

Twenty functional categories compared between Thai and Lue

William J. Hanna

ABSTRACT

The languages in the Southwest branch of the Tai language family share many words that are the same. However, speakers of these languages cannot understand each other. Why is this so?

A major obstacle to communication is the differences in their functor words. This paper discusses twenty functional areas and shows how Thai and Tai Lue use different functor words in these twenty areas. It distinguishes between the difficulties that a Thai person has understanding Tai Lue, and a Tai Lue person has understanding Thai in these areas.

The differences in functor words between these two languages prove to be the major obstacle to understanding between their speakers. It is hoped that this information will lead toward developing a list of functional areas that are most significant for predicting comprehension between Tai languages.

CONTENTS

[1 INTRODUCTION](#)

[1.1 COGNATE PERCENTAGES](#)

[2 FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIES](#)

[2.1 COORDINATION](#)

[2.2 ALTERNATION](#)

[2.3 DEMONSTRATIVES](#)

[2.4 TOPIC](#)

[2.5 INSTRUMENT](#)

[2.6 BENEFICIARY](#)

[2.7 OBLIGATION \(SHOULD, OUGHT, MUST, HAVE TO\)](#)

[2.8 ABILITY](#)

[2.9 YES/NO QUESTIONS](#)

[2.10 NEGATIVE](#)

[2.11 IRREALIS](#)

[2.12 THE QUESTION WORD 'WHO'](#)

[2.13 THE QUESTION WORD 'WHAT'](#)

[2.14 IMPERATIVE](#)

[2.15 PROHIBITION](#)

[2.16 PURPOSE](#)

[2.17 GROUP ACTION](#)[2.18 CLASSIFIERS FOR PEOPLE](#)[2.19 REFLEXIVE](#)[2.20 REPETITION](#)[3 SUMMARY](#)[APPENDIX: ABBREVIATIONS](#)[REFERENCES](#)

1 INTRODUCTION

When Thai people from Bangkok visit Sipsongpanna in Yunnan, China, the center of the Dai Lue language area, they have a difficult time understanding and being understood. Dai Lue speakers face the same difficulty when they travel to Thailand. Although Dai Lue and Thai are in the same language family, and share many individual words in common, it is not easy for their speakers to follow connected speech in the other language.

The languages in the Southwest branch of the Tai language family (such as Dai Lue and Thai) have high shared cognate counts. Given that, why are the languages not mutually intelligible? One conjecture is that there are many differences among the languages in the area of functor words.

A list of twenty functional areas, representing a broad range of categories, was made by an independent committee¹ in order to explore how Thai and Dai Lue (henceforth ‘Lue’) differ in these categories. It is hoped that this will lead toward a diagnostic tool to help measure intelligibility between any two Tai speech varieties.

The Lue data is from a Lue-English dictionary I am developing², and from a corpus of 90,000 words of Lue text, supplemented by my own knowledge of Lue. The Lue data reflects the dialect of Sipsongpanna, China (not the Lue dialect of Thailand, which is considerably closer to Thai).

The Thai data is from standard grammars and dictionaries of Thai (see the bibliography), supplemented by my own knowledge of Thai.³ Many of the illustrative examples cited are from So Sethaputra (1984), Haas (1964), or from the Internet.

1.1 COGNATE PERCENTAGES

Languages that are related share vocabulary that they both have in common from their mother language. These shared words are called cognates. Over time the percentage of

¹ Thanks to Noel Mann and Ken Manson for their help, and for their comments on this paper. All errors are my own.

² Hanna, forthcoming

³ Thanks to Phinnarat Akharawatthanakun for her help in understanding Thai grammar. All errors are my own.

vocabulary that is cognate between two languages will diminish as they each borrow words from different sources or innovate in other ways.

77% Cognate. Lue and Thai are 77% cognate. This figure is calculated from the Mahidol University, 1982, 281-word list, which is an expansion of the 200-word Swadesh wordlist.

57% Easily Recognizable Cognate. Of the 77% of words that are technically cognate, many have significant phonological differences⁴ that hinder communication unless the speaker has spent time in the other language area and the differences have been learned. Although these differences are mostly predictable via phonological rules, they are not transparent to a Tai speaker from either side without time spent in language learning. Adjusting for these differences there are 57% easily recognizable cognates.

A low count in easily recognizable cognates leads to increased difficulty in listening to something spoken or heard on radio or TV, and to difficulty in reading a book in the other language.

The difference of 20% between cognate and easily recognizable cognate (77-57=20) is the percentage of words that can easily be adapted by a computer in a printed document. This is also the area of the language in which a person who is clever at assimilating the phonological rules will make quick progress in language learning. On the first day of contact, it feels like a language in which there is only 57% cognate. However, after a few days or weeks of assimilating phonological rules a rapid learner can move to where he recognizes the full 77% of the cognates.

90% Findable Cognate. The figure of 77% cognate is calculated from the most salient Lue and Thai words for the specified meaning. However there are often other Thai synonyms that a Lue person would recognize, and vice versa. Adjusting for that I calculate a figure of 90% of the items for which a Thai and a Lue person trying to communicate with each other could find common (cognate) vocabulary to express the concept in question.

For the item ‘dry’, for instance, the most salient Thai word (and the word used for calculating the cognate percentage) is /hææŋ³/ แห้ง; in Lue it is /k^haan²/ ອອຸໂ. These are clearly non-cognate. However, a Lue person may recognize the Thai word as being close to his /hæŋ³/ ນອນອຸ, which in Lue means ‘dried up, shriveled’. Thus there is a ‘findable cognate’ available to a Lue person. (There is no similar findable cognate available to a Thai person, since /k^haan²/

⁴ Most of the words in the word list are monosyllabic, consisting of an initial consonant, a vowel, a final consonant and a tone. If two of the three segmental elements were non-identical, I considered the word to have ‘significant phonological differences’. I ignored tone for this count. The tones between Thai and Lue are all different (see footnote 6). Taking tone into account would have given a result of near to 0% “easily recognizable cognates.”

has no meaning in Thai.) For the item ‘nose’, on the other hand, Thai has /**camuuk**²/ ฉมูก and Lue has /**dan**¹/ ၄၇. There are no shared cognates to be found on either side.

If there is no findable cognate, it means that in a particular conceptual area there is no shared vocabulary that people can readily find to express the concept. They can only start to communicate by learning a new word. The existence of a findable cognate hastens the rate of language learning by enabling people to pick up on familiar vocabulary.

The existence of findable cognates is useful in face-to-face contact, but a high findable cognate count gives no benefit to a person reading a book or listening to TV. It does help explain why a person might say, ‘I understand that dialect’, and yet finds reading a book in that dialect to be difficult.

Cognate percentage with functor words. In a separate count, I looked at the 103 most frequent functor words⁵ in the Lue text corpus. Comparing this list with words of the same function in standard Thai there are 55% cognate, 36% ‘easily recognizable cognate’, and 85% ‘findable cognate’.

Table 1: Summary of Cognate Percentages

	Cognate	Easily Recog. Cog.	Findable Cognate
281 Word List	77%	57%	90%
103 Functor Words	55%	36%	85%

Table 1 summarizes the cognate counts. There are considerably fewer cognates among functor words than in a general word list. This hints that the conjecture about the difficulty that functional categories pose to communication has some validity. Now we will look at the twenty different categories in detail.

2 FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIES

2.1 COORDINATION

There are three Lue words meaning ‘and’, appearing in this order of frequency in the Lue text corpus: /**lae**⁵/ လံ, /**kap**²/ ကပ္, and /**kap**²**tan**⁴/ ကပ္၄၇. The most common by far is /**lae**⁵/.⁶ This

⁵ Among ‘functor words’ I include auxiliary verbs, secondary verbs, conjunctions, demonstratives, interjections, prepositions and final particles.

⁶ There are six tones in Lue and five in Thai. For convenience of comparison between cognates, the tones in Lue and Thai are both numbered with the system usually used for Lue. Thus there is no tone numbered ‘5’ in Thai. Tones in cognate words match up in the following way.

