



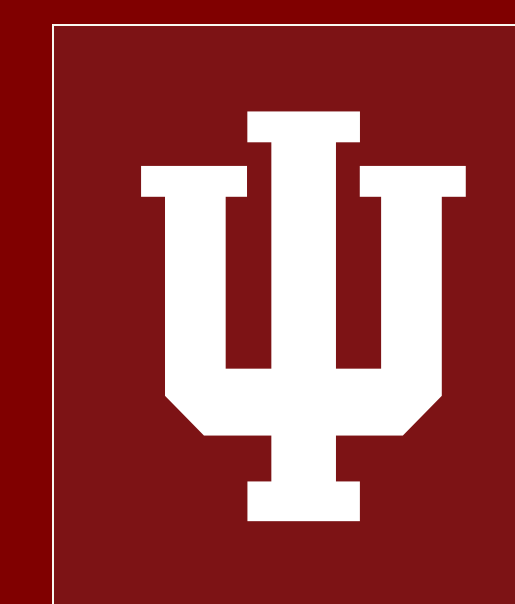
The Zophei Verbal Complex

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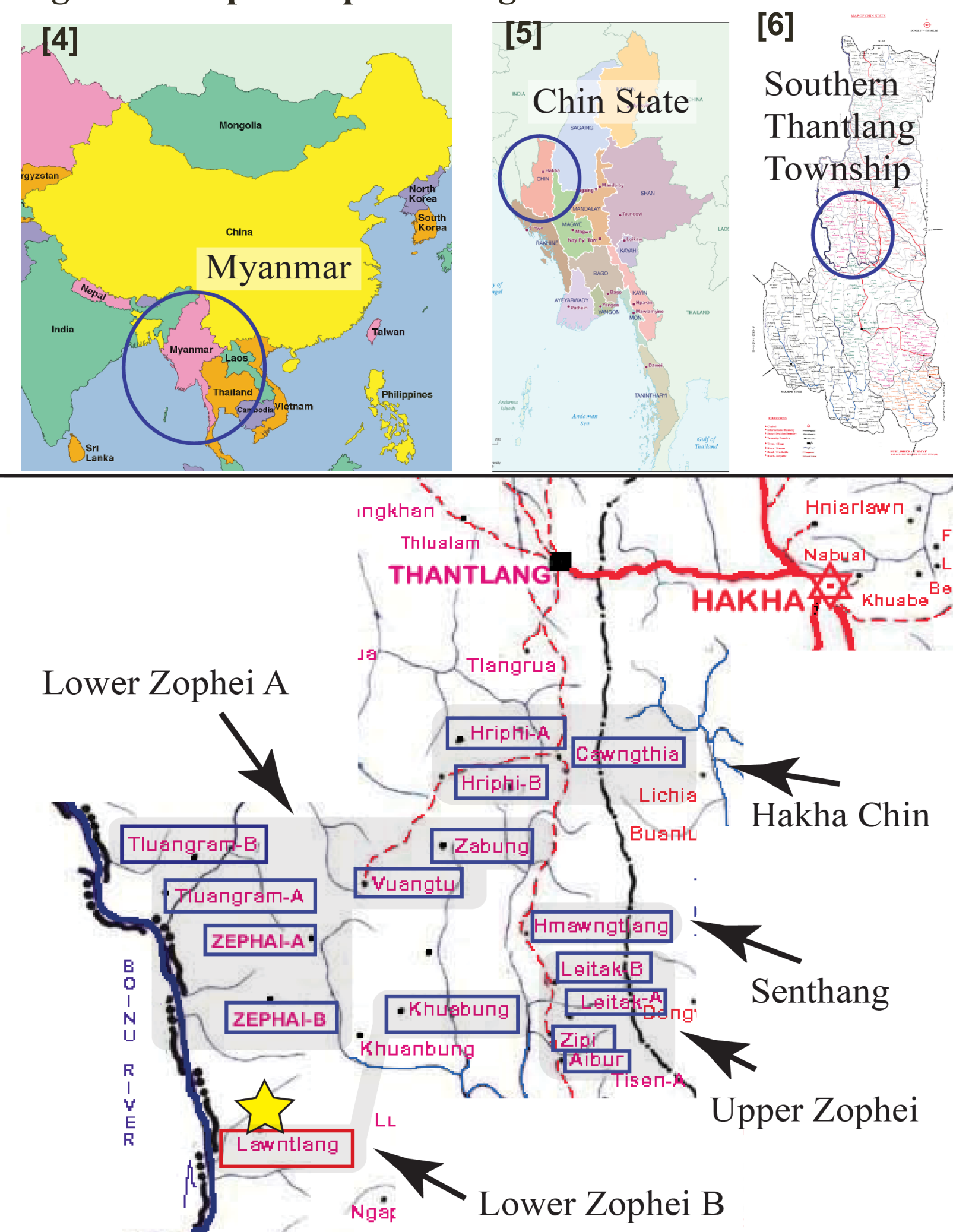
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Zophei (ISO 639-3 ZYP)

- Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Myanmar
 - Tibeto-Burman >> Kuki-Chin >> Maraic >> Lower Zophei >> Lawngtlang Zophei (LZ)
 - Undescribed (outside of current work at IU)
 - Zophei Speakers: 20,000 Worldwide, 17,000 in Chin State (1994) [1]
 - 4,000 in Indiana (est. 2019) [2]
 - LZ Speakers (# of ppl) [3]
- | | |
|---------------|-----|
| United States | 390 |
| Australia | 85 |
| Malaysia | 27 |
| New Zealand | 5 |
| Norway | 13 |
| Denmark | 10 |
| Canada | 6 |
| Singapore | 2 |
| Hakha | 270 |
| Lawngtlang | 360 |
| Kalaymyo | 17 |

Figure 1. Map of Zophei Villages



Study Goal

To describe the verbal complex in LZ including:

- (SUBJ)ect and (OBJ)ect agreement markers
 - Show up in 3 places (marked A, B, C)
- (DIR)ectional marker
- (FUT)ure marker
- (NEG)ative marker
- (Q)uestion marker
- The order of morphemes: (A_{subj})-DIR-(B_{obj})-verb-FUT-NEG-(C_{subj/obj})-Q

Verb Agreement

Agreement with no other markers

- Subject of an intransitive verb:
 - kaa ih 'I slept.'
 - naa ih 'You slept.'
 - aa ih 'He/she/it slept.'
 - kaa ih hepih 'We slept.'
 - naa ih hecih 'You all slept.'
 - aa ih he 'They slept.'
- Subject of a transitive verb (with 3rd person object):
 - ka ∅ hmuh 'I saw him/her/it.'
 - na ∅ hmuh 'You saw him/her/it.'
 - a ∅ hmuh 'He/she/it saw him/her/it.'
 - kaa ∅ hmuh 'We saw him/her/it.'
 - naa ∅ hmuh 'You all saw him/her/it.'
 - aa ∅ hmuh 'They saw him/her/it.'
- Object of a transitive verb (with 3rd person subject):
 - a pa hmuh 'He/she saw me.'
 - ca hmuh 'He/she saw you.'
 - a ∅ hmuh 'He/she saw him/her/it.'
 - ma hmuh 'He/she saw us.'
 - ca hmuh he 'He/she saw you all.'
 - a hmuh he 'He/she saw them.'
- Reflexive/Reciprocal subject
 - kaa hmuh 'I saw myself.'
 - naa hmuh 'You saw yourself.'
 - aa hmuh 'He/she saw himself/herself.'
 - kaa hmuh hepih 'We saw ourselves/each other.'
 - naa hmuh hecih 'You all saw yourselves/each other.'
 - aa hmuh he 'They saw themselves/each other.'

Table 1. Agreement markers (positive)

Transitive		Intransitive	
Subject	Object	Reflexive	Subject
ka-	pa-	kaa-	kaa-
na-	aa-	naa-	naa-
a-	∅	aa-	aa-
kaa-	ma-	kaa-...hepih	kaa-...hepih
naa-	ca-...he	naa-...hecih	naa-...hecih
aa-	-he	aa-...he	aa-...he

Agreement with *bee/ba/ma* (NEG)

- Subject of an intransitive verb:
 - a ih ma nih 'I did not sleep.'
 - a ih ba cih 'You did not sleep.'
 - a ih bee 'He/she did not sleep.'
 - a ih ma pih 'We did not sleep.'
 - a ih ba cih 'You all did not sleep.'
 - a ih ba he 'They did not sleep.'
- Subject of a transitive verb (with 3rd person object):
 - ∅ hmuh ma nih 'I did not see him/her/it.'
 - ∅ hmuh ba cih 'You did not see him/her/it.'
 - ∅ hmuh bee ∅ 'He/she did not see him/her/it.'
 - ∅ hmuh ma pih 'We did not see him/her/it.'
 - ∅ hmuh ba cih 'You all did not see him/her/it.'
 - ∅ hmuh ba he 'They did not see him/her/it.'
- Object of a transitive verb (with 3rd person subject):
 - pa hmuh bee ∅ 'He/she did not see me.'
 - ca hmuh bee ∅ 'He/she did not see you.'
 - ∅ hmuh bee ∅ 'He/she did not see him/her/it.'
 - ma hmuh bee ∅ 'He/she did not see us.'
 - ca hmuh ba he ∅ 'He/she did not see you all.'
 - ∅ hmuh ba he ∅ 'He/she did not see them.'
- Reflexive/Reciprocal subject:
 - a hmuh ma nih 'I did not see myself.'
 - a hmuh ba cih 'You did not see yourself.'
 - a hmuh bee 'He/she did not see himself/herself.'
 - a hmuh ma pih 'We did not see ourselves/each other.'
 - a hmuh ba cih 'You all did not see yourselves/each other.'
 - a hmuh ba he 'They did not see themselves/each other.'

