

## CHAPTER 3

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces Cognitive Grammar (CG), developed by Ronald Langacker as the theoretical foundations of this thesis. Section 3.1 focuses on an overview of some central concepts and basic assumptions of CG, while Section 3.2 and 3.3 emphasize basic notions of salience relevant to the thesis, and Section 3.4 discusses two main kinds of relations between linguistic units. This chapter also provides an overview of previous Lahu Na and Lahu Shi studies, which will be discussed in Section 3.5.

#### 3.1 Overview of cognitive grammar

CG is one grammatical approach within cognitive linguistics. Most basically, cognitive linguists believe that language is not merely a separate system independent of the rest of cognition, but it is closely related to the basic cognitive capacities that support and shape our shared experience. As Langacker states, language is not 'describable without essential reference to cognitive processing' (1991b: 1). To put it another way, it is an approach to language that is based on our experience of the world and the way we perceive and conceptualize it. It is based on how we use language.

Language, as Langacker sees it, allows conceptualizations (or mental experience in the broadest sense of the term) to be symbolized by means of sounds and gestures (1999: 14). In other words, language is essentially **symbolic** in nature (1987a: 11). It is this symbolic system, the means of human communication, that allows us to communicate our thoughts to others and to ourselves (whether to tell our

past experiences, present emotions, plans in the future, or imaginations) without any outside stimulus.

According to this basic assumption, language consists of (1) **semantic structures**<sup>4</sup> (i.e., meanings or conceptualizations) and (2) **phonological structures**<sup>5</sup> (i.e. language in its perceptible form), which are connected by (3) **symbolic relations** (Langacker 1987a: 76-81, Taylor 2002: 20-27).

For example, the conceptualization [CAT] (e.g., a small four-legged animal with soft fur that people often keep as a pet) is not communicable unless it is symbolized by means of its sounds [k<sup>h</sup>æt].

Grammar, as one facet of language, is itself inherently symbolic and thus meaningful (i.e., all grammatical elements have some kind of semantic value) as well. Grammar thus has no autonomous existence at all, and it is inseparable from meaning (Langacker 1987a; 1991; 2000).

Any linguistic expression (whether it is a lexical unit or a grammatical element, whether it is smaller than, or larger than a word) can be referred to as a **symbolic unit** – ‘the conventionalized relation of a phonological structure with a semantic structure’ – shown in Figure 2 (Taylor 2002: 20ff).

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<sup>4</sup> The semantic structure is the focus of this paper, although phonological structure is also important.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Phonological structure refers to the overt manifestation of language’ (Taylor 2002: 20). That is, it not only includes the sound system, but writing system of language as well.

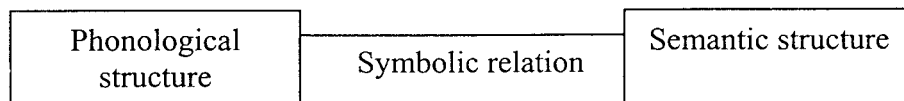


Figure 2. The three elements of a symbolic unit  
(Taylor 2002: 21)

I approach this current grammatical research with the idea that meaning is essential to grammatical research.

From a CG standpoint, a linguistic expression's meaning consists of a basic conceptual content, which can be shaped and construed in alternative views. In other words, CG assumes that meaning is crucially dependent on **construal**, 'our cognitive abilities for conceptualizing the same situation in alternate ways' (Langacker 2002: 3). As a result, it is not uncommon for expressions to have exactly the same conceptual content or the same conceived situation, but be quite different in meaning.

### 3.2 Construal: our cognitive ability

There are many aspects of construal. However, only some of them, namely prominence, and perspective with its related notions, are significant for the present study.

#### 3.2.1 Prominence

There are various types of prominence that have linguistic significance. Of many sorts, two need to be addressed, namely **profile and base** and **trajector and landmark**.

### 3.2.1.1 Profile and base

The first type of prominence is what Langacker terms **profile** and **base** (Langacker 1987a: 183). Take the word *radius* as an example. The base of *radius* is the concept of a circle with a radius. The profile is the *radius* itself. The word for the radius is only understandable in terms of the concept of the circle. In other words, without this conceptual background there is no radius, only a line. Figure 3 illustrates the profile and base of *radius* with the profile given in a heavy line. This follows CG convention.

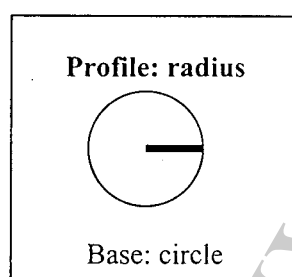


Figure 3. Conceptual profile and base for word *radius*

Some more examples of profiles and their bases are shown in Table 5.

Profile	Bases
<i>Knuckle</i>	<i>finger</i>
<i>Monday, Friday, etc.</i>	<i>week</i>
<i>arc, diameter, chord, radius, etc.</i>	<i>circle</i>

Table 5. Profiles and bases

The base for the characterization of *knuckle* is the conception of finger. The noun *Monday* and *Friday* both invoke as their base the conception of a week, but profile different days within the seven-day calendric cycle. Likewise, the expressions *arc*, *diameter*, *chord*, *radius* and so forth all invoke as their base the conception of circle, but profile different subparts of this conception.

Before continuing on, let me address a related yet distinct notion, namely, **domains**.

Linguistic units, from a CG view, are 'context-dependent to some degree' (Langacker 1987a: 147). According to Langacker, we have inborn capacity to experience pain, color, temperature, taste, pressure, time, etc., which are referred to as domains or the contexts for the characterization of a semantic unit (1987a: 147). These cognitive domains provide the necessary contexts for our understanding of the concept of a linguistic unit. Taylor clearly provides the distinction between base and domain as follows,

The base of an expression is the conceptual content that is inherently, intrinsically, and obligatorily invoked by the expression. A domain is a more generalized 'background' knowledge configuration against which conceptualization is achieved (2002: 195).

For example, the noun *Sunday* invokes as its base the conception of a week – the seven-day calendric cycle, and profiles one day within that cycle. Without the conceptual content of a *week* (i.e., the base), we cannot understand the concept of *Sunday*. However, the conceptualization of the base rests on a more general notion of the natural cycle defined by the movement of the sun, organized in calendar month and year, which constitutes the domain (Lakoff 1987a: 68-69).