Tone	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lue	high	high rising	low rising	low falling	mid falling	low falling creaky
Thai	rising	low	falling	mid	-	high

is cognate with the Thai word /læŋ⁶/ และ. In both languages, it coordinates either nouns or clauses, coming between the things that it coordinates.

Lue Example 1

læŋ³naa³ læŋ⁵ tɔɔp²

pretend_face and answer

‘She faked a smile and answered.’

Thai Example 2

ʔam⁴naat⁵ læŋ⁶ wasanaa¹

power and prestige

‘Power and prestige.’

In Example 1 the Lue word /læŋ⁵/ coordinates two clauses. In Example 2 the Thai word /læŋ⁶/ coordinates two nouns. Parallel examples could be cited in both languages.

The second Lue word is /kap²/. This is cognate with a common Thai word /kap²/ กับ. In both languages it is used only to coordinate nouns, coming between the two nouns.

Lue Example 3

hen⁴ lik⁵ kap² too¹

study numbers and letters

‘Study numbers and letters.’

Thai Example 4

ŋɔŋ⁴ kap² ŋaan⁴ pen⁴ k^hɔɔŋ¹ k^huu⁵ kan⁴

money and work be thing pair each_other

‘Money and work are complementary.’

In Examples 3 and 4 the word /kap²/ is shown coordinating nouns in Lue and Thai.

The Lue compound word /kap²taŋ⁴/ ‘and also’ would be cognate with the Thai word /kap²t^haŋ⁶/ กับทั้ง except for an inconsistent tone correspondence on the second morpheme. In Lue it is used for coordination in extended or complex lists. Although no Thai dictionary defines it as such, a search of Internet examples shows that the Thai word is used in a similar way.

Lue Example 5

jin⁴sæŋ⁴ nɿɿ⁶too¹ p^huu³jiŋ⁴ juu²dii¹ læʔ⁵ het⁵week⁵het⁵kaan¹
 hinder body woman healthy and work
kap²taŋ⁴ kaan¹ham⁵hen⁴
 and_also studies

‘It will hinder a woman from having a healthy body, and her work and also her studies.’

Thai Example 6

lam⁴poŋ⁴ kap²t^haŋ⁶ k^hɔm⁴p^hiw⁴tɿɿ⁴ læʔ⁶ t^ho⁴rasap²
 speaker and_also computer and telephone

‘Speakers and also computers and telephones.’

Examples 5 and 6 illustrate lists of nouns in Lue and Thai coordinated with this morpheme.

Clause chaining in a sentence which would require ‘and’ when translated into English typically has no morpheme in either Thai or Lue (‘He brushed his teeth Ø combed his hair.’).

Grammatical constructions involving coordination are similar between Lue and Thai. The problems of communication between the two languages in the area of coordination are minor.

2.2 ALTERNATION

There are two Lue words meaning ‘or’, neither of which are known to Thai speakers. The most commonly used word in the corpus is /**baw²kɔɔ⁶**/ ɔŋɔɔɔe ‘not then’ and could be glossed as ‘(if) not (A) then (B)’. This encodes alternation between either nouns or clauses.

Lue Example 7

t^huŋ¹ ʔaa⁴tit⁵ nuŋ⁵ baw²kɔɔ⁶ sip² wan⁴ daaw³ni
 reach week one or ten day approximately
kɔɔ⁶ kaaj¹ pin¹ p^hiw¹ lɿŋ¹
 then change be color yellow

‘After about a week or ten days it changes to be yellow.’

Lue Example 8

baw² mii⁴ nam⁶num⁴ baw²kɔɔ⁶ nam⁶num⁴ baw² laaj¹,
 not have milk or milk not much
cak² het⁵ daŋ²huu⁴
 IRR do what

‘If you don’t have any milk (for breastfeeding) or there is not much milk, what should you do?’

Examples 7 and 8 illustrate the word /**baw²kɔɔ⁶**/ encoding alternation between nouns and clauses respectively.

The other Lue word is /**huu⁶waa⁵**/ ຮຸ້ເຮືອວຽ, literally ‘know that’. This is typically used when presenting two alternatives in an either-or construction. Again, this is unknown to Thai speakers. It is shown in Example 9.

Lue Example 9

huu⁶waa⁵ *taaj¹* *han³*, **huu⁶waa⁵** *paaj⁵* *paj¹* *mɤŋ⁴* *daj¹*,
 or die there or flee go city some
p^haj¹ *kɔɔ⁶* *baw²* *han¹*
 anybody then not see

‘Whether they died there or they fled to some other city, nobody saw them again.’

The Thai word for alternation is /**ruu¹**/ หรือ ‘or’, which is not known to Lue speakers. It shows alternation between nouns or clauses.

Thai Example 10

k^hun⁴ **ruu¹** *p^hom¹* *nii³læ²*? *ca* *tɔŋ³* *pen⁴* *p^huu³* *rap⁶p^hit²c^hɔɔp³*
 2s or 1s TOP IRR must be CLF_person responsible
 ‘You or I will have to be the one who takes responsibility.’

Thai Example 11

p^hom¹ *maj³* *saap³* *waa³* *k^haw¹* *ca* *jɔɔm⁴*
 1s not know COMP 3s IRR willing
ruu¹ *maj³*
 or not
 ‘I don’t know whether he will agree or not.’

Examples 10 and 11 illustrate the word /**ruu¹**/ encoding alternation between nouns and clauses respectively.

Alternation is an area with no findable cognates between these two languages, and thus there are major communication difficulties between a Lue and a Thai speaker.

2.3 DEMONSTRATIVES

Tai languages have demonstratives that come at the end of a classifier phrase. Lue has these five and Noss (1964:103) lists close parallels to them in Thai.

Table 2: Demonstratives in Lue and Thai

Lue	Thai	Meaning
/nii ⁶ / ๕๐๕	/nii ⁶ / นี้	this; closer to me
/nan ⁶ / ๕๕๕	/nan ⁶ / นั่น	that; closer to you
/pun ⁵ / ๕๕๕๕๕	/noon ⁶ / โนน	yon; distant from us
/daj ¹ / ๕๕	/naj ¹ / ไหน	which; one of limited possibilities
/nuu ⁵ / ๕๕๕๕๕	/nuu ² / หนึ่ง	a, a certain one

The first two items in Table 2 are virtually identical in the two languages. The third, the distal demonstratives, are non-cognate and sound very different.

The fourth, the ‘which’ demonstratives, are non-cognate, but happen to be similar in pronunciation. A Lue person will hear the Thai word /naj¹/ as meaning ‘where’. A Thai person has access to a findable cognate; the Lue word /daj¹/ is similar to a Thai word /daj¹/ with a similar meaning.

The fifth one on the list is the number ‘one’. When it precedes the classifier, as is typical for numbers, it is a true number. When it appears after the classifier, it functions as a marker coding indefinite reference and for introducing new participants. The tones are non-cognate between Lue and Thai, but the words are similar.

Lue Example 12

cuu⁵ kun⁴ mak⁵caj¹ tii⁵ **nii⁶** pɣɣ⁵waa⁵ man⁴ kaj³ nam⁶mææ⁵samut²
 every person like place this because it close ocean
 ‘Everybody liked this place (a new hotel) because it was near the ocean.’

Thai Example 13

p^hom¹ saaj³ baan³ laj¹ **nan⁶** duaj³ muu⁴ phom¹ ʔeej⁴
 1s build house CLF_house that with hand 1s self
 ‘I built that house with my own hands.’

Lue Example 14

dam¹ pɔɔk⁵ **naj¹**, daj³ too¹ nuu⁵
 dive CLF_time which get CLF_animal one
 ‘On each dive (the ducks) got a fish.’

Thai Example 15

baaj² wan⁴ **nuu²**, p^hlɔɔj⁴ naj³ duu⁴ luuk³luuk³
 afternoon CLF_day one Ploy sit watch children
 ‘One afternoon, Ploy sat and watched the children.’

Examples 12-15 illustrate the use of demonstratives in Lue and Thai. Examples 12 and 13 show the ‘this’ and ‘that’ demonstratives in Lue and Thai respectively. Examples 14 and 15 show the ‘which’ and indefinite demonstratives in Lue and Thai. The grammar in each of these examples would look very similar if translated into the other language.

