

# Tsuu Khaa Tii Hla?: DEIXIS, DEMONSTRATIVES AND DISCOURSE PARTICLES IN LAI CHIN\*

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper is an investigation of the use of a class of deictic particles in Lai Chin. The particles *tsuu*, *khaa*, *hii*, and *khii* have a wide variety of uses; they can be appended to nouns, phrases and clauses as discourse particles with various meanings; they also function as demonstratives, and occur in a number of fixed expressions with an adverbial function. The full range of uses and meanings of these particles is a vast and often-vexing topic, and I make no pretense of even approaching a complete description here. Rather, I will provide an overview of certain basic contexts in which the particles are used, and from this show the constancies and variances in their meaning as I understand them at present.<sup>1</sup>

## 'X-D' CONSTRUCTIONS

Mizo, a language closely related to Lai, is said to have six demonstratives, four of which appear cognate with the particles in question here (Chhange 1989:135).<sup>2</sup> These are shown in example (1):

(1)	<b>hèl</b>	'this, near speaker'	<b>sòò</b>	'yonder, visible'
	<b>khìl</b>	'that, upwards'	<b>cùù</b>	'that, not visible'
	<b>khùù</b>	'that, downwards'	<b>khàà</b>	'that, near addressee'

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\* *Tsuu khaa tii hla?*, literally 'Don't say *tsuu* or *khaa*!', is a set expression in Lai meaning 'Don't argue!' or 'No back-talk!'.

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Mr. Kenneth Van-Bik for providing the data for this paper, as well as for his tremendous insight and vast patience along the way in the slow elucidation of this complicated topic, by the end of which the mere sight of me would inevitably elicit from him a hopeful '*Tsuu khaa tii hla?*'.

<sup>2</sup> Though Chhange refers solely to 'demonstratives', I use 'particles' or 'deictic particles' as general cover terms, restricting the term 'demonstratives' to those instances in which the particles have precisely that function. Chhange's article mentions this topic only in passing, glossing the Mizo 'demonstratives' as above. No indication is given that their use is any more complicated than this. I have not investigated the matter further. Throughout this paper I will also use 'D' as an abbreviation for 'demonstrative', 'deictic particle' and/or 'discourse particle', as the case may be.

The spatial meanings given above are most transparent in Lai when the particles are added sentence-finally. Note that sentence-finally the particles appear with short vowels and final glottal stops, perhaps as a result of their exclamatory usage here. The examples in (2a)-(2e) display this for all four particles:

- Examples (2a)-(2c) are to be construed as warnings from the speaker, who is aware of the danger, to the listener, who is not. In (2a), the use of proximal *hii* fixes the location of the putative treading at a point directly in front of the speaker and listener. The utterance is most likely accompanied by an indicating gesture. Using *khaa*, (2b) assumes that the speaker and listener are somewhat farther apart. The speaker sees the dung in front of the listener, who does not yet see it. This could also be accompanied by pointing. For (2c) to be well-

formed, my consultant envisioned a context in which neither speaker nor listener sees the dung. It is perhaps dark, and the speaker, perhaps by virtue of having passed the spot in daylight, knows the location of the dung, and suspects that the listener will tread in it. The ill-formedness of (2d) with *khii* is interesting. Appended to the entire sentence, the particle locates not the dung itself, but rather the setting of the whole scene. The sentence with *khaa* is well-formed, meaning that the scene is unfolding over by the listener, away from the speaker. *khii*, however, places the speaker and listener together, and the scene at a distance from them both. The listener cannot thus be a participant in the event. Changing the pronoun to third person as in (2e), however, makes the utterance well-formed again: A third party is seen about to tread in the dung 'over there', away from both speaker and listener.

Another such example is given in (3):

- (3)    ?a           zuaŋ       tsaŋ       laay       khi?  
       3SG    fly       perf       fut       D-yonder  
       'Look! It is about to fly!' (said pointing to a bird sitting on a branch  
       at some distance from speaker and listener, about to take to the air)

Examples (4a)-(4c) show further instances of the use of deictic particles to locate an unfolding scenario.

- (4a)   ka       vok       ?an       fiar       khi?  
       1SG    pig       3SG       steal       D-yonder  
       'Look! They are stealing my pig over there!'
- (4b)   ka       vok       ?an       fiar       tsu?  
       1SG    pig       3SG       steal       D-there, not visible  
       'They are stealing my pig!' (noises from the sty alert the  
       speaker to the unseen theft)
- (4c)   ka       vok       ?an       fiar       hi?  
       1SG    pig       3SG       steal       D-here  
       'Help! They are stealing my pig here!' (makes sense only if  
       the speaker is tied up or otherwise incapacitated, watching  
       the theft)

Interestingly, my consultant was not happy with the use of *khaa*, 'over by you', in this instance. Apparently, the utterance seemed nonsensical, since if the theft was indeed 'over by the listener', the listener should have noticed it

and helped out, unless he or she was either an accessory to the crime, a very bad neighbor, or tremendously unobservant. Although I suspect that a context could be found, my consultant offered instead the following:

- (5)    na    faa    lee    ni?    ka    vok    ?an    fiar    kha?  
          2SG child PL    ERG 1SG pig    3SG steal D-near listener  
          ‘Your kids stole my pig!’ (complaining to the father of the  
          perpetrators)

The reason for this usage is not entirely clear. As discussed later in this paper, *khaa* is frequently used to give a past-tense reading to a sentence. It is possible that this is the case here. We will also see, however, that the deictic particles can also be used to render non-spatial extensions of the spatial meanings described above. In this case, the use of the ‘over by you’ particle could be seen to set not the event itself, but rather *blame* or *responsibility* for the event ‘over by’ the father of the pilfering children. In this case *khaa* can be taken to mean ‘relevant to you’. Fuller discussion of such instances follows below, but another example of abstracted use of sentence-final Ds is shown in example (6):

- (6)    ka            kal            tsan            laay            hi?  
          1SG        go            PERF        FUT        D-here  
          ‘I am going to leave now.’ (*hii* here gives us not a proximal spatial  
          reading, but a proximal temporal reading)

### **Postnominal Usage**

Placed after a noun, deictic particles occur in two forms. Their precise relation to that noun will be discussed in greater detail below. For now, it is just necessary to note that, following a noun in the absolutive case, the particles take the forms *hii*, *khii*, *tsuu* and *khaa*; while placed after nouns in other cases (i.e., locative or ergative), they take the forms *hin*, *khin*, *tsun* and *khan*. In this position the particles have a wide variety of uses. Perhaps simplest are *hii* and *khii*. Here, as above, these particles show spatial meanings:

- (7a)    ?uy tsaw        hii        ni zaan        ?a?        ka        hmu?  
          dog        D        yesterday    LOC    1SG    see (Form 2)<sup>3</sup>  
          ‘I saw the dog which is here in front of me yesterday.’

<sup>3</sup> Lai verbs generally have two principal parts, indicated here as “Form 1” and “Form 2”. Their distribution is complex and beyond the scope of this paper. They are discussed in several other papers in this and the previous issue.



- (7b)    *ʔuy tsaw    khii    ni zaan    ʔaʔ    ka    hmuʔ*  
          dog            D    yesterday    LOC    1SG    see (Form 2)  
          ‘I saw the dog which is over there yesterday.’

There is little in these sentences to differentiate them from the demonstrative usage illustrated in example (3). One difference, however, is in the force of the deixis. In these examples, the particles are best seen as adverbials locating the dog. Demonstratives, my consultant notes, sound more forceful or emphatic. This appears to be as hazy a distinction as English ‘I saw the dog here (in front of me now) yesterday’ vs. ‘I saw this dog here (in front of me now) yesterday’. A clearer example may be the following:

- (8)    Berkeley    hii    na    duʔ    moo  
                          D    2SG    like    Q  
          ‘Do you like Berkeley? / Do you like it here in Berkeley?’

In this example, there is no question of demonstrative meaning for the particle (\*‘this Berkeley here’). The question, however, can only be posed within the city of Berkeley. Asked in Rangoon, the question would likely substitute *tsuu* (‘not visible’, here probably as a general topicalizer, as described below). Asked from a vantage point in the Oakland hills overlooking Berkeley, *khii* could be used, pointing to the distant town. More importantly, postnominal deictic particles have potential meanings unavailable to simple demonstratives. Firstly, these particles can function as narrative-internal deictic markers, i.e., deictics centered on the subject of the sentence’s location within the narrative, rather than on the speaker’s location at the time of the speech event. Demonstratives cannot do this. Thus, *ʔuy tsaw khii ka hmuʔ* could appear in a story in which the speaker is looking for a certain dog all around his village. At some point in the story, the speaker resolves to look for the dog at the rubbish tip behind Tsew Mang’s house: “. . . And he turned the corner of the house and . . . *ʔuy tsaw khii ka hmuʔ* . . . He saw the dog over there”. However, the limitations of this sort of usage need further investigation.