Profile and base are not merely aspects of how language symbolizes the distribution of attention<sup>6</sup>, but it is also central to the definitions of syntactic categories (e.g. nouns, verbs) or grammatical description in CG<sup>7</sup> (Langacker 1987b). In order to explain profile and base, it is helpful to make a digression and look at other notions of CG. How entities in the world are categorized in CG will be discussed. (Note that 'entity' is a technical term proposed in CG. It refers to anything that can be conceptualized whether it is a thing, a relation, a state of affairs, an event, an activity, a situation, or whatever. (Langacker 1987a: 198)) Figure 4 shows the diagram of the basic classes of conceptualization.

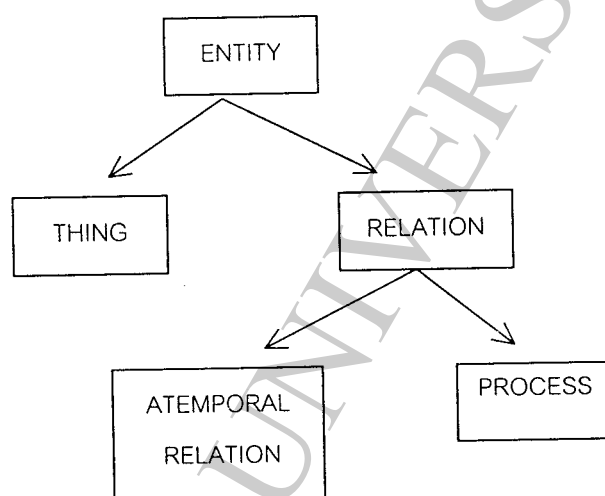


Figure 4. The partial hierarchy of the basic classes of conceptualizations

According to CG, all linguistic expressions, whether they are a morpheme, word, or clause, profile something. A noun has a nominal profile – it profiles a

<sup>6</sup> Language cannot profile all details of meanings, but can choose which concept to 'stand out' and which to be its context.

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted here that there are other cognitive notions that are used to categorize word classes, for example *scanning* (*sequential scanning vs. summary scanning*) is the key to word class distinction between verbs (*process*) and adjective (*atemporal relation*). But since profiling is the most basic and important of all, it is the focus of linguistic analysis (For more extensive discussion, see Langacker 1987).

'thing', while other kinds of words (e.g. verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions) profile different kinds of **relations** (Langacker 1987a: 185, 214-217).

In this thesis I focus on relational profiles, which can be divided into those that profile a process (or '**temporal relation**'), and those that profile a state ('**atemporal relation**').

Process refers to temporal relations whose profile includes a span of time, in contrast to atemporal relations in which time is not included in their profile (but time can be part of the base). An example of a temporal relational profile is seen in the word *go* as diagrammed in Figure 5.

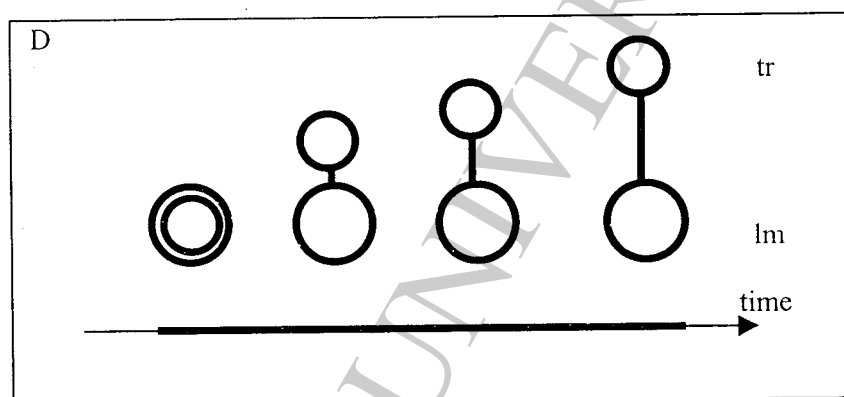


Figure 5. A temporal relational profile: *go*

This diagram employs Langacker's pictographic conventions and are not intended to be formal. They are:

- the two circles representing 'things';
- a line joining the circles representing a 'relation';
- an arrow that stands for time

- profiled entities (including a time segment ) are represented in heavy lines;
- the box represents the conceptual domain of the relational profile which is labeled as 'D'. In the case of the word *go*, the basic domains are the conception of space and time.

Note that 'tr' and 'lm' stand for trajector and landmark. These two notions are also technical terms in CG, which will be discussed in detail in the next section (Section 3.2.1.2).

One may question why a **thing** (either circle) is also profiled in bold. Being a relational profile, the profile should include the entire relation (the line joining two circles) along with the circles.

The reason for this is a matter of 'conceptual dependence'. Relations are conceptually dependent. That is, we 'cannot conceptualize relations without also conceptualizing the entities that they interconnect' (Langacker 1987a: 215). One cannot imagine the verb *throw* without the object being thrown. A thing, on the other hand, is conceptually independent. We are able to conceptualize, say, a *car* without conceptualizing *driving* it. Therefore when a conceptualization is nominal a thing is in profile, when it is relational, two things/entities (or more) and their interconnection are in profile.

Now it is time to explain how profiling plays a role in grammatical description. Consider the verb *break* illustrated in (1). (The example and my discussion of it is adapted from Langacker 1999: 28-30).



- (1) a. *I **broke** the glass*  
 b. *The glass slipped out of my hand and it **broke**.*  
 c. *The glass **broke** by itself mysteriously.*  
 d. *The glass is **broken***

*Broke* in (1) a and (1) b is the same except that in the former it occurs as a transitive verb; in the latter it is intransitive. *Broke* in (1) c is a simple change-of-state intransitive. *Broken* in (1) d is a stative adjective. These different grammatical encodings of comparable situations can be explained in terms of profiling as sketched in Figure 6.