In the area of demonstratives communication difficulties between Lue and Thai people are not large. Some of the words involved are different and others have pronunciation differences, but not enough to cause confusion.

2.4 TOPIC

Tai languages make extensive use of topicalization, and have a variety of strategies for marking topic. This is a complex area of Tai grammar, with several choices in any one language, and wide variation between languages.

The most common way of marking topic in both Lue and Thai is with markers that are related to the demonstratives. The topic markers in both languages differ from the demonstratives in being unstressed and thus lacking distinctive tone. In standard Thai the demonstratives and topic markers are spelled the same way. In Lue the pronunciation difference is reflected in the spelling, and the ‘that’ marker is a different morpheme: /han/ instead of /nan/. Table 3 lists the demonstratives and topic markers in Lue and Thai.

Table 3: Demonstratives and Topic Markers in Lue and Thai

Lue Demonstrative	Topic Marker	Thai Demonstrative	Topic Marker	Meaning
/nii ⁶ / ၄၀e	/ni/ ၄၀e	/nii ⁶ / นี้	/ni/ นี้	this
/nan ⁶ / ၄၄e	/han/ ၀၄e	/nan ⁶ / นั่น	/nan/ นั่น	that
/pun ⁵ / ၀၃၄၄	/pun/ ၀၃၄၄	/noon ⁶ / โนน	/non/ โนน	that, distant

The topic marker is an enclitic attached to the topicalized phrase (noun phrase or prepositional phrase). This can be the subject, or any other referential constituent of the clause. The topic phrase is typically (but not always) fronted in the clause.

Lue Example 16

tuu¹ ni pin¹ cɔɔ⁶ p^hajaa⁴ jot⁵jaj²
 1pEXCL TOP be family king great
 ‘I am (lit. we are) from a family of great kings.’

Lue Example 17

*naj*⁴ *laaj*⁴ *taan*⁵ ***han*** *caaj*⁵ *mii*⁴ *kaan*¹*kii*³ *baw*²*saj*¹
 in letter 3s TOP able have urgent_matter what
 ‘In that letter of his, what urgent matter could there be?’

Thai Example 18

*p^huu*³*jij*¹ ***nan*** *tæŋ*⁴*tua*⁴ *c^haa*⁶ *sam**ɣɣ*¹
 women TOP dress slowly always
 ‘Women always take a long time to dress.’

Examples 16-18 illustrate the use of topic markers. In example 16 the subject is topicalized with the Lue particle /ni/. In example 17 a location is made topic with the Lue particle /han/. In example 18 the subject is made topic with the Thai particle /nan/.

An alternative way of marking topic in Lue is with the particle /læʔ²/ ʌʔ. This takes the place of any of the topic markers shown above. Any constituent of the clause can be topicalized in this way.

Lue Example 19

*saj*¹ ***læʔ***² *nap*⁵*tii*⁵ *duu*¹*k^hwæn*⁴ *k^hɔj*³ *haa*⁴
 why TOP unreasonably despise 1s Q/emotion
 ‘Why is it that you despise me without reason?’

In Example 19 the reason constituent “why” is marked as topic with the Lue particle /læʔ²/.

Lue Example 20

*see*¹*waa*⁵ *sæt*² *jaan*²*daj*¹ ***læʔ***² *hoo*¹*k^hæŋ*¹ *tɔɔ*² *man*⁴ ***ni***,
 if animal any TOP angry at it TOP
*di*² *jam*⁵ *taan*¹ *din*¹
 IRR trample instead dirt
 ‘If any animal, I am angry at it, I trample on it instead of dirt.’ [spoken by a tiger]

In Example 20 two topic markers are used for the same referent. The object of the anger is mentioned twice: ‘any animal’ and ‘it’. Both have topic markers; ‘any animal’ is marked with /læʔ²/, and ‘it’ is marked with /ni/.

In Thai there is a final particle /læʔ²/ **แหละ** which is cognate with Lue /læʔ²/. As a conclusion or summation marker it has similar functions in Lue and Thai, but in Thai it is not used to mark topic.

The examples shown above could be thought of as normal or unmarked topics. A topicalization strategy that is more marked is the use of prepositions to set off the topicalized

noun phrase. There are three prepositions in the Lue corpus used for topicalization. In order of frequency they are: /**daŋ**^{2/7}/ ɔŋᵒ, /**pan**⁴**daŋ**^{2/}/ ɔŋᵒᵒᵒᵒᵒᵒ, and /**tit**²**doj**^{3/}/ ɔŋᵒᵒᵒᵒᵒᵒ.

Lue Example 21

daŋ² ʔaaj³sen¹ **ni** ʔaa⁴la^{ʔ5} caaŋ⁵ cɔŋ⁴
 TOP AajSen TOP powerful able agile
 ‘This AajSen was strong and agile.’

In Example 21 the subject is marked as topic with the morpheme /**daŋ**^{2/} and also with the more typical marker ‘this’ at the end of the topic. Double marking of topic is not unusual in Tai languages.

Lue Example 22

daŋ² k^hɔŋ⁵ **han**, tuu¹k^hɔj³ ʔaw¹ maa⁴ læw⁶
 TOP equipment TOP 1pEXCL bring come already
 ‘The equipment, we have already brought.’

In Example 22 the object is marked as topic with the preposition /**daŋ**^{2/} and the marker /**han**/ at the end. The topic is also fronted to the beginning of the clause.

Resumption of the comment (non-topic) in Lue is often marked by a pronoun or a classifier [John, he hit me], or by a resumptive particle /**haak**^{2/} ɔŋᵒᵒᵒ.

Lue Example 23

tit²**doj**³ hak⁵saa¹ hoŋ⁴luuk⁵, **haak**² pin¹ kaan¹ nak² tataæ⁶
 TOP care_for womb RES be matter important truly
 ‘As for prenatal care, it is truly an important matter.’

In Example 23 the subject is marked as topic with the preposition /**tit**²**doj**^{3/} and the resumptive particle /**haak**^{2/} marks the transition from topic to comment.

Lue Example 24

naaŋ⁴ **ni**, **man**⁴ cum¹ k^haw³ waj⁴nam⁶ paj¹ læw⁶
 woman TOP 3s sink enter underwater_realm go PERF
 ‘The woman, she had sunk into the underwater realm.’

In Example 24 the transition to comment is marked by the pronoun /**man**^{4/} ‘she’.

Thai has a different set of prepositions for marking topic. Smyth lists /**suan**^{2/} ส่วน and /**sam**¹**rap**^{2/} สำหรับ (2002:117). The termination of the topic can be marked with the

⁷ /**daŋ**^{2/} is a common word with several other meanings in addition to TOPIC.

demonstrative topic markers, or with /**naŋ**³/ **น้** or /**naa**³/ **น้** (the last two especially in spoken Thai). The word /**koo**³/ **ก้** is used to mark resumption of the comment.

Thai Example 25

suan² **k^hun**⁴ **koo**³ **ca**² **təŋ**³ **faw**³**duu**⁴ **k^haw**¹ **jaŋ**²**klaj**³**c^hit**⁶
 TOP 2s RES IRR must watch 3s closely
 ‘It is you who will have to watch him closely.’

In Thai Example 25 the subject is marked as topic with the preposition /**suan**²/, and the resumptive particle /**koo**³/ marks transition from topic to comment.

Thai Example 26

sam¹**rap**² **k^hun**⁴ **nan** **ca**² **təŋ**³ **k^hit**⁶**duu**⁴ **koon**² **waa**³
 TOP 2s TOP IRR must think first COMP
p^hom¹ **ca**² **t^ham**⁴ **ʔaraj**⁴ **daj**³ **baaŋ**³
 1s IRR do what able all
 ‘As for you, I will have to think first what all I can do (for you).’

In Example 26 the beneficiary of the verb (‘you’) is marked as topic with the preposition /**sam**¹**rap**²/ and the marker /**nan**/ at the end.