*hii* and *khii* can also occur with non-spatial meanings. For example, *hii* is often used when the noun it follows is not present in the the narrative or at the speech event. Used in such situations, *hii* gives the sentence a certain difficult-to-define vividness (often comparable to the similar English narrative usage: “So, there was this guy, and he . . .”). This is shown in example (9):

- (9)    tsew man    hii    ka    hooy    ʔa    sii  
          Tsew Mang    D    1SG    friend    3SG    COP  
          ‘Tsew Mang is my friend.’

Though Tsew Mang is most likely not present at the speech event, according to my consultant “when you use *hii* here, you make it as if he were there”. This vividness can also be behind the usage in example (10):

- (10)    ?uy tsaw    hii    tshii zo?    naak ?in    ?an    fiim    de?w  
          dog       D       cat       ‘than’    3PL    be smart    COMP  
          ‘Dogs are smarter than cats.’

As we will see below, general definitional pronouncements are usually rendered with *tsuu* following the subject. If this sentence were found in a book, this would be the case. Here, however, the use of *hii* can be said to lend some sort of vividness to the utterance. Alternatively, this pronouncement could be the response to the sight of a dog behaving intelligently alongside a cat behaving stupidly: ‘What we see here shows us that dogs are smarter than cats’. Postnominal deictics can thus be seen centered both within a narrative and within a speech situation, both spatially with respect to the preceding noun, or non-spatially with respect to the situation as a whole. This curious fluctuation in scope of modification will be explored further in discussion of postnominal *tsuu* and *khaa*.

While *hii* and *khii* can be seen to retain a spatial meaning when used post-nominally, *tsuu* and *khaa* are interesting in that their spatial meanings appear to be unavailable or at least not central in this context. While *tsuu* can indeed be used following a non-visible noun—Berkeley in example (8) above, when uttered someplace other than Berkeley—and while the *tsuu* version of the question apparently cannot be asked in Berkeley, there are many cases in which *tsuu* appears following an obviously-present nominal:

- (11)    kay (ma?)            tsuu    ka    kal    laay    law  
          1SG (EMPH)       D    1SG    go    FUT    NEG  
          ‘I will not go.’

In this case, and indeed generally, the postnominal *tsuu* functions as a topicalizer. Example (11) could thus be understood to mean ‘As for me, I’m not going’, perhaps uttered upon hearing that some other individual whom I dislike *is* going. A typical such case is example (12):

- (12)    ?uy tsaw        tsuu    ni zaan        ?a?        ka        hmu?  
          dog            D       yesterday    LOC       1SG       see  
          ‘I saw the dog yesterday.’

Here, the noun is clearly definite (not specific, however, as with a demonstrative), and the dog is most likely not present. The sentence could be a

response to a question ‘What’s new with the dog?’ (‘The dog, I saw [him] yesterday’), or could be the second half of the utterance ‘The cat I haven’t seen lately, but the dog I saw yesterday’. This usage is that of an archetypal topicalizing construction, and often has an implication of contrastiveness.<sup>4</sup> The topicalization need not, however, be tremendously pronounced, as it is in the English glosses with inverted word order. Rather, it often seems just to raise the relative prominence of the preceding argument, as in (13):

- (13) *hjak tshia paa tsuu ?an ?ii hno? moo*  
 boys D 3PL RFL hurry Q  
 ‘Are the boys in a hurry?’

Again, the noun is definite, but not specific (no deixis). It is topicalized, and possibly implies a contrast (i.e., with ‘the girls’). My consultant often glosses such cases as ‘X and no others’. This topicalization has also led to the development of a special context for the use of postnominal *tsuu*, which I will call the ‘definitional’ (see above in the discussion of example [10]). Copular sentences ( $X = Y$ ) often contain a ‘*tsuu*’ following the argument being defined:

- (14a) *tsew man tsuu mii fiar ?a sii*  
 Tsew Mang D person steal 3SG COP  
 ‘Tsew Mang is a thief.’
- (14b) *mii fiar tsuu tsew man ?a sii*  
 person steal D Tsew Mang 3SG COP  
 ‘The thief is Tsew Mang.’

An interesting co-presence of the spatial and topicalizing meanings can be seen in example (15):

- (15) *?aar fii tsuu kan hmu? kho? mii leen*  
 star D 1PL see be able REL outside  
  
*?a? ?a ?um*  
 LOC 3SG exist  
 ‘That star is outside our range of vision.’

Indeed, the semantic connection between ‘that, not visible’ and topicalization is not difficult to imagine: ‘the one we cannot see’ > ‘the one we

<sup>4</sup> Note, however, that strong contrastiveness is rendered not by *tsuu* but by *tuu*: ‘I didn’t see the cat yesterday — *?uy tsaw tuu ka hmu?* — Instead, I saw the dog.’

cannot see but which is the topic of our discussion' > 'the one which we are talking about (usually, though not always, which we cannot see)'. It should be noted that this use of *tsuu* is possible with several arguments in the same clause in a narrative, making it somewhat difficult to see what conditions its presence or absence. This problem, however, is beyond the scope of this paper.

Postnominal *khaa*, unlike *tsuu*, simply cannot have the spatial meaning given above ('near addressee'). Its more abstract meanings, however, are quite various indeed. The most usual meaning of postnominal *khaa* is 'the one you and I know about from some previous context'. My consultant frequently characterizes this as the listener 'having direct reference' to the argument in question. This is to be contrasted with the topicalizing use of *tsuu*, where the listener 'has no direct reference' to the argument: *khaa* implies that the listener has personal knowledge of the argument in question, whereas *tsuu* implies no such thing. The listener may indeed be personally familiar with the argument, but this is not necessary or implied. We can then contrast 'the one we know about' with 'the one we are talking about'. It is worth noting that this opposition bears some resemblance to the 'old information' vs. 'new information' contrast familiar from discourse analysis. We will see below, however, that this is not the relevant distinction here. The 'old information' use of *khaa* is shown in example (16):

- (16)    ʔuy tsaw    khaa    ni zaan    ʔaʔ    ka    hmuʔ  
           dog       D       yesterday   LOC   1SG   see  
           'I saw the dog (you know about) yesterday.'

In this case, the speaker and the listener may have seen the dog together several days before, and the speaker is noting that he saw it again recently.

The contrast between *tsuu* and *khaa* is shown in example (17):<sup>5</sup>

- (17a) law    thlaw    paa    tsuu    ka    hooy   ʔa    sii  
         field   plow    man    D     1SG   friend 3SG   COP  
         'The farmer (we are talking about) is my friend.'

- (17b) law    thlaw    paa    khaa    ka    hooy   ʔa    sii  
         field   plow    man    D     1SG   friend 3SG   COP  
         'The farmer (we know about / met the other day / saw stealing pigs  
         this morning . . .) is my friend.'

<sup>5</sup> It must be noted here, however, that these examples would be equally well-formed without any deictic particles at all. Indeed, postnominal particles are almost always optional. Their inclusion seems to provide a combination of their own specific meanings and a general relative prominence of the argument in question. The details here require further investigation.

The semantic link between 'over there by you' and 'which you know about' is clear enough. The deixis has simply shifted from the spatial to the referential level.

Postnominal *khaa* has other uses as well, however. Often *khaa* shows a strong connection with the past tense, and indeed, since Lai has no fixed past-tense marker, it can often be the only morpheme in the sentence causing past tense interpretation. First, compare the sentences in (18a) and (18b):

- (18a) tsew maŋ      ʔa      ʔum      naak      ʔin      tsuu  
Tsew Mang      3SG      exist      REL      house      D

ʔa      ŋan      ŋaay  
3SG      be large      very

'The house where Tsew Mang lives is very large.'

- (18b) tsew maŋ      ʔa      ʔum      naak      ʔin      khaa  
Tsew Mang      3SG      exist      REL      house      D

ʔa      ŋan      ŋaay  
3SG      be large      very

'The house where Tsew Mang lives (you know the one) is very large.'