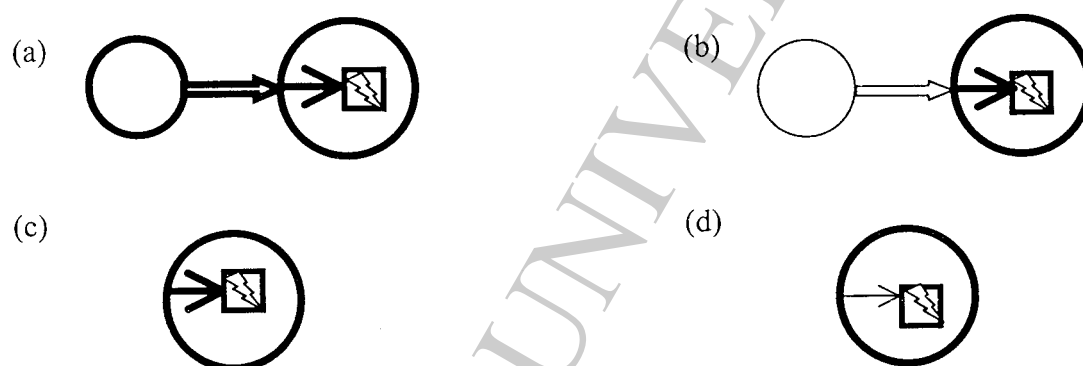


Figure 6. Alternate profiling

Following Langacker's notations, circles represent things. A double arrow indicates causation or the transmission of energy. A single arrow inside a circle stands for a thing undergoing an internal change of state. A 'broken' state is presented as a box with zigzag lines inside. The heavy lines indicate profiling.

The transitive *break*, illustrated in Figure 6(a), profiles both the causation (e.g. *cause something to be broken*) and the change leading to the resultant state, whereas

in 6(b), only the change of state is profiled. However, notice that the difference in Figures 6(b) and 6(c) are not profiling (i.e., they have the same profile), but the presence of the agent's causation. In 6(b), the agent's causation is conceptualized as an unprofiled part of the base, while in 6(c) the agent's causation is absent (i.e., it is not even a part of the base). With respect to Figures in 6(c) and 6(d), their contrast is a matter of different profiles (i.e., they evoke the same base). *Broke* in 6(c) profiles the change of state (i.e., the change resulting in the state of 'broken or pieces'), while in 6(d) *broken* profiles the resultant state itself (the situation in which the glass has the property of 'pieces').

As can be seen, an expression's syntactic category (noun, verb) is determined by the nature of its profile, not by the content it evokes (Langacker 1999: 30). The word *break* is a verb because it profiles a relation, more specifically, a **process**, or a relation followed in its evolution through time, while *broken* is an adjective because it profiles an atemporal relation. This concept of profiling will be applied to the analysis of Lahu Shi aspect in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2). It will show how aspectual meaning depends on profiling.

### 3.2.1.2 Trajector and landmark

The second type of prominence is **trajector** and **landmark**. Langacker defines trajector as 'the figure within a relational profile' (1987a: 217) since it is the most prominent entity within the relation, whereas landmark refers to the less prominent entity in the relation, or as Langacker puts it, 'the ground within the relational profile' (1987a: 217). In order to understand these notions, it is helpful to make a digression and look at **figure /ground**.

Figure within a scene is perceived as being more prominent or salient than the ground (Langacker 1987a: 120). To put it in another way, figures are more prominent and stand out from their grounds. It is so pervasive that every time you look at a

picture of almost any sort, you automatically distinguish the vitally important figure from the far less important ground. Consider the picture in Figure 7.

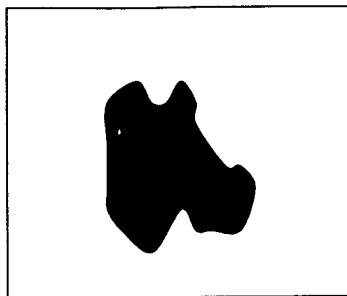


Figure 7. Figure and ground

The obvious entity to be chosen as figure is the black patch; while the white field is given ground status. This relationship of figure to ground also appears in language, for example, in *the book is on the table*, the figure is *the book* and the ground is *the table*.

However, not only are we able to structure scenes in terms of figure/ground organization, but we are able to reverse the figure/ground alignment as well (Ungerer and Schmid 1996: 156-158). Consider the picture shown in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Edgar Rubin reversible figure  
(Rodgers 1998: 107)

This Rubin illusion in Figure 8 is an ambiguous figure/ground illusion. This is because it can be perceived either as a worshiper, in front of a white background, or as a face on a black background.

Because of this cognitive capacity to reverse figure and ground alignment, it is not surprising to find that distinct sentences refer to the same scene. For example, *a plane is above a balloon* and *a balloon is below a plane* show that the figures (or trajector in Langacker's term) are *a plane* and *a balloon* respectively, while the actual 'state of affairs' remains the same. The relational expressions *above* and *below* can be sketched abstractly as in Figure 9.

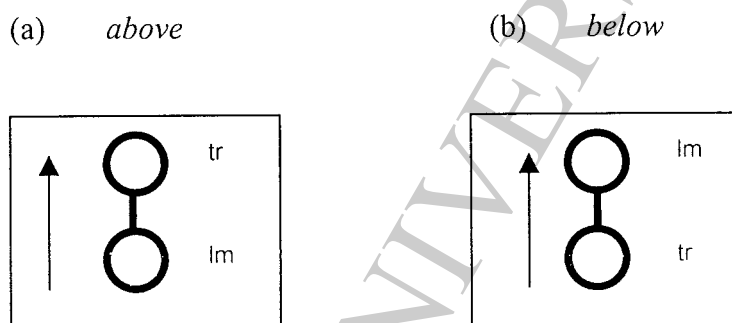


Figure 9. Trajector and landmark

Notice that the two expressions (*above* and *below*) not only evoke the same conceptual base (prepositional space) but also profile the same concept (the vertical relation), however they are contrastive in meaning. The key to their difference is figure/ground organization. It can be said that the notion of trajector and landmark is derived from two degrees of prominence, profiling and figure/ground. This illustrates that without the profiling (more precisely, the relational profile), the conception of vertical organization of two entities is not evoked (i.e. there will be no concept of vertical relation). It is the relational profile that derives the concept of a relationship between two things. Now without figure and ground contrast, the conception of *above* and *below* would be identical. The conception of the two expressions emerges only in

the combination of two construals, profiling and figure/ground contrast. This combination is called trajector and landmark organization.

It should be noted here that both trajector/landmark and profile/base are understood to involve prominence asymmetry, but they are treated as distinct notions in CG. As mentioned, the definitions of word classes are stated in terms of the nature of their profiling. Trajector and landmark, on the other hand, form the basis for the definitions of grammatical relations (e.g. subject is primary figure and object is secondary figure) (Van Hoek 1997: 16-20).