The grammatical constructions used to mark topic are similar in Lue and Thai but the morphemes that are used are very different. For both Lue and Thai, on initial exposure to the other language these unfamiliar words are confusing. Once the morphemes are recognized and learned there can be quick transfer of linguistic ability due to structural similarity of the constructions.

2.5 INSTRUMENT

Instrument in Lue and Thai is marked in the first clause of a serial verb construction with the verb /**ʔaw**¹/ **ᨗᨑ** in Lue, or /**ʔaw**⁴/ **ᨗᨑ** in Thai. The words are cognate despite the tone difference. This word has the basic meaning ‘take’.

Lue Example 27

ʔaw¹ **baa**² **paj**¹ **kam**⁶ **lɔɔ**⁶
 take shoulder go support cart
 ‘Support the cart with your shoulder (take your shoulder and support the cart).’

Thai Example 28

ʔaw⁴ miit³ paj⁴ kriit² k^hɔɔ³muu⁴
 take knife go slit wrist

‘He slit his wrist with a knife (took a knife and slit his wrist).’

Examples 27 and 28 illustrate the use of /*ʔaw¹*/ to mark instrument in Lue and Thai. More often than not, the two clauses in an instrument serial verb construction are connected with a secondary verb ‘go’ or ‘come’. The construction of these clauses is similar in Lue and Thai.

In Lue the more elaborate morpheme /*ta²ʔaw¹*/ တာ^၂ဝဲ^၁ can also be used in the same construction. This is not known in Thai.

The functional category of instrument is not a major hurdle to communication between these two languages. Both the construction and the functional morphemes are basically the same.

2.6 BENEFICIARY

Beneficiary in Lue is normally marked with the preposition /*huuu³*/ ထူ^၃, which is cognate with a Thai word /*haj³*/ ให้ that has the same function (the vowel difference is due to a sound merger in Thai). In both languages this morpheme is a common word with several meanings. The uses of the word are similar between the two languages, and in marking the function of beneficiary they are virtually identical. On initial exposure to the language these words may be hard to recognize, but once the speaker realizes that Lue /*huuu³*/ is the same word as Thai /*haj³*/ she will quickly carry this over to the various meanings of the word.

Lue Example 29

ʔaw¹ jaa¹ saj² nɲɲ¹ hoo¹ huuu³ taan⁵
 take medicine put on head BEN 3s

‘She put medicine on his head for him.’

Thai Example 30

proot² kaw⁴ laŋ¹ haj³ c^han¹ t^hii⁴
 please scratch back BEN 1s IMPER

‘Please scratch my back for me.’

In Examples 29 and 30 the words /*huuu³*/ and /*haj³*/ are used to mark the beneficiary in Lue and Thai.

Thai has an additional preposition that encodes beneficiary: /*p^huaa³*/ ให้^๓ (see Example 31). This has no parallel in Lue and so a Lue person hearing it would be confused.

Thai Example 31

*raw*⁴ *taaŋ*² *kɔɔ*³ *t^ham⁴ŋaan⁴* *p^huaa³* *prat^heet³c^haat³*
 1p each LINK work BEN nation
 ‘We are all working for the nation.’

There are moderate difficulties in communicating the idea of beneficiary between Lue and Thai, with the greater burden falling on the Lue speaker.

2.7 OBLIGATION (SHOULD, OUGHT, MUST, HAVE TO)

There are four words in the Lue corpus that mark obligation, including the less demanding ‘should’ or ‘ought’, and the more insistent ‘have to’ or ‘must’. These auxiliaries⁸ are listed in Table 4 in the order of frequency with which they occur in the corpus.

Table 4: Lue Words for Obligation

/t ^h aa ³ /	၅၁၉	must
/puaŋ ⁴ kon ⁴ /	၅၀၅၆၇၈၉	should
/kon ⁴ /	၆၇၈	should
/taŋ ³ /	၀၁၂၃၄	must

Lue Example 32

t^haa³ *haa¹* *baw²saŋ¹* *maa⁴* *pin¹* *sak^hi[?]2* *haa⁴*
 must find something come be evidence FPemotion
 ‘I must find something to present as evidence.’

Lue Example 33

puaŋ⁴kon⁴ *kin¹* *nam⁶fot⁵* *laaj¹* *p^hɔŋ⁵*
 should eat boiled_water much quite
 ‘She should drink quite a lot of boiled water.’

Lue Example 34

k^haw³ *p^hak²* *kon⁴* *pæŋ¹* *laaj¹* *cɣɣ⁶*
 rice vegetable should make many CLF_kind
 ‘You should cook many kinds of rice and vegetables.’

⁸ Following Haas (1964:xxii) verbal words preceding the main verb are called ‘auxiliaries’, and those following the main verb are called ‘secondary verbs’.

Lue Example 35

kin¹ jaa¹ mɔŋ⁴ kun⁴ ni baw² haaj¹,
 eat medicine world people TOP not recover
tɔŋ³ daj³ kin¹ jaa¹ tip⁵
 must ACH eat medicine divine

‘If I eat medicine from the human world I won’t recover, I must eat divine medicine.’

Examples 32-35 show how these Lue auxiliaries are used. The last two, /**kon⁴**/ and /**tɔŋ³**/, are familiar to Thai speakers through cognate words. The two most common ones are not.

Thai also has four words for obligation. As in Lue these are auxiliaries that precede the main verb. They are listed in Table 5, although I do not have any frequency counts for Thai.

Table 5: Thai Words for Obligation

/k ^h uan ⁴ /	ควร	should
/naa ³ /	น่า	should
/tɔŋ ³ /	ต้อง	must
/cam ⁴ pen ⁴ tɔŋ ³ /	จำเป็นต้อง	must

Thai Example 36

k^hun⁴ k^huan⁴ caʔ² paj⁴ diaw¹nii⁶
 2s should IRR go now

‘You should go at once.’

Thai Example 37

k^haw¹ naa³ caʔ² daj³ pruk²saa¹ p^hom¹
 3s should IRR ACC consult 1s
kɔɔn² t^hii³ caʔ² ʔɔɔk² k^ham⁴t^halæŋ¹
 before NOM IRR issue statement

‘He should have consulted me before issuing a statement.’

Thai Example 38

p^hom¹ tɔŋ³ paj⁴ t^huŋ¹ t^hii³ nan³ wee⁴laa⁴ sip² moon⁴
 1s must go reach at there time ten o’clock

‘I have to be there by 10 o’clock.’

Thai Example 39

nak⁶rian⁴ thii³ mii⁴ p^hun⁶t^haan¹ p^hasaa¹?aŋ⁴k^hrit² maj³ t^huŋ¹ keen⁴
 student RC have foundation English not reach standard
cam⁴pen⁴təŋ³ rian⁴ tɔɔ²
 must study further

‘Students whose English does not reach the standard must study further.’

Examples 36-39 show how these words are used in Thai. /k^huan⁴/ is cognate with the Lue word /kon⁴/, and /təŋ³/ with the Lue word /təŋ³/.

The most common Lue word /t^haa³/ is not known to Thai speakers with this meaning. The Lue word /puŋ⁴kon⁴/ is a compound built on /kon⁴/, and the /puŋ⁴/ part of the compound does not correspond to anything familiar for a Thai speaker.

Two commonly used Thai words /naa³/ and /cam⁴pen⁴təŋ³/ are not known to Lue speakers, although /cam⁴pen⁴təŋ³/ is built around the known morpheme /təŋ³/.

There is a fair degree of difficulty in communicating the idea of obligation between Lue and Thai speakers. Although the constructions involved are similar, many of the most common words that are used are unknown.

2.8 ABILITY

Ability is a complex area in Tai languages as it can be marked by many different morphemes and with various grammatical patterns. Verbs of ability can be either auxiliaries or secondary verbs. Lue and Thai have verbs that fall into both categories.

There are three auxiliaries in the Lue corpus which precede the main verb and have the meaning of ‘able’, in order of frequency: /caŋ⁵/ ɔɔŋ⁶, /?aat²/ ʔaʔ and /t^haa⁴jaat⁵/ ɔaɔaʔ.