The *tsuu* sentence makes no assertions about prior knowledge. It states merely that there is such a house in which Tsew Mang lives, and that the house is quite large. My consultant describes this sentence as 'breaking news' to the listener. The *khaa* sentence, on the other hand, is referential (for more on referential vs. non-referential use, see below). It implies that the speaker and listener have seen the house in question, and asserts that that house is large. This sentence can have a past-interpretation 'where Tsew Mang lived', but this is not necessarily the case.

Addition of *ʔan tii* 'they say', to the above sentences, however, produces a curious effect, as shown in examples (19a) and (19b):

- (19a) tsew maŋ      ʔa      ʔum      naak      ʔin      tsuu  
Tsew Mang      3SG      exist      REL      house      D

ʔa      ŋan      ŋaay      ʔan      tii  
3SG      be large      very      3PL      say

'The house where Tsew Mang lives is very large, they say.'

- (19b)    tsew man            ʔa            ʔum            naak            ʔin            khaa  
           Tsew Mang        3SG        exist        REL        house        D  
           ʔa        ʔan            ʔaay        ʔan        tii  
           3SG    be large    very        3PL        say  
           ‘The house where Tsew Mang lived was very large, they say.’

The presence of ‘they say’ in the second sentence precludes the ‘the house we know about’ reading. If the speaker had seen the house, the information would no longer be hearsay. Oddly, though, this does not make the utterance ungrammatical, but rather merely forces a past tense interpretation.

Postnominal *khaa* is in no way limited to the past tense ([18a-b] and [20]):

- (20)    law thlaw paa    khaa    fa laam    ʔa        kal    laay  
           farmer        D        Falaam    3SG    go    FUT  
           ‘The farmer (we know about) will go to Falaam.’

It does, however, occur extremely frequently in the past tense, and it seems that, at least in cases where a ‘the one you know of’ reading is excluded, it can often force a past-tense reading.

- (21)    ka        min        tsuu        tsew man    ʔa        sii  
           1SG    name        D        Tsew Mang    3SG    COP  
           ‘My name is Tsew Mang.’  
       (22)    ʔ ka        min        khaa        tsew man    ʔa        sii  
           1SG    name        D        Tsew Mang    3SG    COP

While the meaning of (21) is clear enough, (22) sounds odd to my consultant. Apparently, the ‘the one we know of’ reading makes no sense here. The sentence with *khaa* could, however, be well-formed, if the speaker is discussing a play in which he or she had a role. In this case, the sentence could be glossed ‘My name (in the play) was Tsew Mang’. While somewhat forced, this example is quite telling. We will see several more examples of the past-tense use of *khaa* below.

The connection between the two meanings of postnominal *khaa* is certainly not immediately obvious. While what follows is clearly just speculation, the context given in example (25) occurs frequently enough to be suggestive.

- (23)    law thlaw paa    khaa    fa laam    ʔa        kal    laay  
           farmer        D        Falaam    3SG    go    FUT  
           ‘The farmer (we know about) will go to Falaam.’

- (24) ka vok ?an fiar khaa na hjal moo  
 1SG pig 3PL steal D 2SG know Q  
 'Did you know they stole my pig?'
- (25) tsew man khaa mii thaa ?a sii  
 Tsew Mang D person good 3SG COP  
 'Tsew Mang (we know about him) is a good person.'

Example (23) shows a clearly referential reading of postnominal 'khaa'. Example (24), with post-clausal *khaa*, allows only the past-tense reading (if the listener was aware of the event, the question would be unnecessary). Example (25), however, is not so clearly classifiable. This sentence could occur in a context, where, for example, the speaker and listener had met Tsew Mang for the first time earlier that day. Later, the speaker reflects that he believes Tsew Mang to be a good person; *khaa* is used to indicate which Tsew Mang the speaker means ('that Tsew Mang we met earlier today'). The sentence thus implies 'We met a man named Tsew Mang earlier today, and based on something he said or did, I decided that he is a good person'. Note that in English as well such a statement could be rendered either in the present or the past tense: 'That Tsew Mang we met is a good person' or 'That Tsew Mang we met was a good person'.

If Tsew Mang was still with the pair, the speaker would be forced to use *hii* or *khii* instead of *khaa*. Since he is no longer present, however, *khaa* here could be making either a general statement about 'that Tsew Mang you know' or a past tense statement concerning the behaviour of the Tsew Mang encountered earlier. In this particular context, this is a tenuous distinction at best. This particular example appears to be a point of overlap between the two interpretations of *khaa*.

Now, however, imagine that the acts performed by Tsew Mang which made such an impression on the speaker actually resulted in Tsew Mang's death (Tsew Mang is a martyr, for example). While it is true that the listener 'knows of' Tsew Mang here too, the present tense understanding of the sentence is excluded. It is not unimaginable that this connection has led to (is leading to) a grammaticalization of postnominal *khaa* as a marker of the past tense. The fact that it can occur post-clausally (= post-verbally) in this meaning would support such an account. The spatial meaning 'distance from speaker, proximity to listener' is thus exchanged for a temporal distance from both.

There is one use of postnominal *khaa* for which I can offer no connection to the meanings given above, and so I merely note its existence here. We have seen already that *tsuu* appears to occur following only definite nominals. In narrative, for example, a character or object mentioned for the first time in the

story cannot be topicalized by *tsuu*. If the narrator wishes to place additional prominence on an indefinite argument in such a context, oddly enough he or she can do this using *khaa*:

- (26) 'I went the other day to Falaam, and upon arriving there . . .  
 ʔii ʔuy tsaw pa khat khaa ka hmuʔ ʔii  
 and dog one D 1SG see and  
 tsuu ʔuy tsaw niʔ tsun kii khaa ʔa ʔaʔy . . .  
 D dog ERG D horn D 3SG have  
 (and) I saw a dog, and that dog had horns! . . .'

While one could imagine that the past tense of the narrative is being supported by the use of the *khaa* particles, my consultant does not feel this here. The sentence would also be just as good without either *khaa*. My consultant feels that the addition of *khaa* here is simply providing emphasis. In other words, *khaa* can act as a general topicalizer for indefinite arguments, while *tsuu* is reserved for definite arguments. This state of affairs directly contradicts an 'old vs. new information' analysis of the two particles. If *khaa* is a marker for old information, we should not be able to introduce new characters into a narrative with it, and conversely, if *tsuu* is used for new information, we should expect it to do precisely this. Its limitation to definite noun phrases would be more characteristic of a marker for 'old information'.

In general, the particles are used in the same ways following ergative nouns, although there do seem to be additional restrictions. Several times during the elicitation of these forms my consultant noted that their presence seemed 'superfluous' or even odd. After we provided a fuller context, the constructions seemed better, but it is noteworthy that the absolutive forms were usually judged acceptable even without a context. As discussed in more detail below, there are many differences between the *hii* / *khii* / *tsuu* / *khaa* forms and the *hin* / *khin* / *tsun* / *khan* forms aside from the obvious distributional generalizations. Perhaps most importantly, the particles with *-n* always follow an overt case marking, whereas the absolutive forms often serve themselves to carry the case marking (as the above examples of definitional *tsuu* show). We will return to this problem below. For now we will merely note that the *tsuu* forms appear to be more closely bound to the preceding argument than the *tsun* forms. Examples of problems with the *-n* forms are given in examples (27a)-(27b):

- (27a) ʔʔ ʔuy tsaw niʔ khan ʔa rak ka seʔ  
 dog ERG D 3SG ASP 1SG bite (Form 2)  
 'The dog (we know about) bit me.'



- (27b) ʔan ʔuy tsaw ni? khan ʔa rak ka se?  
 3PL dog ERG D 3SG ASP 1SG bite (Form 2)  
 'Their dog (which we know about) bit me.'

The first sentence was judged acceptable only as part of a narrative which could warrant such a statement, whereas the second was judged immediately acceptable. Similar results were obtained with the other particles. My consultant felt that for the *-n* forms to be used postnominally, some additional information about the argument was necessary, either from the context of the narrative, or from such additional specification as in example (27b). His most frequent response to the underdetermined examples was that they sounded acceptable, but would be more natural if a demonstrative were included.

The reason for this asymmetry in possible usages of the *tsuu* and *tsun* forms may stem from their functions. The *tsuu* forms, we have noted, in addition to providing their own idiosyncratic meanings, serve also as sources of increased relative prominence of a given argument (true even of solely spatial particles—they provide 'emphasis' in addition to location), and indeed are the only overt markers of the argument's grammatical function, since they are used only after absolutive nominals. They can thus, as we will discuss below, be seen as a sort of portmanteau class.