### 3.2.2 Perspective

Our perceptions of the world are influenced by our experiences that the farther away something is, the smaller it will appear. An example of this may be looking at a mountain from 100 miles away. If we did not know better, we would assume that the mountain is small and we might believe that we could walk to the top in only a few minutes. Our perception of reality is what allows us to know that the mountain only looks small because it is far away. Perception has also been an important technique in photography. A picture of a flower in forefront and a tree in the background may look as if the flower is bigger than the tree, but our perception allows us to understand that it is the photographer who manipulated the image. Our minds ability to understand how our perception is manipulated through space is important for us to be able to make proper judgments about location, time and space. It is through experience that we are able to recognize the various clues in the landscape that tell us the actual size and distance of an object. It is this experience that forms the basis of **perspective**, another aspect of construal.



Figure 10. Rabbit or duck

(Rodgers 1998: 40)

In Figure 10, one could see the picture of a duck or a rabbit. The image you see depends on whether you view from left or right. If you look at it from the right, you can see the duck's beak and its eye. But if you look at it from the left you have a rabbit with its eye looking leftwards and its long ears flopping behind its head. More specifically, this perspective is called **orientation**, or 'the direction in which the speaker, the hearer, or some other viewer is facing relative to the scene' (Langacker 1991b: 315). It should be emphasized here that our image can be based on either the actual orientation of a scene (what the direction of a conceptualizer in relation to the scene observed is) or a mental one. Figure 10 above is an illustration of the latter. We are viewing the picture from the same direction, but it is conceived distinctly from two different mental orientations.

Another CG notion which the term perspective subsumes is '**vantage point**', or 'the position from which a scene is viewed' (Langacker 1987a: 123). The linguistic significance of vantage point is apparent from an expression such as *Jack is in front of the tree*, whose use depends on whether the speaker adopts his own vantage point or Jack's.

The cognitive abilities mentioned are so pervasive in our everyday life, not just in perception (like seeing a picture), but in conception which is reflected in language. And this is normally in such a way that we are unaware of it.

### 3.2.3 Subjectivity

Subjectivity is another aspect of perspective which is very crucial for our understanding of the discussion 'grounding' in the next section (Section 3.3). Subjectivity is a matter of 'viewing arrangement'. That is, the viewer is able to arrange the way to perceive an entity as well as himself with an 'objective' or 'subjective' construal<sup>8</sup>.

The objective construal is the ability to focus attention on the OBJECT OF PERCEPTION (the object/entity perceived) solely and prominently. The subjective construal, by contrast, is ability to be unfocussed on oneself as the SUBJECT OF PERCEPTION. Imagine that you were 'eyeballs', you could see any object of perception, but you could not see yourself the subject of perception. In perceiving an object, you are not aware that you are functioning as a perceiving apparatus. That is to say, without this apparatus, any entity cannot be seen. Your role is thus crucial yet implicit (Langacker 1991b 315-318; 2002a 15-20).

The contrast between objective and subjective construal above reflects the inherent asymmetrical relationship between the entity perceived and the perceiver at the two extremes. Langacker (1991b: 316) refers to this situation as the 'optimal viewing arrangement', which is diagrammed in Figure 11.

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<sup>8</sup> Note that the terms subjective, objective and their derivative terms are proposed as technical terms in CG. They are not equivalent to our judgement being subjective or objective.

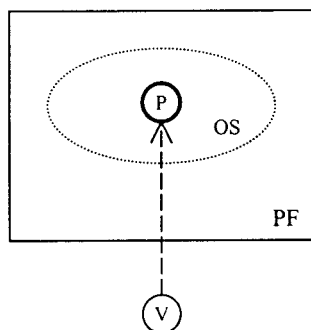


Figure 11. Optimal viewing arrangement

Figure 11 employs CG's notations, V is the viewer/perceiver, P is the perceived object, and the dashed arrow represents the perceptual relationship between them. The box labeled PF stands for the viewer's perceptual field, while the dashed oval labeled OS represents the objective scene or the onstage region.

Using Langacker's theatre analogy to clarify these notations, one can imagine a theatre scenario with a viewer as an audience. He is 'the viewer' (V) watching a play which can be referred to as 'the perceived object' (P) – the focus of viewing attention. Supposing that he sits in the back row of seats, what he sees is not merely the play on stage but the orchestra pit, lots of seats, and audience in front of him. These all are his 'perceptual field' (PF). However, he does not pay attention to seats or heads etc., what he focuses his attention on is the play on stage. The stage thus can be understood as his 'object scene' (OS) or the 'onstage region'<sup>9</sup>.

It is a great play; therefore he is so absorbed in his perceptual experience that he loses all awareness of himself. That is, his role as the subject of perception is construed maximally subjectively. The play (i.e., the object of the perception), on the

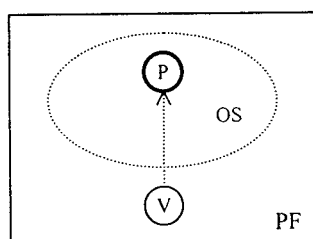
<sup>9</sup> See also (Langacker 1991b, 2000, 2002)



other hand, is construed maximally objectively. Note that subjectivity, like other construals shown, can go beyond perception to conception. Exactly how this is implemented will be shown in section 3.3.2.

This situation is, however, an extreme case of a viewing arrangement. One is able to literally 'arrange' his viewing in alternate ways – the degree of subjectivity or objectivity.

(a)



(b)

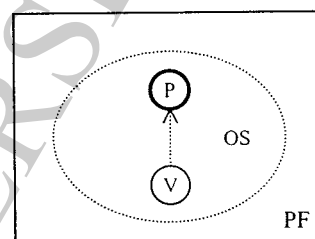


Figure 12. Alternate viewing arrangement

Notice in Figure 12(a) that the viewer construes himself more objectively so now he is in the perceptual field (PF), but his role still remains implicit and nonsalient. However, sometimes he is concerned with himself and the relationship related to the perceived entity. When this happens, his role as the perceiver is more explicit or salient, i.e., he receives a less subjective (or a more objective) construal, whereas the perceived object receives a less objective (or a more subjective) construal. Langacker refers to this situation as 'egocentric viewing arrangement' diagrammed in Figure 12 (b) (1991b: 317). He is put on the 'onstage' region in which he gains more focus of attention. The closer V moves towards the onstage region, the more he gains his objectivity (and the less that of P remains).