Lue Example 40

p^hajaa⁴caw³ caŋ⁵ kaa⁵ ?aa³ sop² waj⁶,
 king able only open mouth up
baw² caŋ⁵ tɔɔp² kam⁴ saŋ¹
 not able answer word any

‘The king could only open his mouth; he could not answer a word.’

Lue Example 41

too¹daj¹ baw² ?aat² cak² kææ³ daj³
 anybody not able IRR solve able

‘Nobody could solve (the riddle).’

Lue Example 42

t^haa⁴jaat⁵ *kin¹* *cin⁶* *taam¹caj¹*
 able eat meat as_one_pleases
 ‘We can eat as much meat as we want.’

Examples 40-42 illustrate the use of these three Lue words, including examples with a negative. None of them is recognized by a Thai speaker as meaning ‘able’. The word /*caan⁵*/ is cognate with the Thai word /*c^han⁵*/ ช่าง ‘craftsman’. The word /*?aat²*/ is cognate with Thai /*?aat²*/ อด which means “bold” (the meanings in the two languages have diverged due to semantic shift). The word /*t^haa⁴jaat⁵*/ is not cognate with any Thai word.

In Thai the only auxiliary with the meaning of ‘able’ is /*saa¹maat³*/ สามารถ (shown in Example 43).

Thai Example 43

t^han³ *saa¹maat³* *t^ham* *daj³*
 3s able do able
 ‘He can do it.’

When /*saa¹maat³*/ is used it is almost invariably followed later in the clause by the secondary verb /*daj³*/ ได้ ‘able’. In the Lue corpus the word /*?aat²*/ is regularly followed by /*daj³*/ as in Example 41 above. The Lue words /*caan⁵*/ and /*t^haa⁴jaat⁵*/, however, are not followed by /*daj³*/.

Communication between Lue and Thai people about the idea of ability using auxiliaries is limited due to the structural and lexical differences discussed above.

Moving from auxiliaries to secondary verbs (those that follow the main verb) that encode ability, the situation is more complicated. Noss (1964:128-132) speaks of ‘general completive verbs’ which can mark ability following a wide range of main verbs, and of ‘specific completive verbs’⁹ which are limited in their use to marking ability for a small group of main verbs in a particular semantic range.

The ‘general completive verbs’ in Lue which mark ability are /*daj³*/ ɕɔ̃ɛ ‘able’ and /*pin¹*/ ɕɔ̃ɛ ‘know how to’. These are cognate with the Thai verbs /*daj³*/ ได้ ‘able’ and /*pen⁴*/ เป็น ‘know how to’ and they work in similar ways.

Lue Example 44

tæt² *saaj¹buur¹* *daj³* *læʔ²*
 cut umbilical_cord able FP
 ‘Now you can cut the umbilical cord.’

⁹ Noss (1964:128-132) says that ‘specific completive verbs occur as predicators after certain transitive verbs or groups of transitive verbs with which they have a covert relationship.’

Lue Example 45

*nap*⁵ *pin*¹

count able

‘He knows how to count.’

Examples 44 and 45 illustrate the use of these two words in Lue. Thai examples would look very similar.

There are at least twenty ‘specific completive verbs’ in both Thai and Lue, too many to catalogue here. This may, in fact, be an open set. The Lue verb /*ʔɔɔk*²/ *ʔɔɔk*² is typical, as shown in Examples 46 and 47.

Lue Example 46

*kut*⁵ *p^hajaa¹pan¹jaa⁴* *ʔɔɔk*² *maa*⁴ *ɕɻɻ*⁶ *nuŋ*⁵

think wisdom out come CLF one

‘He thought out a piece of wisdom.’

Lue Example 47

*jew*⁵ *baw*² *ʔɔɔk*²

urinate not out

‘Unable to urinate.’

In the whole area of ability, there are major challenges to communication between Lue and Thai speakers.

2.9 YES/NO QUESTIONS

Lue has two particles that are used with polar questions. The most neutral one is /*haa*⁵/ *ɲɔɔ*⁶ which marks questions that genuinely seek information. This is comparable in function to the Thai word /*maj*¹/ *ไหม*. Examples 48 and 49 illustrate these words in Lue and Thai.

Lue Example 48

*dii*¹ *dɔj*³ *haa*⁵

good eat Qy/n

‘Does it taste good?’

Thai Example 49

*t^ham*⁴ *daj*³ *maj*¹

do able Qy/n

‘Can you do it?’

Another Lue word /**kaa**⁴/ ๑๖ marks yes/no questions, but anticipates a positive response. Often it is best translated into English with a tag question. This is closely parallel to the Thai word /**ruu**¹/ หรือ (formal) or /**rxr**¹/ เหมว, /**rxr**¹/ เระะ, /**ruu**¹/ รึ (informal). Examples 50 and 51 illustrate these words in Lue and Thai.

Lue Example 50

*paj*¹ **kaa**⁴

go Qy/n

‘You are going now, are you?’ [said to a guest]

Thai Example 51

k^hun *paj*⁴ *t^hij*³ *nan*³ *maa*⁴ *lææw*⁶ **ruu**¹

3s go at there come already Qy/n

‘You have been there already, have you?’

Another yes/no question construction used in Lue is the ‘verb-NEG-verb’ construction, shown in Example 52. Note that the question particle at the end is still required. This construction is rarely used by Thai speakers.

Lue Example 52

*jaŋ*⁴ **mii**⁴ **baw**² **mii**⁴ *pin*²*jaa*² *k^hwæn*⁶ *dii*¹ *nan*⁶ **haa**⁵

still exist NEG exist method more good that Qy/n

‘Are there still other methods that are better?’

Lue and Thai have some differences in the grammatical structures for marking yes/no questions, and they use entirely different particles with no findable cognates. This will be confusing for speakers on both sides at first encounter.

2.10 NEGATIVE

The standard negative forms in Lue and Thai are /**baw**²/ ๑๑๖ and /**maj**³/ ไม respectively. While the forms are different, in grammatical usage they are similar, taking identical positions within the clause.

Lue Example 53

*taan*⁵ **baw**² *mii*⁴ *srx*³

3s not have shirt

‘He does not have a shirt.’

Example 53 shows the word /baw²/ in Lue. A Thai example with /maj³/ replacing /baw²/ would look very similar.

A difficulty for a Thai speaker learning Lue is that the morpheme /baw²/ is reduced to a syllabic /m²/ in connected speech. In addition to that, Lue has a distinct tone sandhi process, and the segmental parts of the morpheme /baw²/ can disappear, with its only remaining trace being tone sandhi on the following word. To the learner of Lue it seems to disappear altogether and learning to listen for it is a challenge. In Example 54 the clause ‘I don’t have any’ is shown with three different degrees of distinctness.

Lue Example 54

<i>baw²</i>	<i>mii⁴</i>	OR	<i>m²</i>	<i>mii⁴</i>	OR	<i>mii^{4S}</i>
not	have		not	have		not_have
‘I don’t have any.’						

The negative is a difficult area for communication between a Lue and a Thai speaker, with the largest learning difficulty falling on the Thai person.

2.11 IRREALIS

Irrealis particles in Tai languages mark a situation that is not real: it hasn’t yet happened or may never happen. This includes future, conditional, hypothetical, prediction and contrary-to-fact constructions.

In formal writing and formal speech the Lue irrealis particle is the auxiliary /cak²/ ɔcɔ̌. In common speech, and in many written texts, Lue speakers use a wide variety of variant forms. In published Lue books and newspapers the following seven colloquial forms appear: /ʔiʔ²/ ɔ̌θɔ̌, /k^hiʔ²/ ɔ̌θɔ̌, /siʔ⁵/ ɔ̌θɔ̌, /tiʔ²/ ɔ̌θɔ̌, /dii¹/ ɔ̌θ, /diʔ²/ ɔ̌θɔ̌ and /dii²/ ɔ̌θɔ̌ as well as the formal /cak²/ ɔcɔ̌. None of these forms are familiar to a Thai speaker. In Thai the standard irrealis particle is /caʔ²/ ɔ̌, which is probably cognate with the formal Lue /cak²/. Examples 55 and 56 show the formal particle in Lue and Thai respectively. Examples 57 and 58 show other colloquial forms in Lue.