The *tsun* forms, however, are appended to nominals already marked for case. Though more investigation of this point is necessary, I would argue that they contribute no more than their own particular idiosyncratic meanings, and this being the case, clearer motivation for the inclusion of this meaning is necessary. If the *tsuu* forms are often 'optional', then the *tsun* forms are even more optional, and seem to need greater context for felicitous use. An exception to this generalization, however, is *tsun* itself. My consultant never objected to its use following an ergative argument, but always then ascribed to it an especially contrastive meaning:

- (28) ʔuy tsaw ni? tsun ʔa rak ka se?  
 dog ERG D 3SG ASP 1SG bite (Form 2)  
 'That dog (we are talking about) bit me (but the others did not / but the chickens did not / etc.).'

Another curious example which is illuminating in this regard is (29a)-(29b):

- (29a) tsew man ni? khan ʔa ka veʔl  
 Tsew Mang ERG D 3SG 1SG beat up  
 'Tsew Mang (whom you know) beat me up.'

but :

- (29b)    ???tsew man        ni?        khan    ?a        ka        veel        law  
              Tsew Mang        ERG        D        3SG    1SG    beat up    NEG  
              ‘Tsew Mang did not beat me up.’

This latter sounded almost completely unacceptable to my consultant. Apparently, the addition of *khan* to an ergative form if the transitive subject is not terribly agentive is unacceptable. The sentence is passable only in a very strong context, where, for example, the entire rest of the village beat me up, and only Tsew Mang did not. This context makes Tsew Mang’s very inaction an instance of considerable agency, and then *khan*, singling Tsew Mang out as an agent, is acceptable. More examples of this sort are necessary, however, before any firm conclusion can be drawn here.

### Locatives

Following locative markers, it was already noted, only the *tsun* form of the particle is used. *tsun* and *khan* are both relatively straightforward in this context, as is shown in examples (30a) and (30b):

- (30a)    fa laam        ?a?        khan        ka        kal        laay  
              Falaam        LOC        D        1SG        go        FUT  
              ‘I will go to Falaam (with which you are familiar).’
- (30b)    fa laam        ?a?        tsun        ka        kal        laay  
              Falaam        LOC        D        1SG        go        FUT  
              ‘I will go to Falaam (and no other place).’

More interesting are *hin* and *khin*. With the right context, they can have their usual spatial meanings:

- (31a)    fa laam        ?a?        hin        ?a        raa        laay  
              Falaam        LOC        D        3SG        come    FUT  
              ‘He will come here to Falaam.’
- (31b)    fa laam        ?a?        khin        ?a        kal        laay  
              Falaam        LOC        D        3SG        go        FUT  
              ‘He will go over there to Falaam (said from a vantage point overlooking Falaam).’

A number of non-spatial senses of *hin* and *khin* can be seen in their use with locatives. The proximal meaning of *hii*, illustrated in example (31a), changes

interestingly when the subject is changed to first person with the verb 'to go'. Since the first person 'going' and a goal 'here' are largely incompatible, the only potential reading for *fa laam ?a? hin ka kal laay* is restricted to a context where the speaker is pointing to Falaam on a map, saying 'I will go here, to Falaam'.

An example of the 'vividness' use of *hii* can be seen in the phrase *?a hlaan liaw ?a? hin*. The phrase *?a hlaan liaw ?a?* is the conventionalized introductory phrase for folk tales, the Lai equivalent of 'once upon a time'. Since it in fact means literally something like 'a long time ago', the inclusion of the proximal *hin* seems rather odd, and yet is heard quite frequently in folk tales. My consultant feels that this use of *hin* serves to 'place the setting of the story right in front of the listener', to make the events of the story more vivid. The use of *hii* in various contexts can then continue throughout the narrative, again with the purpose of increasing the vividness of the narration.

*khin* used with locatives has non-spatial interpretations as well. The sentence in example (31b), for example, can also be interpreted as 'He will go to Falaam (at some point in the future)'. The usual meaning of 'yonder in space' can be taken as 'yonder in time'. The examples in (32a) and (32b) show *khin* in a spatial sense, but with the deictic center removed from the speech event:

- (32a)    daaw tshim        ?a?        khin        ka        kal        toon  
              village name    LOC        D        1SG       go       HAB  
              'I used to go over to Daaw Tshim.'

- (32b)    ?a        luŋ        tshuŋ        tee        khin  
              3SG       heart    inside       DIM       D  
              'way in the corner of his heart'

Sentence (32a) was uttered to my consultant recently by another Lai speaker. This speaker was from the village of Ha Kaa. Daaw Tshim is another village, visible from Ha Kaa. Though the sentence was uttered in the United States, the speaker uses *khin* 'over yonder', as if he and the hearer were in Ha Kaa, looking over at Daaw Tshim. The deictic center is thus moved from the location of the speech act in the U.S. to the location of the narrative in Burma.

Sentence (32b) uses *khin* again with a shifted deictic center. The sentence is uttered concerning the location of a certain feeling inside the hero of a narrative. The feeling is off in the corner of the hero's heart, and the use of *khin* thus emphasizes just how far into that distant corner of his heart the feeling in question is squeezed. The deictic center of this sentence might well be said to be then the center of the hero's heart, or at least some location inside the hero where such feelings are located when they are not felt to be marginalized.

### Subordinate Clauses

*tsun* and *khan* in certain subordinate clauses have very specific, even lexicalized meanings: *?a? khan* means 'when' and *?a? tsun* means 'if':

- (33)    *fa laam*    *ka*    *kal*    *?a?*    *khan*  
           Falaam    1SG    go    LOC    D  
  
           *ban hlaa*    *kaa*       *ken*  
           banana    1SG-RFL    bring  
           'When I went to Falaam, I brought a banana with me.'

- (34)    *fa laam*    *ka*    *kal*    *?a?*    *tsun*  
           Falaam    1SG    go    LOC    D  
  
           *ban hlaa*    *kaa*       *ken*  
           banana    1SG-RFL    bring  
           'If (whenever) I go to Falaam, I bring a banana with me.'

In some contexts, (34) could be understood to mean 'when', but only with a strong contrastive meaning, and my consultant feels that it sounds like an elliptical variant of *?a? khan tsun* 'when X (as opposed to Y)'. Utterance (33) is an example of the kind of past-tense reading of *khaa* which was discussed above. Example (34), however, we have not encountered.

The incorporation of a topic marker in the marker of a conditional protasis is relatively common cross-linguistically. The semantic link here is discussed in detail in Haiman 1978. Essentially, if we imagine basic conditional sentences to be of a form 'assuming X, then Y', the tendency to topicalization of the protasis is clear. In Lai *?a? tsun* is actually lexicalized as a non-counterfactual conditional protasis marker, but counterfactual conditionals are also frequently topicalized with *tsuu*:

- (35)    *tsew man*    *ni?*    *?a*    *ban hlaa*    *rak*    *laa*    *hla?*    *se?-loo*  
           Tsew Mang    ERG    3SG    banana    ASP    take    NEG    if  
  
           *tsuu*    *zoonj*    *tee*    *ni?*    *?a*    *that*    *hja*    *law*  
           D    monkey    DIM    ERG    3SG    kill    SUBJ    NEG  
           'Had Tsew Mang not stolen his banana, the monkey would not have killed him.'

The use of *tsuu* here is not obligatory, but adds emphasis to the protasis.

The use of *hin* and *khin* in situations similar to those in examples (33) and (34) was somewhat difficult to elicit. The examples I ultimately found show use of the non-spatial meanings of the particles.

- (36)    fa laam       ka       kal       ʔaʔ       hin       ban hlaa  
          Falaam       1SG       go       LOC       D       banana  
  
          kaa       ken       toon  
          1SG-RFL bring       HAB  
          ‘When I go (would go) to Falaam, I always bring (brought) a  
          banana with me.’

The use of *hin* in this sentence is optional, and again brings a certain vividness to the image of the journey. It is as if the speaker is taking the journey and placing it before the listener's eyes. My consultant offered up the same sentence with *khin* replacing *hin*. He described its meaning as having a somewhat different kind of vividness, as though the speaker were taking the journey and placing it ‘over there’ for the listener to view. I am not certain that I understand precisely what this would mean, but perhaps further examples could be obtained to illuminate the problem.

