

THE COGNATE NOUN/VERB CONSTRUCTION IN LAHU*

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The cognate noun/verb construction is nowhere near as productive in Lahu as it is in Akha, but there are still a fair number of examples. I have found about 40 in the *Dictionary of Lahu* (DL).

The usual form is for the cognate N/V morpheme to have the ð- prefix when it appears as a noun, and in unprefix form when functioning as a verb, e.g. ð- u u ve (OV) 'lay an egg'. A root which can take the ð- prefix is called a *prefixable morpheme* (Mpx). A form consisting of the ð- prefix plus Mpx (e.g. ð- u 'egg') is called a *general prefixal compound* (Matisoff 1973[GL]:66).

Alternatively, the cognate morpheme in its nominal guise may appear as the second constituent of a compound where the first syllable is a *specifying noun*, like *khî* 'leg' in *khî-šê? šê? ve* (OV) 'wear leggings'. In this example there is no corresponding general prefixal compound *ð-šê?. In other cases the cognate morpheme may participate both in collocations with the ð- prefix and with specifying nouns: e.g. ð-thî? 'a packet' (general prefixal compound), ð-thî? thî? ve (OV) 'wrap up a packet'; vs. š-thî? 'a rice packet' ("specified compound" with the noun š 'cooked rice'), š-thî? thî? ve (OV) 'wrap up a rice packet'; similarly, ð-vê? vê? ve (SV) 'a flower blooms'; šf-vê? vê? ve (SV) 'flower on a tree blooms' (with the combining form šf- 'tree' < šf?).

This list of cognate objects is probably quite complete as far as the general prefixal compounds go, because they could be found simply by looking under ð- in DL. The specified compounds are more difficult to locate, since they are alphabetized under the specifying noun and/or under the verb—i.e. scattered throughout the Dictionary. I cannot be sure I have found them all.

Some of these cognate N/V morphemes are also classifiers, so that they function as three different parts of speech, e.g.

ð-thî?	nî	thî?	thî?	ve	'make two packets'
N	NUM	CLF	V		

* Several years ago, sitting around a hotel dining room table in Sichuan, Inga-Lill Hansson, Lon Diehl, and I hatched a plan to produce a joint article about TB "cognate object" constructions, providing data on Akha, Jingpho, and Lahu, respectively. This sequel to Inga-Lill's splendid article is a preliminary and belated attempt to keep my part of the bargain.

In this respect too, Lahu is similar to Akha (see Hansson 1996).¹

The cognate N and V morphemes may stand in a number of covert semantic relationships to each other. When the verb is transitive it is usually an OV construction; when the verb is intransitive, it is often an SV construction. Sometimes the noun and verb stand in some sort of oblique relationship (instrumental, appurtenative, locative, etc.), which is signified by the non-committal label of “specifying noun plus verb” (Nspec + V) (see GL:308-313). Some cases are especially difficult to pigeonhole, e.g. when neither the noun nor the verb occurs other than with each other (e.g. *ð-qhâ? qhâ? ve* ‘to hibernate’). (In the following list, I am assigning the same form-class designation to each item as in DL.)

Several of these Lahu expressions have semantically and etymologically exact Akha equivalents, some of which are noted below. On the other hand, at least one of the cognate morphemes in these collocations is a loanword (*ð-thā(n) thā(n) ve* ‘protect with a shield’ [*thā(n)* prob. < Shan]), demonstrating that this construction is fairly productive.

A few of these expressions are dubious, posited in GL (1973) but not confirmed during subsequent research for DL (published 1988). They are marked with asterisks. All these collocations are cited with the nominalizing particle *ve*, which is used like English *to* in the citation forms of verbs or VP’s.

<i>Lahu Expression</i>		<i>English Gloss</i>	<i>DL pg. no.</i>
<i>ð-u u ve</i>	(OV)	‘lay an egg’	135
<i>ð-ō ō ve</i>	(SV)	‘a bud buds; a shoot shoots’	124; 135
<i>cà-ō ō (la) ve</i>	(SV)	‘a rice-bud buds’	
<i>(ŋâ) ð-ɔ ɔ ve</i>	([S]OV)	‘fish goes to spawn’ (“fish-spawn spawns”)	136
<i>ð-qō qō ve</i>	(Nspec + V)	‘have a hollow/hole’	136
<i>ð-qɔ qɔ e ve</i>	(Nspec + V)	‘be fit to cook and eat’ (of a tuberous plant after its creeper has died)	137
<i>ð-qhâ? qhâ? ve</i>	(OV)	‘hibernate’ (of animals)	143
<i>(šâ?) ð-kā kā ve</i>	(OV)	‘stack up (wood)’	145
<i>ð-khâ? khâ? ve</i>	(OV)	‘pound paddy a second time’	152

¹ Many Lahu nouns take themselves (or their last syllables, if they are compounds) as their classifiers (e.g. *yê tê yê* ‘one house’, *ð-qâ? tê qâ?* ‘one sheaf’, *šû-lê? nî lê?* ‘two cigars’) (GL:89). In the context of the present discussion, we are not interested in these “autoclassifiers” unless there is also a homophonous verb.