Consider the two expressions in (2).

- (2) a. *The monkey is on the tree.*  
 b. *I saw the monkey on the tree.*

In (2) a, the role of the speaker<sup>10</sup> (as the perceiver) is not expressed. This corresponds to the viewing arrangement in Figure 12 a, whereas in (2) b, the speaker is mentioned explicitly (that is, *I*). This corresponds to the viewing arrangement in Figure 12 b.

This is a matter of the speaker's perspective (more precisely, the speaker's subjectivity). A speaker does not need to linguistically encode every facet of the scene he perceives (or conceives). As Taylor states, it is enough to select just a few, prominent facets of the scene for linguistic encoding (2002: 168). However, one should bear in mind that whichever facet of the scene is chosen to encode, linguistically varies from language to language. That is, the facet symbolized linguistically in one language may not be so in another.

Note also that the speaker is one component of the content of the speech event or the 'ground' itself (See section 3.2.1 for the discussion of the ground). Subjective and objective construal therefore is much related to grammatical behavior of grounding elements. This will be explained more in Section 3.2.3 after the notion of grounding and its derivatives are introduced.

It is apparent from the discussion above to say that there is a correlation between implicitness and subjectivity, which will be explained again in Section 3.3.3.

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<sup>10</sup> Corresponding to the viewer is the conceptualizer, who can be identified primarily with the speaker, and secondarily with the addressee. (Langacker 1991b: 318).

### 3.3 Grounding

Before going to the discussion of grounding, some basic concepts to grounding need to be addressed first, namely **verbs** and **finite clauses**. (Note that nouns and nominals (noun phrases) are also basic concepts subject to grounding but they are not the focus of the paper)

#### 3.3.1 Verbs and finite clauses

The category verb is a fundamental class in all languages. However, it is insufficient for both cognitive and communicative utility. It is not enough for a verb (a process type) to conceptualize a particular situation and communicate it. This is because the semantic function of verbs is merely to provide an initial **type** specification (that is the schematic conception) which is by no means anchored to any situation of speech. An example can clarify this construct.

Compare '*sleep*' and '*John slept on the floor*'. The verb *sleep* just presents a certain process type. It fails to evoke a specific **instance** of the process type. In other words, although we are able to recognize and differentiate it from other related activities such as 'taking a nap' or 'dozing', it is not located in relation to any context of the speech event or the '**ground**' (the term used in CG). The term ground includes 'the participants in the event, its time and place, the situational context, previous discourse, shared knowledge of the speech-act participants and such like' (Taylor 2002: 346). The clause '*John slept on the floor*', in contrast, is conveyed out of the countless number of instances. Just one instance is chosen for attention in this communication (Taylor 2002: 343-351). Notice that what turns the verb into the finite clause<sup>11</sup> is the past tense morpheme (in this particular example).

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<sup>11</sup> A clause is finite when it has both communicative and cognitive utility. That is, it has a path and an indicator for speech-act participants to anchor a given situation in relation to the ground.

Before explicating why it is the past morpheme that serves that function, one should ask first why it is not the participant (*John*) and the location (*on the floor*) that is capable of deriving the finite clause. One should bear in mind that a finite clause in CG is not merely a group of words which contains a subject (and/or an object) and a finite verb. Exactly how it is defined will become clearer by the end of this section (Section 3.3.1). My discussion of it is based on Taylor (2002: 343-349, 389-390).

Recall that verbs are conceptually dependent. Owing to this nature, *John sleep on the floor* is still a type specification and it is specified in greater detail (the process is not performed by anybody but a particular person, namely, *John* and specifically on the floor). By means of the past tense marking, on the other hand, the clause not only instantiates the process type (i.e., designates one specific instance of the process out of the countless potential instances of the type), but also locates one specific instance of the process at a time preceding the moment of the speaking. This process is thus called 'grounding' because both speech act participants (speaker and hearer) have access to the time in which this process took place via the tense morpheme. The semantic structure of the finite clause *John slept on the floor* is illustrated in Figure 13.

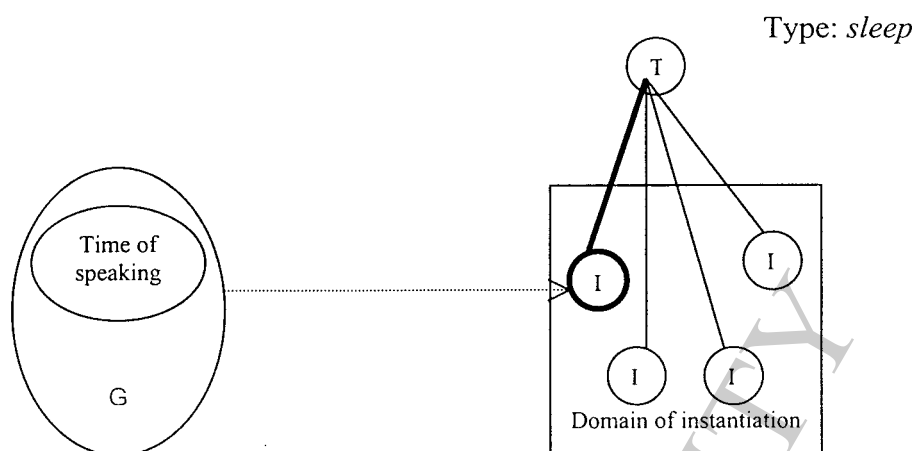


Figure 13. The semantic structure of the finite clause  
(Adapted from Taylor 2002: 349)

In Figure 13 the circle labeled 'T' represents the process type which is given by the verb *sleep*. In other words, the simple verb *sleep* designates a type of process. The circles labeled 'I' represent countless potential instances, one of which is designated (in bold) and identified from the ground (G).

From the above remarks the difference between a verb and a finite clause can thus be summarized as follows. A verb designates a type of process, whereas a finite clause designates a grounded instance of that type (Langacker 2002: 7)

The notion of grounding will be used in Chapter 5 to show that the evidential system in Lahu Shi from a CG view is a grounding system.

### 3.3.2 Grounding predications vs. deictic expressions

The concept of ground has been introduced in Section 3.3.1. In this section, grounding predication and its grammatical properties will be discussed.

Grounding predications are grammatical elements that turn verbs into finite clauses (Brisard 2002: xi). In English the class of grounding predications for finite clauses are tense and modals. This implies that there is something that makes them capable of deriving a finite clause.