Lue Example 55

<i>p^hajaat⁵</i>	<i>k^hɔ̌j³</i>	<i>kɔ̌ɔ̌⁶</i>	cak²	<i>haaj¹</i>	<i>læʔ²</i>
disease	1s	then	IRR	get_better	FP_like_that
‘Then my disease will get better.’					

Thai Example 56

t^haa³ p^hom¹ maj³ kin⁴ jaa⁴ koo³ caɽ² maj³ haaj¹
 if 1s not eat medicine LINK IRR not get_better
 ‘If I hadn’t eaten medicine I wouldn’t have gotten better.’

Lue Example 57

kan⁴ mii⁴ ηɣn⁴ pæk⁵ nuŋ⁵ koo⁶ tiɽ² mɣɣ⁴ din³bee³ naj³ pɣn⁵
 if have money CLF one LINK IRR go gamble with others
 ‘If he had even one piece of money he would go gamble with the others.’

Lue Example 58

mii⁴ kun⁴ dii¹ juu⁴ muŋ⁴, paaj⁵ waj⁴ doɽ²
 exist person IRR shoot 2s flee quickly IMP
 ‘There is someone going to shoot you, flee quickly.’

Lue speakers will not have much difficulty understanding the Thai irrealis particle. The difficulty in communication is mostly for the Thai speaker trying to understand Lue informal speech and writing.

2.12 THE QUESTION WORD ‘WHO’

The words for ‘who’ in Lue and Thai are /p^haj¹/ 𑜀𑜂𑜆𑜨 and /k^hraj⁴/ ใใคร respectively and there are no findable cognates. Although the forms are different, their grammatical usage is very similar. Both are used in questions, and in both languages this same morpheme is used as an indefinite pronoun ‘whoever, anybody’. Example 59 shows the Lue word in a question, and Example 60 shows the Thai word as an indefinite pronoun.

Lue Example 59

p^haj¹ cak² leŋ⁶ luuk⁵taw³ kuu¹ noo⁴
 who IRR care_for child 1s FP_exclaim
 ‘Who will care for my child?’

Thai Example 60

jaa² haj³ k^hraj⁴ saap⁵
 don’t allow anybody know
 ‘Don’t let anybody know.’

Unfamiliar morphemes are an obstacle to communication between a Lue and a Thai speaker, but once these words are learned the constructions involved are the same.

2.13 THE QUESTION WORD ‘WHAT’

There are four Lue words for ‘what’, in order of frequency: /**saŋ**¹/ သၣ်, /**baw**²**saŋ**¹/ ဝၣ်သၣ်, /**daŋ**²**huuu**⁴/ ဒၣ်ၣ်ၣ် and /**tii**⁵**saŋ**¹/ တီၣ်သၣ်. Thai uses only the single morpheme /**?araŋ**⁴/ ฉะไร. There are no findable cognates between the two languages. Examples 61 and 62 illustrate the Lue and Thai words.

Lue Example 61

*kin*¹ *saŋ*¹
eat what
‘What are you eating?’

Thai Example 62

*p^hom*¹ *ca?*² *t^ham*⁴ *?araŋ*⁴ *haj*³ *k^hun*⁴ *daj*³ *baaŋ*³
1s IRR do what BEN 2s able all
‘What all can I do for you?’

In both languages these same morphemes are used as indefinite pronouns ‘whatever, anything, something’. This is true for all four of the Lue words as well as the Thai word /**?araŋ**⁴/. Example 63 shows the Lue word /**daŋ**²**huuu**⁴/ as an indefinite pronoun.

Lue Example 63

*baw*² *caaŋ*⁵ *het*⁵ *daŋ*²*huuu*⁴
not able do anything
‘They couldn’t do anything about it.’

In Lue all four of the words are also used with the meaning ‘why’. In Thai the meaning ‘why’ has a separate word /**t^ham**⁴**maj**⁴/ ทำไม ‘why’. In Lue, both meanings (‘why’ and ‘what’) are conflated into the four words shown above. This opens up opportunity for grammatical confusion when Thai people listen to Lue. In Example 64 the Lue word /**saŋ**¹/ is illustrated with the meaning ‘why’.

Lue Example 64

*k^hwaaj*⁴ *too*¹ *nii*⁶, *saŋ*¹ *baw*² *mii*⁴ *k^haw*¹ *haa*⁴
water_buffalo CLF this why not have horn Qemotion
‘This water buffalo, why doesn’t it have any horns?’

There is considerable scope for confusion in communicating the concept ‘what’ between speakers of Lue and Thai.

2.14 IMPERATIVE

The unmarked form of imperatives in both Lue and Thai have no particles. Example 65 is standard Lue and standard Thai for a blunt, unvarnished imperative.

Lue or Thai Example 65

ʔaw¹ maa⁴

take come

‘Bring it here.’

However, in many situations such a command would be rude, and various particles are used to mitigate the command. In both languages, these include auxiliaries, which precede the verb, and final particles.

Lue and Thai share a similar imperative auxiliary. In Lue it is /**cuŋ²**/ ɔŋɔŋ⁶ and in Thai /**coŋ⁴**/ ฅง. These have an irregular tone correspondence, but are probably cognate. Haas (1964:108) says the Thai word is literary and elegant, and the Lue word has the same feel to it. Example 66 shows the Lue word /**cuŋ²**/ in a command given by a king.

Lue Example 66

***cuŋ²** kum³hoo¹ p^hɔɔ²duu¹ ŋaw⁴ nok⁵ too¹ bin¹ paj⁴*

IMP bow_head look_at shadow bird CLF fly go

‘Bow your heads and look at the shadow of the bird that flies by.’

By far the most common auxiliary for imperative in Lue is /**koŋ⁵**/ ɔŋ⁶ which is used colloquially. The Thai auxiliary /**k^hɔŋ³**/ ฅ็ຍ ‘gradually’ is probably cognate but is not used as an imperative. Example 67 illustrates this word in Lue.

Lue Example 67

***koŋ⁵** ʔaw¹ kaa⁵ huuu³*

IMP take price BEN

‘Bring me the money.’

Lue and Thai each have several final particles that are used to mitigate imperatives. The most common Lue word is /**do⁴**/ ɕ̌ɔ (with variants /**toŋ⁵**/ and /**doŋ⁵**/). Other Lue mitigating imperatives are /**tyr⁶**/ ɔŋ⁶ɔ, /**duu¹**/ ɕɔ and /**ton⁴**/ ɕ̌ɔ. The particle /**tyr⁶**/ in Lue is used in formal and literary situations. Examples 68 and 69 show the Lue words /**do⁴**/ and /**tyr⁶**/.

Lue Example 68

kɔŋ⁴caj¹ baw²saŋ¹, waa⁵ do⁴

worry what tell IMP

‘What are you worried about? Tell me.’

Lue Example 69

k^hɔɔ¹ p^hajaa⁴caw³ t^haam¹ man⁴ ɔn¹kɔn² tɔɔ⁶

request king ask 3s first IMP

‘Please may the king ask him first.’

Four final particles are listed in Thai grammars as imperatives: /si⁶/ **สิ**, /t^hɔɔ²/ **เถิด**, /nɔj⁶/ **นอຍ** and /t^hii⁴/ **หึ**. The particle /t^hɔɔ²/ may be cognate with the Lue particle /tɔɔ⁶/, and like it, it is used in formal contexts. The other Thai particles bear no resemblance to any of the Lue particles.

Example 70 illustrates the Thai particle /si⁶/.¹⁰ Example 71 shows the Thai imperative particle /t^hɔɔ²/.

Thai Example 70

t^haa³ maj³ c^hɔɔp³ kɔɔ³ jaa² maa⁴ si⁶

if not like LINK don't come IMP

‘If you don't like it then don't come.’

Thai Example 71

maa⁴ t^hɔɔ² dic^han¹ caɔ² k^hɔɔj⁴ k^hun⁴

come IMP 1s-fem IRR wait 2s

‘Do come, I will be waiting for you.’