Relative clauses may also be followed by the deictic particles, usually with the same results as described with simple nouns. The use of *tsuu* vs. *khaa* following a relative clause is especially interesting, and brings up a semantic distinction noted in passing in examples (18a) and (18b): the referential vs. non-referential use of the particles.

- (37a)    tsew maŋ    ʔa    ʔum    naak    ʔin    tsuu    ʔa    ŋan    ŋaay  
          Tsew Mang    3SG exist    REL    house    D    3SG    be large    very  
          ‘The house where Tsew Mang lives is very large.’  
  
          (37b)    tsew maŋ    ʔa    ʔum    naak    ʔin    khaa    ʔa    ŋan    ŋaay  
          Tsew Mang    3SG exist    REL    house    D    3SG    be large    very  
          ‘The house where Tsew Mang lives (you know the one) is very large.’

The sentences in (18a) and (18b), repeated here as (37a) and (37b), were said to differ only in the referentiality of the subject noun phrases. The example with *tsuu* does not imply that the listener has any knowledge of the house, whereas the example with *khaa* speaks of a concrete house known to the listener. The *tsuu* sentence is not truly non-referential, however, in that the speaker can be talking about a concrete house he has seen. The example is perhaps better if the speaker is only repeating what he has heard from others.

In that case, he is merely setting forth a hypothetical house X, in which Tsew Mang lives, and predicating big-ness to it. Examples (38a) and (38b) clarify this point:

(38a) ka vok ?a fiar mii paa tsuu na hmuu moo  
 1SG pig 3SG steal REL man D 2SG see Q  
 'Have you seen the man who stole my pig?'

(38b) ka vok ?a fiar mii paa khaa na hmuu moo  
 1SG pig 3SG steal REL man D 2SG see Q  
 'Have you seen the man who stole my pig?'

In the *tsuu* sentence, the relative clause is topicalized. The phrase is being used non-referentially. Neither the speaker nor the listener attaches a concrete individual to the words 'the man who stole my pig'. The sentence simply posits the existence of an individual answering to the description 'thief of speaker's pig', and asks whether or not the listener has encountered him. The speaker and listener do not know who stole the pig, but the pig's absence allows the existence of such an individual to be assumed.

Using *khaa* in the same sentence, however, with the meaning 'with whom you are familiar', forces a referential interpretation of the question: Both speaker and listener know who stole the pig. It was, for example, Tsew Mang who lives down the street. The speaker is asking whether or not the listener has seen Tsew Mang, to whom he refers in the question as 'the man who stole my pig'. The distinction drawn here falls out quite naturally from the meanings of *tsuu* and *khaa* described so far.

### **Demonstratives**

In their use as demonstratives, deictic particles are placed before the noun they modify. For absolutive nouns, however, the *demonstrative* + *noun* sequence is obligatorily followed by another deictic particle, giving rise to a sort of circumfixing construction of the form *D<sub>i</sub>-N-D<sub>i</sub>*. Thus, a sequence *hii X hii* is well-formed, while a sequence *\*hii X* is not. With absolutive nouns, the first and second particles are usually identical: *D<sub>i</sub> -N-D<sub>i</sub>*. *Hii* and *khii* may never co-occur with the same noun, but if the first particle is *hii* or *khii*, the second may be *tsuu* or *khaa* in the right context. This distribution will be discussed in greater detail below in comparison with the distribution of demonstratives with non-absolutive nouns. For now, the facts are merely summarized:

(39a) hii X hii / tsuu / khaa

- (39b) khii X khii / tsuu / khaa  
 (39c) tsuu X tsuu  
 (39d) khaa X khaa

Examples of the use of demonstrative *hii* are given in (40a)-(40c):

- (40a) hii    ʔuy tsaw    hii    ʔa    nun    ʔa    tʰaa  
          D        dog        D        3SG    life    3SG    good  
          ‘This dog here is gentle.’
- (40b) hii    ʔuy tsaw    tsuu    ʔa    nun    ʔa    tʰaa  
          D        dog        D        3SG    life    3SG    good  
          ‘This here dog is gentle (but the others are not / but that cat is  
          ferocious / etc.).’
- (40c) hii    ʔuy tsaw    khaa    ʔa    nun    ʔa    tʰaa  
          D        dog        D        3SG    life    3SG    good  
          ‘This here dog was gentle (but now he is a man-eater / but now he is  
          dead / etc.).’

Example (40a) shows the simple spatial use of demonstrative *hii*: ‘this one right here’. The difference between this sentence and the same sentence using only postnominal *hii* is not great. My consultant notes that the deixis here is ‘more forceful’ or more ‘overt’ (as noted above). More interestingly, the presence of the demonstrative precludes the non-spatial uses of the particle seen in many cases. The construction *hii X D* fixes the deictic center on the speech event. Demonstrative *hii* may not be used unless the modified argument is actually present at the time of the speech event.

Sentence (40b) is our first example here of the combination of the meanings of two different particles. The demonstrative *hii* fixes the argument spatially at the time of the speech event, and the particle *tsuu* modifies the status of the argument in the discourse, topicalizing it. In such examples, the contrastive meaning of *tsuu* is especially strong.

Example (40c) shows the similar behavior of *khaa*. In this sentence, we get only the past-tense reading of *khaa*: ‘The dog in front of me now was gentle in the past’. The generalization we will see repeated in all such examples is that, although the default construction has the two particles identical, the first particle fixes the argument relative to the speech event, while the second fixes its position inside the narrative. This generalization further clarifies for us the uses of postnominal particles given above. Note, however, that when no demonstrative is present, the postnominal particle may fix the modified

argument either relative to the speech event or relative to the frame of the discourse. With demonstratives, the function of the postnominal particle is considerably narrowed. The use of *khii* as a demonstrative parallels that of *hii* exactly :

- (41a) *khii*    *ʔuy tsaw*    *khii*    *ʔa*    *nun*    *ʔa*    *ʈhaa*  
          D        dog        D        3SG    life    3SG    good  
          ‘That dog over there is gentle.’

- (41b) *khii*    *ʔuy tsaw*    *tsuu*    *ʔa*    *nun*    *ʔa*    *ʈhaa*  
          D        dog        D        3SG    life    3SG    good  
          ‘That there dog is gentle (as opposed to the others, etc.).’

- (41c) *khii*    *ʔuy tsaw*    *khaa*    *ʔa*    *nun*    *ʔa*    *ʈhaa*  
          D        dog        D        3SG    life    3SG    good  
          ‘That there dog was gentle.’

Again, the non-spatial interpretations of *khii* are unavailable here.

Before moving on to *tsuu* and *khaa*, it is necessary to note the existence of another demonstrative pronoun: *maʔ*. This pronoun occurs only as a demonstrative, and has no postnominal use.<sup>6</sup> When used as a demonstrative, *maʔ* is synonymous with *hii*. Thus:

- (42) *maʔ*    *ʔuy tsaw*    *hii*    *ʔa*    *nun*    *ʔa*    *ʈhaa*  
          D        dog        D        3SG    life    3SG    good  
          ‘This dog here is gentle.’

We will see further uses of this demonstrative below in discussion of emphatic demonstratives.

*tsuu* functions as a demonstrative with absolutive nouns only when followed by a postnominal *tsuu*. Attempts to elicit *tsuu X khaa* (or for that matter *khaa X tsuu*) were met with mild dismay followed by categorical disapproval on the part of my consultant. An example of *tsuu* as a demonstrative are given in (43):

- (43) *tsuu*    *ʔuy tsaw*    *tsuu*    *ʔa*    *nun*    *ʔa*    *ʈhaa*  
          D        dog        D        3SG    life    3SG    good  
          ‘That dog (which we just mentioned / are talking about) is / was gentle.’

<sup>6</sup> Actually, it does occur in a lexicalized context as the second part of the emphatic personal pronouns: *kay maʔ* ‘I (emphatic)’, *naŋ maʔ* ‘you, sg. (emphatic)’, etc. This appears to be an isolated phenomenon.



This sentence is only appropriate following a reference to the dog in question. The dog must be immediately proximal in discourse, but crucially cannot be present at the speech event. If it were present at the speech event, a different demonstrative would be used. Thus we see both the 'not visible' and the 'topic' meanings of *tsuu*. Recall that postnominal *tsuu* could topicalize both present and absent definite arguments. In a narrative, then, demonstrative *tsuu* might be used as in (44):

- (44) 'Tsew Mang went to Falaam the other day, and when he got to Ni Hui's house, he was attacked by a monkey. Suddenly, . .

fuŋ    khaa    ʔa    hmuʔ    ʔii    tsuu    fuŋ    tsuu    ʔaa    tshaŋ  
stick    D    3SG    see    and D    stick    D    3SG-RFL    pick up  
he saw a stick and that stick he picked up

. . . and commenced defending himself.'