<i>Lahu Expression</i>		<i>English Gloss</i>	<i>DL pg. no.</i>
ò-gà? gà? ve	(Nspec + V)	'have stripes'	153
ò-cā cā (la) ve	(SV)	'a sprout sprouts'	155
ò-ci ci ve ²	(OV)	'make pickles'	156
*ò-cɔ cɔ ve ³	(Nspec + V)	'go around in circles'	
ò-chē chē ve	(Nspec + V)	'be spicy; well-spiced'	162
*ò-chî? chî? ve ⁴	(OV)	'tie a bundle'	
ò-jâ? jâ? ve	(SV)	'a drop drips'	163
ò-tí tí ve	(OV)	'begin process of pounding paddy (until husks split)'	166
ò-tè? tè? ve	(Nspec + V)	'be alive'	166
ò-thā(n) thā(n) ve ⁵	(Nspec + V)	'protect with a shield'	170
ò-thî? thî? ve	(OV)	'wrap a packet'	170; 679
ò-thî? nî thî? thî? ve	(OV)	'make two packets'	
ò-thî? thî? ve	(OV)	'make a rice packet'	
ò-tho tho ve	(OV)	'make a hole in sthg (in order to hang it up or tie it)'	170
ò-pɔ pɔ ve	(OV)	'mold into a flat round object; make a flat cake'	181
ò-phô? phô? ve ⁶	(OV)	'to swarm (bees, wasps); gather in a hive'	905
ò-bô? bô? ve	(OV)	'cut/make a notch'	188; 945
ò-bí bí ve	(SV)	'for the tip of a plant to break through the earth'	188
ò-mū mū ve	(OV)	'brood (of hen); sit on eggs'	191
ò-mē mē ve ⁷	(Nspec + V)	'be named with a name'	192
ò-mə mə è ve ⁸	(Nspec + AEstat)	'get all powdery'	194
ò-hô? hô? ve	(OV)	'cover with a lid; close a lid'	198
ò-šī šī ve	(OV)	'bear fruit'	[TBL p. 480]

² Cf. Akha *sjhà-tjhé tjhé* 'pickle meat'.

³ Cited in GL p. 68; but not confirmed in DL:158 or 486.

⁴ Cited in GL, p. 68; but not confirmed in DL:163.

⁵ *thā(n)* prob. < Shan.

⁶ Glossed 'pile in heaps' in GL:68; this sense not confirmed in DL:184.

⁷ Cf. Akha *tshó mjǎŋ-mjǎŋ*.

⁸ *mə* is a verb 'be powdery' (DL:1042), though in this expression it appears in the high-rising tone as a *stative adverbial expression* (see GL:285-292).

<i>Lahu Expression</i>		<i>English Gloss</i>	<i>DL pg. no.</i>
ò-yè yè (la) ve	(SV)	'a seedling sprouts'	211
ò-yò yò ve	(OV)	'repay money one has been advanced; repay with interest'	212
ò-yô? yô? ve	(OV)	'make a racket (of a large gathering of people or animals)'	212
ò-vê? vê? ve ⁹	(SV)	'a flower blooms'	214
šɛ-vê? vê? ve	(SV)	'flower blooms on a tree'	1235
ò-lò? te lò? ve ¹⁰	(OV)	'roll sthg up in a roll'	217
khɛ-šê? šê? ve	(OV)	'wear leggings'	390
mû-cha cha ve	(SV)	'sun shines'	993
mû-tɔ̃ tɔ̃ ve ¹¹	(SV)	'thunder thunders'	994
*mû-thê? thê? ve ¹²	(SV)	'lightning lightens'	995
yɪ?-mâ? mâ? ve ¹³	(OV)	'dream a dream'	1301
là?-dî? dî? ve	(SV)	'pulse throbs'	1356
là?-pé pé ve	(Nspec + V)	'fold one's arms (over chest)'	1358

⁹ Cf. Akha ájeq jeq.

¹⁰ The causative auxiliary verb *te* (literally 'do; make') is apparently required in this expression: "having made a roll, roll (it)".

¹¹ Cf. Akha ìn djè djè.

¹² This expression is understandable, but not idiomatic; see comment in DL p. 995.

¹³ Cf. Akha yuq máq máq.

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