There are major difficulties for both Thai and Lue speakers in communicating the idea of imperative because the particles used are never identical. Even the few particles that a linguist would recognize as cognate are different in their form and will not be recognized by language learners.

2.15 PROHIBITION

The most salient word for prohibition in Lue is /jaa²/ **จา** ‘don't’. Its cognate word in Thai /jaa²/ **จํา** is the most common prohibition form in Thai. This much is common to Lue and Thai and aids communication.

¹⁰ Cooke (1989:100) differs from other scholars in identifying this particle not as an imperative, but rather as ‘expectable response’, i.e. ‘the given response is obvious, expectable, or certain under the circumstances’.

In both languages there are other prohibitives, mostly built around /jaa²/. Lue uses (in order of frequency): /jaa²paj¹/ ၵၢၼ်ၵၢၼ်ၵၢၼ် 'don't', /jaa²t^haa³/ ၵၢၼ်ၵၢၼ်ၵၢၼ် 'don't' as well as /baw²t^haa³/ ဝၵ်းၵၢၼ် 'don't'.

Thai also uses the compound /jaa²paj¹/ 'don't', as well as /maj³ton³/ မၢၵ်းတၢၵ်း 'don't'. The Thai word /ton³/ တၢၵ်း 'must' is unknown to Lue people, and the Lue word /t^haa³/ ၵၢၼ် 'must' is unknown to Thai people.

Lue Example 72

jaa² ʔoot²haan¹ tɔɔ² nam⁶law³
 don't boast about liquor
 'Don't boast about your drinking.'

Lue Example 73

baw²waa⁵ k^hɔɔ³juu²haaw⁴kin¹ tok⁵p^haan¹ paan¹daj¹
 no_matter way_of_living poor in_whatever_way
 kɔɔ⁶ baw²t^haa³ cok²caaj² lim³k^ham⁴ nii⁶ nɔɔ⁴
 LINK don't spend gold_bar this IMPER
 'No matter how poor your standard of living is, don't spend this gold bar.'

Thai Example 74

maj³ton³ huan² c^han¹
 don't worry 1s
 'Don't worry about me.'

Example 72 illustrates the particle /jaa²/. A Thai example would look very similar. Examples 73 and 74 show the prohibitives /baw²t^haa³/ and /maj³ton³/ in Lue and Thai respectively.

Lue and Thai have an abundance of different compound words for prohibition which leads to the possibility of confusion. The basic word /jaa²/ is a clear 'findable cognate' and eases face-to-face communication between Lue and Thai speakers.

2.16 PURPOSE

Lue and Thai use cognate conjunctions to mark purpose. In Lue it is /pɔɔ⁵/ ၵၢၼ်ၵၢၼ်, and in Thai it is /p^hua³/ เพื่อ. Although they sound different they are cognate, and the differences in pronunciation can be understood once a person has assimilated the consistent sound changes. Examples 75 and 76 illustrate these words in Lue and Thai.

Lue Example 75

*prɔːʔ*⁵ *jin*⁴*dii*¹ *kap*² *kʰaw*¹, *kɔː*⁶ *tɔːt*⁵ *paa*¹ *lon*¹ *huu*³
 PURPOSE thank to 3p LINK cast fish big for
*kʰaw*¹ *kun*⁴ *too*¹
 3p each CLF_animal

‘In order to thank them, he caught them each a big fish (caught with a casting net).’

Thai Example 76

*kʰaw*¹ *laa*⁴*ʔɔːk*² *pʰua*³ *nɔːŋ*⁶*cʰaaj*⁴ *kʰɔːŋ*¹ *kʰaw*⁶
 3s resign PURPOSE younger_brother of 3s
*ca*² *daj*³ *rap*⁶ *tam*⁴*nææŋ*⁴ *tʰææn*⁴
 IRR ACC receive position instead

‘He resigned so that his younger brother might succeed him.’

Once the sound changes are understood, Lue and Thai people should find it easy to communicate about purpose.

2.17 GROUP ACTION

Tai languages do not have number marking on either nouns or verbs. If the number is not clear from the context and the speaker wants to be specific, a quantifier such as ‘six’ or ‘all’ does the job.

There are, however, auxiliary verbs that denote group or collective action. The Thai word /**pʰaa⁴kan⁴**/ พากัน (literally ‘take each other’) is defined by Haas as an ‘expression indicating concerted action, simultaneous and identical action by the members of a group’ (Haas 1964:369). She gives the following example (Example 77).

Thai Example 77

pʰaa⁴kan⁴ *hua*¹*rɔːʔ*⁶
 COLL laugh

‘Everybody laughed (together).’

Lue has three words with this function (in order of frequency): /**coo⁴kan¹**/ ໂຄວ໋ຄນ, /**con⁴kan¹**/ ໂຄນ໋ຄນ and /**paa⁴kan¹**/ ປາວ໋ຄນ. The word /**paa⁴kan¹**/ is cognate with the Thai /**pʰaa⁴kan⁴**/. Example 78 illustrates /**coo⁴kan¹**/ which is the most common Lue word for collective action.

Lue Example 78

coo⁴kan¹ *ʔaw*¹ *kʰaw*³ *paj*¹ *kʰaaj*¹
 COLL take rice go sell

‘Together they sold the rice.’

Lue and Thai people have to learn the different auxiliaries that they use for group action, although there is a findable cognate in /paa⁴kan¹/. Because of structural similarities they will quickly learn to communicate in this area.

2.18 CLASSIFIERS FOR PEOPLE

The classifiers in Thai for people are /k^hon⁴/ คน, /p^huu³/ ผู้, and /t^han³/ ท่าน. /k^hon⁴/ is the most common. /p^huu³/ is not used with numbers above ‘one’, but is common with specifiers or adjectives. /t^han³/ is used for reference to honored people, or in formal situations. Example 79 shows the classifiers /k^hon⁴/ and /p^huu³/.

Thai Example 79

dek ²	sɔɔŋ ¹	k ^h on ⁴	dek ²	p ^h uu ³	dii ⁴
child	two	CLF	child	CLF	good
‘Two children.’			‘Good child.’		

Lue has words that are cognate with the first two: /kun⁴/ ဝဉ် and /p^huu³/ ဧယု. As in Thai, /kun⁴/ is the most common, and /p^huu³/ is not used with numbers above ‘one’. The phrases in Example 79 would look very similar in Lue.

The Lue word /taan⁵/ ဖဲဉ် ‘3s’ is cognate with the Thai /t^han³/. In both languages it is a 3rd person pronoun, but in Lue it is not used as a classifier.

Lue has three other human classifiers: /k^hyy¹/ ဝဉ်ဝဲ, /k^haa¹/ ခဲ, and /koo⁶/ ဝဉ်. /k^hyy¹/ is used for a group of two people acting together, and is only ever used with the number ‘two’. In saying ‘two people came to visit me today’, a Lue person would likely use /sɔŋ¹ k^hyy¹/ ‘two CLF’ if they came together. If they did not come as a group he would most likely use the normal classifier /sɔŋ¹ kun⁴/ ‘two CLF’.

/k^haa¹/ (literally ‘leg’) is a classifier for things that naturally occur in pairs. This includes lovers, as well as such things as chopsticks. It typically occurs with the number ‘two’, although it can be used for one part of a pair.

Lue informants identify /koo⁶/ as a classifier for children. In the corpus, however, it is also used for people with whom one has a close relationship (spouses, friends, clients), and for those in an unfortunate state, such as beggars and poor people. I believe it expresses a degree of real or assumed intimacy.

When using classifiers for people there are communication difficulties on both sides, as both Lue and Thai people use classifiers that are unfamiliar to people in the other language.

2.19 REFLEXIVE

In Lue three different reflexive pronouns are used to describe reflexive action: /**too**¹/ ຄ້ອ, /**k^hiŋ**⁴/ ຄ້ອ and /**tun**¹/ ດັງ. The words /**too**¹/ and /**k^hiŋ**⁴/ both have the basic meaning ‘body’. As a reflexive /**too**¹/ is most commonly used for animals. Example 80 illustrates this.