According to Langacker (2002: 8), grounding predications are deictic in nature since they indicate a relationship between some facet of the ground (speech event) and the processual profile (i.e. a specific instance of the process type). As a result, they can be referred to as deictic expressions. However, not every deictic expression functions as a grounding element that derives a finite clause. Before making the distinction between deictic expressions and grounding elements, the class of deictic expressions should be defined first.

An important basis for classification of deictic expressions suggested by Langacker (1991b, 2002a) is the salience of the ground's role within the conception that constitutes the meaning of a deictic element.

Deictic expressions inherently invoke the ground to serve as a reference point, in contrast to nondeictic expressions like *table* or *run* which do not invoke the ground at all (and therefore are nondeictic for this reason). At this point we can say that the presence of the ground is important to define deictic expressions. Compare each diagram sketched in Figure 14, where G, MS, and IS stand for the ground, the maximal scope, and the immediate scope (onstage region) respectively (Langacker 1991b: 318-320, 2002a: 8-10).

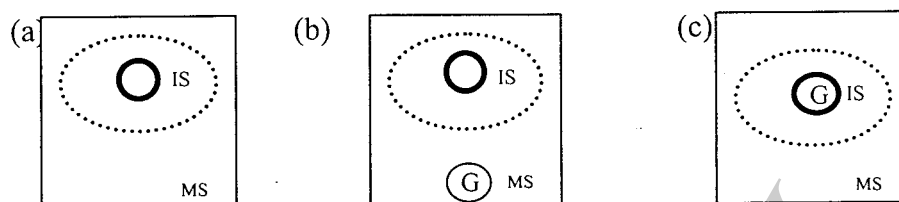


Figure 14. Alternate presence of the ground

Figure 14(a) illustrates the nondeictic expression (e.g. *book*, *ghost*, *sleep*, and *work*) where the ground is not invoked or mentioned at all, as a result, the ground is not sketched in 14(a).

Deictic expressions inherently invoke the ground, and there are at least two kinds of presence the ground (its location) can have in a conceptualization as diagrammed in Figure 14 (b) and 14(c). Figure 14 (b) illustrates the presence of the ground in deictics such as *yesterday* and *tomorrow*. Notice that the ground does fall within the maximal scope of expressions (MS) (i.e., expressions invoke the ground as part of their meaning), but it remains implicit and nonsalient; serves only as an ‘offstage’ reference point.

Figure 14 (c), on the other hand, illustrates the presence of the ground in deictics such as *I*, *you* which appear onstage (mentioned explicitly and saliently) as the specific focus of attention. Because of this, the class of deictic expressions is defined as those which invoke the ground and include it in their scope of predication (Langacker 1991b: 318).

Now turn to grounding predications. The ground of grounding elements typically is left offstage or unprofiled. Consequently, a grounding element appears to be most similar to deictic expressions like *tomorrow* as sketched in 14(b). However,

they are by no means the same. Langacker (2002: 10-11) suggests that grounding predications (e.g. *will*) are distinguished from deictic expressions (e.g. *tomorrow*) because of their grammatical status and the nature of their conceptual content. In other words, it is these properties that make grounding predications different from deictic expressions like *tomorrow*. By grounding status, he means a grounding element is grammatical (abstract and schematic semantically) rather than lexical in nature (semantically specific and detailed). Regarding the nature of their conceptual content, grounding predications like other grammatical elements tend to have a relativistic nature. To clarify, a grounding element like the past tense morpheme does not indicate a specific time of an event, rather it merely and abstractly indicates that a process is distant from the ground in time.

### 3.3.3 Grounding and subjectivity

It was mentioned in Section 3.2.3 that subjectivity is important to understanding the concept of grounding elements, more especially their grammatical behavior (why the ground is implicitly evoked).

Compare the two sentences in (3) (Langacker 2002b: 19).

- (3) a. *Mary was sitting across the table from me.*  
 b. *Mary was sitting across the table.*

According to Langacker, the difference between 3 (a) and 3(b) (explicit and implicit vantage points) is a matter of subjectivity. That is, in 3(b) the speaker's role is construed maximally subjectively, whereas in 3 (a) the speaker merely receives a subjective construal (i.e., less subjective, more objective) to the extent that it functions as the subject of conception but not as the object. So, it is the example (b) which is subjective and therefore not expressed explicitly.



Owing to the correlation between implicitness and subjective construal, the ground cannot be simultaneously mentioned explicitly and construed maximally subjectively (Langacker 2002b: 19). That is, it is impossible to cognitively put the speaker offstage and at the same time encode it linguistically. But, it is possible to cognitively put the speaker onstage and at the same time encode it linguistically.

Recall that the ground includes the participants in the situation, its time and place, the situational context, previous discourse, shared knowledge of the speech-act participants and the such. This illustrates that there are many facets of the ground. I will refer to these facets as **'the ground components'**<sup>12</sup>. It should be borne in mind that when a grounding predication invokes the ground, it doesn't actually invoke all the ground components at once. Rather, only some ground components are invoked. Of the many ground components, it is the speaker which can be put onstage and made a specific focus of attention. This can happen due to the speaker's perspective, namely, subjectivity. This phenomenon can be referred to as 'onstage' construal of the ground. Figure 15 illustrates Example (3) a in which the speaker is expressed explicitly.

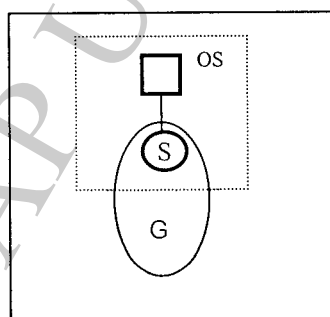


Figure 15. Onstage construal of the ground

*'Mary was sitting across the table from me'*

<sup>12</sup> Langacker refers to them as **ground elements**. In order to avoid confusion over the similar word **grounding elements**, I will refer to them as **ground components**.

The speaker (the circle labeled 'S') is represented inside the ground (the oval labeled 'G') indicating that it is one facet of ground components. The speaker is put onstage ('OS') where he gains a specific focus of attention. This explicit vantage point is encoded linguistically by the expression *from me*<sup>13</sup>. While the rest of the ground components remain outside of the onstage region (for example, past tense marking).

The notion of grounding and subjectivity presented here will be used in the analysis of the evidential particles in Chapter 5.