Table 2. Agreement markers (with NEG)

Transitive		Intransitive	
Subject	Object	Reflexive	Subject
-nih	pa-	aa-...nih	aa-...nih
-cih	ca-	aa-...cih	aa-...cih
∅	∅	aa-	aa-
-pih	ma-	aa-...pih	aa-...pih
-cih	ca-...he	aa-...cih	aa-...cih
-he	-he	aa-...he	aa-...he

Other verb modifiers

- Directional marker *-za-* (DIR)
 - a za pa ming 'He/she came to watch me.'
 - a za ca ming 'He/she came to watch you.'
 - a za ∅ ming 'He/she came to watch him/her/it.'
 - a za ca ming he 'He/she came to watch you all.'
 - a za ma ming 'He/she came to watch us.'
 - a za ∅ ming he 'He/she came to watch them.'
 - aa za ih 'He/she came to sleep.'
- Question marker *-maa* (Q)
 - a pa ming maa? 'Did he/she watch me?'
 - a ca ming maa? 'Did he/she watch you?'
 - a ∅ ming maa? 'Did he/she watch him/her/it?'
 - a ma ming maa? 'Did he/she watch us?'
 - a ca ming he maa? 'Did he/she watch you all?'
 - a ∅ ming he maa? 'Did he/she watch them?'
 - aa ih maa? 'Did he/she go to sleep?'
- Future marker *-aa* (FUT)
 - a pa ming aa 'He/she going to watch me.'
 - a ca ming aa 'He/she going to watch you.'
 - a ∅ ming aa 'He/she going to watch him/her/it.'
 - a ma ming aa 'He/she going to watch us.'
 - a ca ming he 'He/she going to watch you all.'
 - a ∅ ming he 'He/she going to watch them.'
 - aa ih aa 'He/she going to sleep.'

Glossing conventions

1st, 2nd, 3rd person (1,2,3)
 Plural (p); Subject (s); Object (o)
 Future (FUT),
 Directional (DIR),
 Question (Q), Negative (NEG)

Summary: Order of morphemes

(A_{subj})-DIR-(B_{obj})-verb-FUT-NEG-(C_{subj/obj})-Q

- Agreement markers show up in 3 possible positions:
 - Pre-verbal subject position
 - Pre-verbal object position
 - Post-verbal subject/object position
- Other morphemes (DIR, FUT, NEG, Q) have a fixed position
- Illustrative examples of ordering:
 - Subject position A & C

naa za ih aa hecih maa?
 2ps DIR sleep FUT 2ps Q
 'Are you all going/coming to sleep?'
 - Subject position A & C (with NEG)

aa za ih aa ba cih maa?
 2ps DIR sleep FUT NEG 2ps Q
 'Are you all not going/coming to sleep?'
 - Subject position A; Object position B

naa za ma ming aa maa?
 2ps DIR 1po watch FUT Q
 'Are you all going/coming to watch us?'
 - Subject position A; Object position C

naa za ming aa he maa?
 2ps DIR watch FUT 3po Q
 'Are you all going/coming to watch them?'
 - Subject position C; Object position B

za ma ming aa ba cih maa?
 DIR 1po watch FUT NEG 2ps Q
 'Are you all not going/coming to watch us?'

Future Directions

- Distribution of NEG allomorphs *bee/ba/ma*
- Tonal realization of FUT marker:
 - Realized as High tone on Plural Subj/Obj *he* (11e-f)
 - Also Q *-maa* (ex. final High tone renders 10a 'Is he/she going to watch me?')
- Tone differentiates other constructions (see 2f & 4c)
- What does allomorphy tell us about the phonology and syntax of Zophei?
- What kind of variation is there between Zophei dialects?

References

- [1] Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2019. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Twenty-second edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.
- [2] (B. Cung, personal communication, July 24, 2019).
- [3] (H. Zo, personal communication, July 19, 2019).
- [4] World Map: <https://wallscover.com/asia.html>
- [5] Burma Map: http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/maponline/system/files_force/maps/bitmap/standard/2016/01/13-058b_Burma_states.png?download=1
- [6] Chin State Map: Chin Baptist Mission Youth Fellowship, Pu Siang Kung(Va)

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