Lue Example 80

*mæw*⁴ *lee*⁴ *too*¹
 cat lick REFL
 ‘The cat licked itself.’

/**tun**¹/ is a classifier for respected people and gods, and when used as a reflexive has a respectful tone. In Example 81 the respect one owes to one’s parents extends to the pronoun one uses to refer to oneself in relation to them.

Lue Example 81

<i>saj</i> ²	<i>luuk</i> ⁵	k^hiŋ ⁴	<i>juŋ</i> ² <i>jam</i> ¹	<i>pɔɔ</i> ⁵ <i>mææ</i> ⁵	tun ¹
teach	child	REFL	respect	parents	REFL
‘Teach your children.’			‘Respect your parents.’		

In Thai the reflexive pronouns are /**tua**⁴/ ตัว, /**tua**⁴/ **teen**⁴/ ตัวเอง, and /**ton**⁴/ ตน. Thai /**tua**⁴/ and /**ton**⁴/ are cognate with Lue /**too**¹/ and /**tun**¹/ respectively (the apparent tone differences are predictable). Haas says that /**tua**⁴/ is colloquial and /**ton**⁴/ is elegant, but otherwise does not distinguish their meaning. She says that /**tua**⁴/ **teen**⁴/ is more emphatic than the bare /**tua**⁴/.

The common Lue reflexive /**k^hiŋ**⁴/ is not recognized by Thai speakers, and the Thai word /**teen**⁴/ is not know by Lue speakers.

There are considerable difficulties in communicating about reflexives because of non-cognate vocabulary.

2.20 REPETITION

The words in Lue that signal repetition of an event include (in order of frequency): /**sam**⁶/ ຄ້ອ ‘again’, /**t^hæm**¹/ ດັງ ‘again’, /**t^hæŋ**³/ ດັງ ‘again’, and /**pɔɔ**⁴**sɔŋ**¹/ ດັງ ‘a second time’. The first is an auxiliary, preceding the main verb. The others are secondary verbs, which follow the verb they refer to.

The word /**sam**⁶/ when used as a secondary verb means ‘completely, everything’. When used as an auxiliary it means ‘again’ as in Example 82.

Lue Example 82

kun⁴caj⁶ sam⁶ tɔɔp² kam⁴ p^hajaa⁴caw³ waa⁵
 servant again answer word king say

‘The servant again responded to the word of the king saying...’

/t^hæm¹/ and /t^hæŋ³/ have similar uses in the secondary verb position, as in Example 83.

Lue Example 83

bææk² cam¹ mɔɔ⁴ jok⁵ paa¹ t^hæŋ³
 carry_over_shoulder net go lift fish again

‘They carried their nets and went to catch fish again.’

/pɔɔ⁴sɔŋ¹/ (literally ‘as much as twice’) is only used with a negative, as in Example 84.

Lue Example 84

taŋ³nii³paj¹ kuu¹ baw² maa⁴ p^hoot² muŋ⁴ pɔɔ⁴sɔŋ¹
 from_now_on 1s not come help 2s again

‘From now on I will not come to help you again.’

The words in Thai that signal repetition of an event include /sam⁶/ ซ้ำ ‘again’, /maj²/ ใหม่ ‘new’, and /ɨiik²k^hraŋ⁶/ อีกครั้ง ‘another time’. These all appear in the secondary verb position following the main verb.

The word /sam⁶/ causes communication difficulties. A Thai person will hear /hak² sam⁶/ as meaning ‘break it again’ while a Lue person will hear ‘break them all’. For ‘break it again’ a Lue person will reverse the order: /sam⁶ hak²/.

The Thai /maj²/ could be glossed ‘anew’, but allows for contexts that are purely repetition.

Thai Example 85

p^hruŋ³nii⁶ p^hom¹ ca[?]² maa⁴ maj²
 tomorrow 1s IRR come again

‘Tomorrow I will come again.’

Lue speakers use /maj²/ as a secondary verb to mean ‘anew’, but not ‘again’. Sentences like Example 85 above are viewed as odd by Lue speakers, although they approve of Example 86.

Lue Example 86

p^hajaa⁴p^hum⁴ maa⁴ saan³ look⁵ maj²
 Brahma come build world anew

‘Brahma came to build the world anew.’

The Thai word /ʔiik²k^hraŋ⁶/ is not known to Lue speakers, and the Lue words /t^hæm¹/, /t^hæŋ³/ and /pɔɔ⁴sɔŋ¹/ are not known to Thai speakers.

There are major difficulties for both Thai and Lue speakers in understanding each other in the area of repetition.

3 SUMMARY

Two things can be observed in summary. If one can tear apart words from structures, it is apparent that the challenge for communication is more often in the words. The grammatical structures involved in these twenty areas are often similar in the two languages.

It is also apparent that Lue and Thai speakers do not share the burden of communication equally. In the Table 6 below, I make a subjective judgement of difficulty on a scale of 1 (for easy) to 7 (for difficult). This is an attempt to measure the difficulty on first exposure to the other language, and is a measure of the differing words involved. Those marked with asterisks are ones in which I judge that the differing structures also play some role in hindering communication.

**Table 6: Difficulty in Each Category on First Exposure
(1 easy, 7 difficult)**

*** Structural differences play a role in hindering communication**

	Level of difficulty for a Lue person	Level of difficulty for a Thai person
1. Coordination	1	1
2. Alternation	7	7
3. Demonstratives	3	3
4. Topic	6*	6*
5. Instrument	1	2
6. Beneficiary	3	2
7. Obligation	4	4
8. Ability	6*	6*
9. Yes/No questions	7	7
10. Negation	6	7
11. Irrealis	2	4
12. The question word “who”	7	7
13. The question word “what”	7	7
14. Imperative	6*	6*
15. Prohibition	3	3
16. Purpose	2	2
17. Group action	7	7
18. Classifiers for people	2	4
19. Reflexive	2	3
20. Repetition	6*	6*
TOTAL	88	94

Table 6 shows that a Thai person traveling to Sipsongpanna may find comprehension more difficult than a Lue person traveling to Bangkok. The totals at the bottom line of Table 6 are indicative only of this general impression. It would be deceptive to calculate an average at the bottom of the columns, because the twenty categories are not equally weighted. They differ in their complexity, in their effect on communication, and in frequency of use. Thus no further conclusions should be drawn from the totals.

Would it be possible to create some kind of a Swadesh list of functional categories to use in comparing Tai dialects? I hope this study will provide the basis for further research.

APPENDIX: ABBREVIATIONS

ACH	achievement
BEN	beneficiary
CLF	classifier
COLL	collective
COMP	complement
EXCL	exclusive
IMP	imperative
INCL	inclusive
IRR	irrealis
PERF	perfect
Q	question
RC	relative clause marker
RES	resumptive
TOP	topic

REFERENCES

- Cooke, Joseph R. 1989. Forms and meanings of the Thai particle *si*. Thai sentence particles and other topics. *Pacific Linguistics A:80, Papers in South-East Asian Linguistics 12*, 91-122.
- Haas, Mary, comp. 1964. *Thai-English student's dictionary*. Stanford University Press.
- Hanna, William J. forthcoming. *Dai Lue-English dictionary*.
- Higbie, James & Snea Thinsan. 2002. *Thai reference grammar: The structure of spoken Thai*. Bangkok: Orchid Press.
- Noss, Richard B. 1964. *Thai reference grammar*. Washington, D.C.: Foreign Service Institute.
- Smyth, David. 2002. *Thai: An essential grammar*. London: Routledge.

So Sethaputra, comp. 1984. *New model Thai-English dictionary*. Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Press.

นววรรณ พันธเมธา. 2006. ไวยากรณ์ไทย (Thai grammar). กรุงเทพฯ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย.

พจนานุกรม ฉบับราชบัณฑิตยสถาน พ.ศ. ๒๕๒๕. (Dictionary of the Royal Institute, 1982) สำนักพิมพ์ อักษรเจริญทัศน์ กรุงเทพฯ.