### 3.4 Relations between units

From a CG perspective, the linguistic inventory is not merely very large, but it is also structured in complex and intricate ways. Of several kinds of relations between units, there are two main kinds that are important for the present discussion: the 'vertical' relation and the 'horizontal' relation (Taylor 2002: 22-25).

#### 3.4.1 The vertical relation

The vertical relation is derived from the notion of 'level of specificity'. That is, units are specified in differing degrees of detail. A unit which is characterized with lesser specificity and detail can be considered a **schema** of another unit, which is characterized with greater specificity and detail, and can be considered as an **instance** of the former. The notion of schema and instance can apply to phonological, semantic, and symbolic units. Only schema and instance in semantics are exemplified here.

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<sup>13</sup> Note that the expression *from me* in this example is not a grounding element. It is just meant to show how a ground element invokes the ground and how grounding is related to subjectivity. That is, the ground is implicitly evoked.

For example, the semantic unit [TREE] is **schematic** for [OAK], [PINE] and such; [OAK], [PINE] and further instances of the schema in turn are instances of the more schematically characterized semantic unit [TREE]. In other words, [OAK], [PINE] and other instances **elaborate** [TREE] by filling semantic detail. As a result, the instances are similar in the fact that they **inherit** the specification of the schema, and at the same time are different since they flesh out the schema in different and contrasting ways (i.e., they are all trees but different kinds of trees). This relation is exemplified in Figure 16.

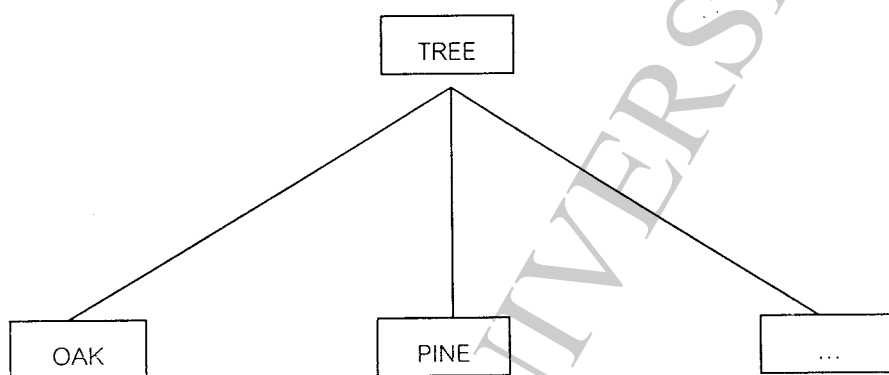


Figure 16. The relation between a schematic concept and some of its instances

The relation between schema and its instances can be depicted in a more schematic way, as in Figure 17.

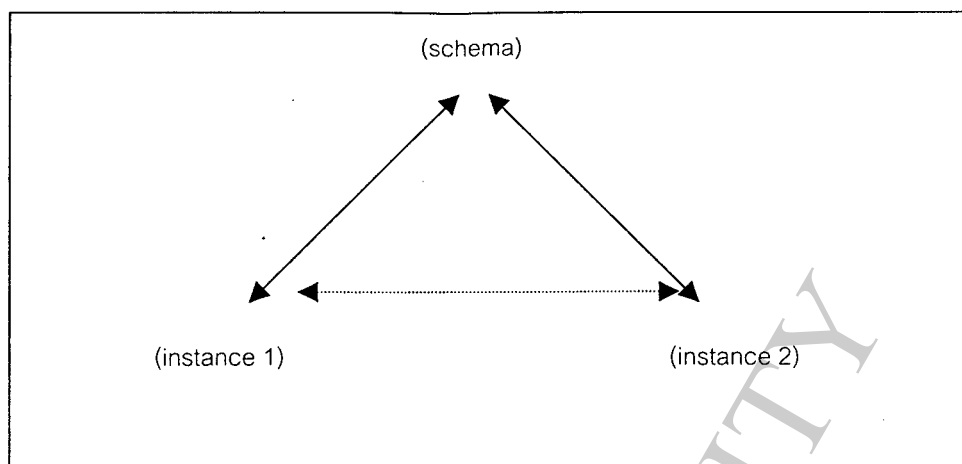


Figure 17. A more schematic representation of the relation between a schema and its instances

The solid lines represent a relationship of elaboration; the dotted line represents the similarity between the instances. Both instances together provide a general pattern in which to conceptually create a schema. In other words, a schema is abstracted from two or more instances<sup>14</sup>.

It should be noted here that the notion of schema and instance apply not only to relations between lexical units, but also to function units (e.g. *in*, *on*, *under* are the instances of the schema *the stative relation*). This notion is essential to understand the similarity of two progressive aspects in Lahu Shi in Section 4.2.3

### 3.4.2 The horizontal relation

In Section 3.4.1, the vertical relation of schema and instance was discussed. In this section, I turn to the horizontal relation between units, that is the, 'syntagmatic

<sup>14</sup> See Inglis 2003 for an example of this applied to numeral classifier languages, specifically Thai.

combination of simpler units into larger, internally more complex units' (Taylor 2002: 225).

When two linguistic units are combined to form a larger unit, they are not conceptualized in a sequence as discrete units. Rather, there is a horizontal conceptual relation between the two. Take, *under the tree*, as an example. The preposition *under* designates a relation between a schematic trajector and a schematic landmark. *The tree*<sup>15</sup> designates a thing of the type 'tree' (represented by the circle labeled 'T' in Figure 18). To conceptualize the integrated concept of [UNDER THE TREE], the landmark of [UNDER] and the profile of [THE TREE] are not conceived as two distinct concepts but instead they are construed as two concepts of the same entity. This relation is symbolized by the dotted line. What happens is that [THE TREE] elaborates the schematic landmark of [UNDER]. That is to say, it gives a fuller specification of the semantic content of the landmark. Consequently, one is able to conceive that it is [THE TREE] that is the landmark of this relation not a schematic thing or any other kind of thing.