The stick, when first mentioned, is topicalized with *khaa*, but its next mention in the narrative is with demonstrative *tsuu*.

Demonstrative *khaa* is used as in example (45):

- (45) khaa    ʔuy tsaw    khaa    ʔa    nun    ʔa    ʔhaa  
D    dog    D    3SG    life    3SG    good  
'That dog (we know about) is / was gentle' or 'That dog over by you is gentle.'

As we might expect from the above discussion of the function of demonstratives, demonstrative *khaa* can be interpreted either as 'the one we know about' or 'the one over by you'; the strictly speech-event-centered, spatial meaning of *khaa*, not available to the postnominal particle alone, is again a possibility here.

An interesting contrast between *khaa* and *tsuu* in this context can be seen in examples (46a) and (46b):

- (46a) tsuu    ʔuy tsaw    tsuu    ʔa    nun    ʔa    ʔhaa    law  
D    dog    D    3SG    life    3SG    good    NEG  
'That dog (we are discussing) is not gentle.'

- (46b) khaa    ʔuy tsaw    khaa    ʔa    nun    ʔa    ʔhaa    law  
D    dog    D    3SG    life    3SG    good    NEG  
'That dog (we had some experience of) is not gentle.'

Sentence (46a) could be uttered in a conversation between A and B, where A has just told a story concerning a rabid dog, and comments as in (46a), noting that the dog is not gentle. Sentence (46b) could be uttered in a conversation between A and B, where A and B have just listened to a story told by C concerning a rabid dog. C has just left, and A comments to B that the dog they both know of from C's story is not gentle. More investigation of the precise dynamics and points of overlap in demonstrative use in such situations would be helpful.

An interesting example of the use of spatial *khaa* in a sort of quasi-spatial way can be seen in sentence (47):

- (47) *khaa*    *tshoo*    *leenj*    *khaa*    *na*    *zuar*    *moo*  
          D    bullock    cart    D    2SG    sell    Q  
       'Are you selling that bullock cart? / Is that bullock cart of yours for sale?'

The use of *khaa* here is clearly linked to the 'over by you' meaning of the particle. The listener, however, is not necessarily standing next to the bullock cart. Rather, 'over by you' appears to be indicating possession. Changing the subject pronoun to third person results in a different interpretation: 'Is he selling that bullock cart?' said with demonstrative *khaa* means either 'that bullock cart we know about (saw earlier today, etc.)' or 'that bullock cart you are standing next to'. More natural for the question 'Is he selling that bullock cart?', where the bullock cart is in view, would be example (48):

- (48) *khii*    *tshoo*    *leenj*    *khii*    *ʔa*    *zuar*    *moo*  
          D    bullock    cart    D    3SG    sell    INT  
       'Is he selling that bullock cart? / Is that bullock cart of his for sale?'

Using *hii* in example (48) would place the bullock cart directly in front of the speaker and listener, while using *tsuu* would necessitate that the bullock cart was nowhere in sight, but being discussed at the moment. Note that although the use of *khaa* in example (47) is not necessarily literally, spatially 'over by you', the somewhat figurative meaning nonetheless depends on a deictic center fixed in the speech event.

The use of demonstratives with ergative subjects differs from that with absolutive nouns in a number of telling ways. While the most frequent constructions are again of the sort  $D_i-N-D_i$ , the presence of the second particle is no longer obligatory. Thus, an ergative subject phrase *hii X ni?* is just as well-formed as one such as *hii X ni? hin*. More investigation is necessary into the precise factors governing the inclusion or omission of the second  $D_i$ . It is

worth noting that my consultant feels that the phrase without the postnominal particle ‘sounds like you are saying it anyway, even when you do not’.

Another interesting factor in the use of the postnominal particle in demonstrative contexts is that there is more freedom in the choice of postnominal particle following an overt ergative (or locative) case marker than in the absolutive contexts, where the particle itself seems to function in part as the case marker. We will return to these problems below. A summary of the distribution of particles with demonstrative ergative noun phrases is given in (49a)-(49d):

(49a) *hii* X *ni?* (*hin* / *tsun* / *khan*)      (49c) *tsuu* X *ni?* (*tsun* / *khan*)

(49b) *khii* X *ni?* (*khin* / *tsun* / *khan*)      (49d) *khaa* X *ni?* (*khan* / *tsun*)

Examples of *hii* and *khii* with meanings as described above are shown in (50a)-(50c) and (51a)-(51c):

(50a) *hii*    *ʔuy* *tsaw*    *ni?*    *hin*    *ʔa*    *rak*    *ka*    *se?*  
          D       dog       ERG    D     3SG   ASP   1SG   bite (Form 2)  
          ‘This dog here bit me.’

(50b) *hii*    *ʔuy* *tsaw*    *ni?*    *tsun*    *ʔa*    *rak*    *ka*    *se?*  
          D       dog       ERG    D     3SG   ASP   1SG   bite (Form 2)  
          ‘This here dog (and no other ) bit me.’  
          *Alternatively:* *hii ʔuy tsaw ni? hin tsun ʔa rak ka se?*

(50c) *hii*    *ʔuy* *tsaw*    *ni?*    *khan*    *ʔa*    *ka*    *se?*  
          D       dog       ERG    D     3SG   1SG   bite (Form 2)  
          ‘This here dog bit me.’ (with emphasis on pastness, or even with a pluperfect meaning—‘had bitten me prior to a given point in the narrative’—though the dog must still be present at the speech event)

(51a) *khii*    *ʔuy* *tsaw*    *ni?*    *khin*    *ʔa*    *rak*    *ka*    *se?*  
          D       dog       ERG    D     3SG   ASP   1SG   bite (Form 2)  
          ‘That dog there bit me.’

(51b) *khii*    *ʔuy* *tsaw*    *ni?*    *tsun*    *ʔa*    *rak*    *ka*    *se?*  
          D       dog       ERG    D     3SG   ASP   1SG   bite (Form 2)  
          ‘That there dog (and no other ) bit me.’  
          *Alternatively:* *khii ʔuy tsaw ni? khin tsun ʔa rak ka se?*

- (51c) khii   ʔuy tsaw   ni?   khan   ʔa   ka   se?  
           D       dog       ERG   D       3SG 1SG bite (Form 2)  
           ‘That there dog bit me.’ (with emphasis on pastness, or even with a  
           pluperfect meaning—‘had bitten me prior to a given point in the  
           narrative’—though the dog must still be present at the speech event)

The ‘D<sub>1</sub>-N-D<sub>1</sub>’ uses of *khaa* and *tsuu* differ little from the absolutes above:

- (52a) tsuu   ʔuy tsaw   ni?   tsun   ʔa   ka   se?  
           D       dog       ERG   D       3SG 1SG bite (Form 2)  
           ‘That dog we are now discussing bit me.’ (perhaps A interrupting  
           B’s story about the dog)

- (52b) khaa   ʔuy tsaw   ni?   khan   ʔa   ka   se?  
           D       dog       ERG   D       3SG 1SG bite (Form 2)  
           ‘That dog you know about (we met earlier, etc.) bit me’ or ‘That  
           dog over by you bit me.’

More interesting are the new combinations available with the ergative:

- (53a) khaa   ʔuy tsaw   ni?   tsun   ʔa   ka   se?  
           D       dog       ERG   D       3SG 1SG bite (Form 2)  
           ‘That dog you know about (and no other) bit me’ or ‘That dog over  
           by you (and no other) bit me.’

- (53b) fa laam   ʔa?   ka   rak   kal   ʔii   ʔuy tsaw   pa khat  
           Falaam   LOC   1SG   ASP   go   and   dog       one  
  
           ka   hmu?   ʔii   tsuu   ʔuy tsaw   ni?   khan  
           1SG   see   and   D       dog       erg   D  
  
           tsew maŋ   ʔa   rak   se?   bal   ʔan   tii  
           Tsew Mang   3SG   ASP   bite   EXP   3PL   say  
           ‘I went to Falaam and I saw a dog, and that dog, they say, was the  
           one who had bitten Tsew Mang.’

