sup> ɔɔ <sup>3</sup> juu <sup>2</sup> haaw <sup>4</sup> kin <sup>1</sup> 'way of life'	27	#2	-	16	2	8	-	1
t <sup>h</sup> aluŋ <sup>4</sup> kap <sup>h</sup> aɿ <sup>5</sup> 'pregnant'	26	#3	-	2	9	15	-	-
baan <sup>3</sup> kɔŋt <sup>2</sup> mɔŋ <sup>4</sup> pin <sup>1</sup> 'hometown'	25	#2	-	13	-	5	4	3
nam <sup>6</sup> mææ <sup>5</sup> samut <sup>5</sup> 'ocean'	24	#3	12	7	-	5	-	-
see <sup>1</sup> naa <sup>4</sup> ɔamaat <sup>5</sup> 'courtier'	20	#3	-	20	-	-	-	-
haj <sup>5</sup> mii <sup>4</sup> pin <sup>1</sup> dii <sup>1</sup> 'rich'	12	#3	-	4	-	4	1	3
maak <sup>2</sup> k <sup>h</sup> aw <sup>3</sup> met <sup>5</sup> nam <sup>6</sup> 'food crops'	12	#5	-	3	-	-	2	7
p <sup>h</sup> ajaa <sup>1</sup> pan <sup>1</sup> jaa <sup>4</sup> 'wisdom'	10	#3	-	6	-	3	1	-

Table 5. Ten most common EEs with formation strategy and distribution in the corpus

### 8.3. Typological Concerns

Care should be taken to avoid creating a definition of 'elaborate expression' that is too restrictive and may rule out expressions that a native speaker would include. Matisoff, for instance, restricts his discussion of EEs in Lahu to ones like these.

An elaborate expression... is 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 1983: 71).

This would restrict the discussion to my first strategy: Expansion of Coordinate Compounds. This may work for Lahu, but it does not coincide with any category that Dai Lue speakers recognize. When Dai Lue people discuss or make lists of EEs (albeit without any formal name) they routinely include all the strategies discussed above, jumbled together and undistinguished.

Listing of elaborate expressions based on their canonical structure (ABAB, ABBA, etc) has proved to be a dead end typologically. An exploration of these seven formation strategies (and there may be more?) in Southeast Asian languages holds promise for new insights into their morphology.

## 9. CONCLUSION

In some languages terseness of speech and frugality with words may be recognized as providing elegance and beauty. In Dai Lue the opposite is true. Beauty is found in elaboration and wordiness, and especially in elaboration that is channelled into the four-syllable expression.

The category of elaborate expression is, however, a complex one, involving non-lexical terms that are often elaborate and wordy, and lexical terms that are often very pedestrian.

Elaborate expressions appear throughout the language, in both formal and informal speech, from offhand phrases to idioms and sayings, and are a standard Dai Lue word formation strategy. EEs often incorporate rhyme and alliteration. The master of the elaborate expression is recognized as an eloquent speaker.

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