Example (53a) shows the topicalization of a ‘known to you’ or ‘by you’ argument with *tsun*, and (53b) shows *khan* attached to a ‘topic of conversation’ ergative argument contributing to a pluperfect reading of the sentence. Without the pluperfect context, this construction would be ill-formed. Note here also the

difference between a 'topicalized' argument and a 'topic of conversation' argument (the results of using pre- and postnominal *tsuu*, respectively). 'Topicalization' adds some sort of relative prominence to an argument in a sentence, whether it has just been mentioned or not. A 'topic of conversation' argument, on the other hand, is one being discussed at the moment and mentioned immediately before.

We have noted in several places already certain differences between the use of the *tsuu* forms and the use of the *tsun* forms of the postnominal particles: while the *tsuu* forms are always obligatory following demonstrative noun phrases, the *tsun* forms are not. The *tsuu* forms can be used readily in non-demonstrative noun phrases, while the *tsun* forms face greater restriction. Finally, the *tsun* forms have greater combinatorial possibilities with demonstratives than do the *tsuu* forms. In general, the *tsun* forms appear to be less tightly bound to the preceding nouns than do the *tsuu* forms.

We have noted that the *tsuu* forms can be analyzed as portmanteau morphemes with both deictic and case-marking functions. This would mean that the absolutive case marker in Lai has several allomorphs:  $-\emptyset$  for non-deictic contexts and *tsuu*, *khaa*, *hii* or *khii* for deictic contexts. If we accept this analysis, it allows the following generalization to be made about demonstratives: the use of demonstratives in Lai requires that the modified noun be overtly case marked.

If the noun is absolutive, this is done with a *tsuu*-form deictic particle. If the noun in question is ergative, the case-marker is *ni?*. If it is locative, the case marker is *?a?* or *?ii*, and so forth. In these latter cases, an additional deictic particle can be used to add various meanings, but is not obligatory, and requires a strong context to be used at all. With this in mind, we can represent the constituency of the Lai demonstrative NP (entirely pre-theoretically, and ignoring relativization, adjective placement, etc.) as follows:

- (54) [[[Dem N] Case] (D)]<sub>NP</sub>

Additional support for this representation comes from suspended affixation. While it is possible to conjoin two demonstrative noun phrases as *hii X hii lee hii Y hii* (*lee* 'and'), the more natural construction is that shown in (55):

- (55)    *hii*    *?uy tsaw*    *lee*    *hii*    *tshii zo?*    *hnaa*    *hii*  
           D        dog        and        D        cat        PL        D.ABS  
  
           *ni zaan*        *ka*        *hmu?*  
           yesterday    1SG    see  
           'I saw this here dog and this here cat yesterday.'

The absolutive-deictic *hii* is attached to the entire conjoined noun phrase. It is not possible, however, to attach only one demonstrative *hii* at the beginning for the whole phrase either with one or with two absolutive markers (*\*hii X hii lee Y hii*, *\*hii X lee Y hii*). This supports the notion that demonstratives and nouns form a constituent which is then marked for case by the postnominal particles. Note that we find the same facts with the ergative marker:

- (56) *hii    ?uy tsaw    lee    hii    tshii zo?    hnaa    ni?*  
          D        dog        and    D        cat        PL        ERG
- (hin)    ni zaan        ?an    ka        se?  
 (D)       yesterday    3PL    1SG    bite
- ‘This here dog and this here cat both bit me yesterday.’

The ergative marker and the postnominal deictic particles occupy the same morphosyntactic slot in the examples above, supporting our analysis of them as case markers.

From these examples, as well as from sentence (57) below, we can now also add a slot for number into the representation in (54), giving us the structure in (58):

- (57) *hii    ?uy tsaw    pa hni?    hnaa    hii        ka        hmu?    hnaa*  
          D        dog        two        PL    D.ABS    1SG    see    PL.OBJ
- ‘I saw these two dogs here yesterday.’

(The cardinal number occurs before the plural marker. An adjective could be placed here as well).

- (58) [ [ [ [ [Dem    N] Adj / #] Plural] Case] (D) ]<sub>NP</sub>

### ***Emphatic Demonstratives***

The demonstratives as described above (with the exception of *ma?*) can be augmented in such a way as to give them additional demonstrative force, perhaps in a way akin to English ‘this very X’ or ‘that very X’ constructions. This is accomplished by the addition of *ma?* and a short-vowel copy of the demonstrative in question to the beginning of the phrase, yielding a structure ‘*ma?* D<sub>i</sub> -<sub>short</sub> D<sub>i</sub> - X - Case - (D)’. The facts concerning the use and meaning of the postnominal particles in this construction remain as described above. Examples are given in (59) and (60):

- (59)    *fa laam*    *ʔaʔ*    *ka*    *kal*    *ʔii*    *ʔuy tsaw*  
          Falaam    LOC    1SG    go    and    dog
- pa khat*    *ka*    *hmuʔ*    *ʔii*    *maʔ*    *tsu*    *tsuu*  
          one    1SG    see    and    D    D    D
- ʔuy tsaw*    *niʔ*    *khan*    *tsew maŋ*    *ʔa*    *rak*    *seʔ*  
          dog    ERG    D    Tsew Mang    3SG    ASP    bite
- ‘I went to Falaam and I saw a dog, and that very dog had once bitten Tsew Mang.’
- (60)    *maʔ*    *tsu*    *tsuu*    *ʔuy tsaw*    *tsuu*    *ka*    *ʔin*  
          D    D    D    dog    D.ABS    1SG    house
- ʔaʔ*    *ʔa*    *rak*    *ʔum*    *bal*  
          LOC    3SG    ASP    live    EXP
- ‘That very dog (we are discussing) used to live in my house.’

There is also a slightly less emphatic form of this construction identical to that above, but lacking the short-vowel copy of the demonstrative:

- (61)    *maʔ*    *hii*    *phen*    *khaa*    *khii*    *kaa*    *ʔaʔ*    *ka*  
          D    D    pen    D    D    place    LOC    1SG
- rak*    *phiʔl*  
          ASP    forget / leave
- ‘I left *this* pen over there!’ (said in surprise or agitation at finding the pen in question someplace other than over there)

The demonstrative augmented as in examples (59)-(61) can also be used without a following noun to mean ‘this thing’ or ‘that thing’. It can then itself be modified by a postnominal particle as described above for ‘demonstrative + noun’ phrases. This is shown in examples (62a)-(62c):

- (62a)    *maʔ hii hii*    ‘this thing here’
- (62b)    *maʔ hii tsuu*    ‘this thing only / this thing in particular / this very thing’

(62c) ma?    hii    hii    ʔa    tʰaa.  
           D        D        D        3SG    good

ma?    hii    hii    tsuu    ʔa    tʰaa    law  
           D        D        D        D        3SG    good    NEG

‘This thing here (pointing to some object) is good. (But) *this thing here* (contrastive) is not good.’

### ***Demonstratives in Locative Phrases***

Demonstratives in locative phrases behave much like those in the ergative phrases described above. The combinatorial possibilities are the same, and the postnominal particle is again optional, as shown in example (63):

(63) ma?    puʔm    naak    ʔii    ʔa    phuŋ    tʃhim    mii  
           D        gather    NOM    LOC    3SG    custom    talk    rel

ka        du?    hrim hrim    law  
           1SG    like        really        NEG

‘I didn’t like his speech at this conference at all.’

Examples (64a)-(64d) show the use of *hii* as a demonstrative in locative phrases.

(64a) hii    ʔin    ʔa?    hin    ʔuy tsaw    pa khat    ʔa    ʔum  
           D        house    LOC    D        dog        one        3SG    exist

‘There is a dog in this house here. / In this house here there lives a dog.’

(64b) hii    ʔin    ʔa?    tsun    ʔuy tsaw    pa khat    ʔa    ʔum  
           D        house    LOC    D        dog        one        3SG    exist

‘There is a dog *in this house here*. / *In this house here* there lives a dog.’

(64c) hii    ʔin    ʔa?    khan    ʔuy tsaw    pa khat    ʔa    ʔum  
           D        house    LOC    D        dog        one        3SG    exist

‘There was a dog in this house here. / In this house here there lived a dog.’



- (64d) hii    ?in        ?a?    khan    tsun    ?uy tsaw    pa khat    ?a    ?um  
          D    house    LOC    D        D        dog        one    3SG exist  
          ‘There was a dog *in this house here*. / *In this house here* there lived  
          a dog.’

*khii* behaves in the same way, as shown in examples (65a)-(65c):

- (65a) khii    ?in        ?a?    khin    ?uy tsaw    pa khat    ?a    ?um  
          D    house    LOC    D        dog        one    3SG exist  
          ‘There is a dog in that house there. / In that house there there lives a  
          dog.’
- (65b) khii    ?in        ?a?    tsun    ?uy tsaw    pa khat    ?a    ?um  
          D    house    LOC    D        dog        one    3SG exist  
          ‘There is a dog *in that house there*. / *In that house there* there lives a  
          dog.’
- (65c) khii    ?in        ?a?    khan    ?uy tsaw    pa khat    ?a    ?um  
          D    house    LOC    D        dog        one    3SG exist  
          ‘There was a dog in that house there. / In that house there there lived  
          a dog.’

*khaa* and *tsuu* are used as demonstratives in locative phrases, as is shown in examples (66a)-(66b) and (67a)-(67b):

- (66a) tsuu    ?in        ?a?    tsun    ?uy tsaw    pa khat    ?a    ?um  
          D    house    LOC    D        dog        one    3SG exist  
          ‘There is a dog in that house we are discussing / In that house we  
          are discussing there lives a dog.’
- (66b) ?ii    ?in        pa khat    ka    hmu?    ?ii    tsuu    ?in        ?a?  
          and house    one        1SG    see    and    D    house    LOC  
          khan    ?uy tsaw    pa khat    ?a        ?um  
          D        dog        one        3SG    exist  
          ‘and I saw a house, and in that house there once lived a dog.’  
          (pluperfect)

- (67a) khaa    ?in        ?a?        khan    ?uy tsaw    pa khat    ?a        ?um  
          D    house    LOC    D        dog        one        3SG    live  
          ‘In that house (‘we know about’ or ‘you are standing by’) there  
          lives a dog.’

- (67b) khaa    ?in        ?a?        tsun    ?uy tsaw    pa khat    ?a        ?um  
          D    house    LOC    D        dog        one        3SG    live  
          ‘In that house (‘we know about’ or ‘by you’) (and no other) there  
          lives a dog.’

### *Demonstratives in an Adverbial Expression*

This section illustrates the use of demonstratives and postnominal particles in a set expression. There are quite a few such expressions (e.g., *tsuu tsaa ?a? tsun* ‘for this reason, thus’), but only one will be exemplified here: expressions on the model ‘D-*tii*-D’, where *tii* means ‘way’, and the expressions mean ‘in such-and-such a manner’.

The frame used in this section was provided by my consultant. It seems that in Ha Kaa village in the Chin Hills, there was a man who walked with a limp, such that upon taking a step with his bad leg, he would stoop sharply to one side. All the dogs in the village were frightened of this individual, and fled at the sight of him, apparently because his walk made him look as though he was constantly bending down to pick up a stone to throw at them. Taking this as a topic of conversation, we can see the use of *hii* in describing the situation in the examples in (68a)-(68c):

- (68a) hii        tii        hin        ?a        kal  
          D        way    D        3SG    walk  
          ‘He walks like this.’ (speaker then demonstrates)
- (68b) hii        tii        tsun        ?a        kal  
          D        way    D        3SG    walk  
          ‘He walks like *this*.’ (speaker demonstrates version of gait more  
          accurate than a preceding demonstration)
- (68c) hii        tii        khan        ?a        kal  
          D        way    D        3SG    walk  
          ‘He used to walk like this.’ (speaker then demonstrates)

*khii* functions similarly in this expression:

- (69a) khii    tii    khin    ʔa    kal  
          D    way    D       3SG   walk

‘He walks like that.’ (speaker then points to a nearby wag demonstrating the walk)

- (69b) khii    tii    tsun    ʔa    kal  
          D    way    D       3SG   walk

‘He walks like *that*.’ (speaker then points to a nearby wag demonstrating the walk more accurately than previous wags)

- (69c) khii    tii    khan    ʔa    kal  
          D    way    D       3SG   walk

‘He used to walk like that.’ (speaker points to an imitator)

*tsuu* is shown in (70a)-(70b):

‘There was this guy who used to walk in such and such a way, and one day . . .

- (70a) tsuu    tii    tsun    ʔa    kal    ʔii    ʔuy tsaw    ni?  
          D    way    D       3SG   walk    and       dog        ERG

ʔan    thliik            taak  
 3PL    run away       RELINQ

. . . he was walking that way (just described) and all the dogs ran away from him.’

- (70b) tsuu    tii    khan    ʔa    kal  
          D    way    D       3SG   walk

. . . he had been walking as was just mentioned.’

Examples (71a)-(71b) show the same expression with *khaa*:

- (71a) khaa    tii    khan    ʔa    kal  
          D    way    D       3SG   walk

‘He walks in the way we know / in the way the man next to you is demonstrating.’

- (71b) khaa    tii    tsun    ʔa    kal  
          D    way    D    3SG    walk

‘He walks in the way we know, not some other way / as the man next to you is demonstrating, not some other way.’

The sources of the various meanings given above should by this point be apparent enough to the reader, so I will not repeat them here.

**Another Set Expression: ‘After X’**

One last expression will be treated here. It takes a number of forms, including *maʔ tsu tsun*, *maʔ tsun*, and *tsu tsun*.<sup>7</sup> These three appear to be semantically equivalent, though some sort of still undiscovered difference may well be at work. Examples of this expression with the various deictic particles are given in (72a)-(72d):

- (72a) maʔ    hi    hin    kuak    ka    zuu    tii    laay    law  
          D    D    D    cigar    1SG    smoke    more    FUT    NEG

‘From this moment on, I will no longer smoke cigars.’

- (72b) maʔ    khi    khin    kuak    ka    zuu    tii    laay    law  
          D    D    D    cigar    1SG    smoke    more    FUT    NEG

‘From that moment on (some point in the future, the speaker’s birthday, for example), I will no longer smoke cigars.’

- (72c) maʔ    kha    khan    kuak    ka    zuu    tii    law  
          D    D    D    cigar    1SG    smoke    more    NEG

‘From that moment on (some specific point in the past), I never smoked another cigar.’

- (72d) ‘People who smoke cigars often fall ill, and sometimes when they do . . .

maʔ    tsu    tsun    kuak    ʔan    ʔi    khap            toon  
          D    D    D    cigar    3PL    RFL    abstain from    HAB

‘. . . from that (hypothetical, general) point on, they abstain from all cigar-smoking.’

<sup>7</sup> Even *tsuu* and *tsun* alone sentence-initially can mean something like ‘then’ or ‘next’.

All the particles in the above examples show the temporal meanings we have already encountered in various other contexts: *hii* means not 'here', but 'now'; *khii* means not 'over there', but 'in the future'; *khaa* shows the past-tense meaning discussed in detail above; *tsuu* here means 'in general', a meaning arguably present in its definitional sense noted earlier; *tsu tsun* also occurs meaning 'then', 'after that' or 'next' in narrative; *kha khan* occurs in these same narrative contexts, and the difference between the two is extremely difficult to pinpoint. We can imagine *tsu tsun* to mean 'after the event mentioned immediately before this', and *kha khan* to mean 'after a point in the past, prior to this event'. While these glosses differ, it is not clear to me how this difference could manifest itself in narrative usage.

My consultant describes the difference as follows: when using *tsu tsun*, you are simply relating the events to the listener as a story. When using *kha khan* (and *khaa* in general in optional positions), it is as though you are taking the listener along with you, showing them through the events, as it were. This explanation is quite similar to that of *hii* in its 'vividness' usage (although there, the scene was being placed before the listener, while here the listener is being taken into the scene). More investigation of this topic is clearly necessary, but it should be noted that my consultant's description of the use of *kha khan* to foster a sense of listener involvement is at least not at odds with the 'over by you' meaning we have seen *khaa* display so many times.

The 'after that' construction, like the constructions reviewed above, also seems to admit some different combinations of particles: *ma? hi tsun*, for example, appears to mean 'only after this moment'. I have yet to determine the extent of these combinatorial possibilities, but I suspect them to be somewhat more restricted than those seen in demonstrative noun phrases.

## CONCLUSION

We have seen that the deictic particles of Lai Chin, each with its own spatial meaning, can be used in a huge variety of ways, with a surprisingly large number of additional meanings emanating from the basic, spatial ones. Even a cursory glance at a Lai Chin text makes clear how nuanced and complex these meanings are, and how far this paper falls short of describing them completely. In particular, the use of these deictic particles to structure narrative is an obviously fruitful topic which will be left for future research. I have, however, provided an account of the basic properties of this system from which such further work could proceed.

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