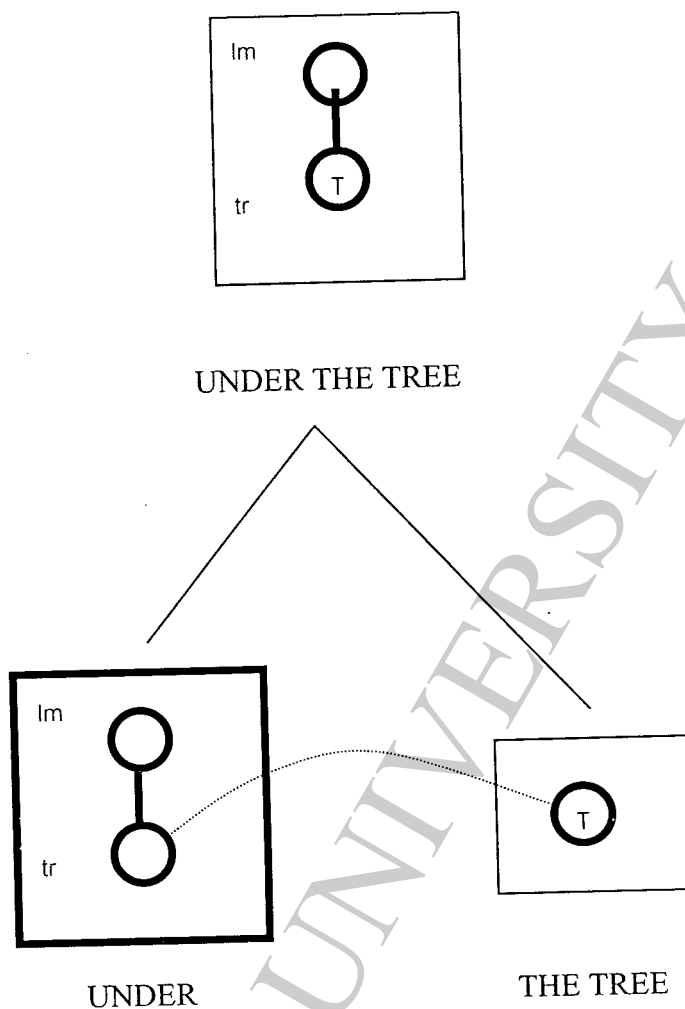


Figure 18. The assembly of [UNDER THE TREE]

However, it is not merely the elaboration of [THE TREE] on the landmark of [UNDER] that derives the resulting concept. In a CG approach, all linguistic expressions profile something. This includes the result of the combination – the complex concept [UNDER THE TREE] – which has a relational profile, even though it consists of the two distinct profiles (*under*: relational profile and *the tree*: nominal

<sup>15</sup> To simplify matters, the contribution of the definite article to the expression is ignored. Moreover, only the semantic pole of the linguistic expression *under the tree* is discussed.

profile). This illustrates that [UNDER THE TREE] inherits the relational profile from that of [UNDER]. In other words, the profile of [UNDER THE TREE] is determined by the profile of [UNDER] (not that of [THE TREE]). Langacker (1987a: 235) refers to [UNDER] as the **profile determinant** (so-called **head** in traditional grammar) of [UNDER THE TREE], because it determines the profile of the complex concept. The profile determinant is represented by the heavy box in Figure 18.

The concepts of vertical and horizontal relations presented here will be used in the analysis of aspect in Section 4.2.

### 3.5 Lahu studies

This section provides an overview of previous Lahu Na and Lahu Shi studies. Lahu Na work will be discussed first, followed by that of Lahu Shi.

#### 3.5.1 Matisoff and Lahu Na

Lahu Na is a member of the Tibeto-Burman subfamily of the Sino-Tibetan family of languages. Like most Tibeto-Burman languages, Lahu Na is verb-final. According to Matisoff (1973), the verb phrase is 'king' in Lahu Na clauses, since a clause must have a verb phrase, while noun phrases are optional. Two or more verbs can be strung by simple juxtaposition to form a complex verb phrase. Matisoff calls this juxtaposition verb concatenation.

Verb concatenation consists of the verb head (Vh) and non-head elements which can occur either before or after, or between their verb head. They are called pre-head versatiles (vC), post-head versatiles (Cv), and 'fore-and-aft' versatiles (vCv) respectively by Matisoff (1973: 200ff). It is the second type of versatile concatenation which is relevant to my research and will be discussed here.

Matisoff divides post-head versatile into four subclasses: juxtacapitals, medials, caudals, and variables.

**Juxtacapitals** always occur directly after the verb head. They all carry meanings related to motion or directionality, for example, *taw*<sup>^</sup> ‘out’, *keu* ‘into’.

**Medials** have meanings related to notions of ‘Manner’, for example, *sha* ‘easy’, *leh* ‘late’. The post head verb *to*<sup>^</sup> ‘walk’ (or *tod* in Lahu Shi) is also classified as a medial (a non-adjectival medial, to be more precise) by Matisoff.

**Caudals** involve notions of ability or potentiality, for example, *hpeh*<sup>^</sup> ‘can’, *caw*<sup>v</sup> ‘should’

**Variables** have meanings related to notions of aspect, for instance, *cheh*<sup>v</sup> ‘continuous’, *peu*<sup>v</sup> ‘completive’ (or *chehd* and *peor* respectively in Lahu Shi).

The so-called medial (*tod*) and the variables (*chehd* and *peor*) will be analyzed differently along the lines of CG in Chapter 4.

As for evidentials, only one evidential is mentioned by Matisoff, namely *ce*<sup>^</sup> ‘reported information’ (or *ced* in Lahu Shi). This particle has the general function of indicating that the source of information was told by someone else. In Chapter 5, I will introduce evidentials found in Lahu Shi and analyze them on the basis of ‘grounding’.

### 3.5.2 Chaikuna and Lahu Shi

According to Chaikuna (2003), Lahu Shi verb phrases are either a simple head verb (the verb phrase contains a single verb) or a concatenated verb (the verb phrase contains two or more head verbs). She divides verb phrases into action verbs and auxiliary verbs based on their functions. Action verbs include intransitive, transitive,



and bitransitive verbs. Three auxiliary verbs are discussed in her thesis, they are *gha* (modality), *chehd* (imperfect aspect), and *vehr* (perfective aspect).

Lahu Shi clause structure is composed of noun phrases followed by a verb phrase. It has a clause-chaining characteristic which employs sequences of medial clauses called non-final clauses, completed by a final clause. These two clauses have particles at the end of the clause.

There are some other clause types explained in her thesis, one of which is a relative clause. According to Chaikuna, a relative clause may be embedded in either the subject element or the object element. It can be a 'left relative clause' or a 'right relative clause'. The former is a clause in which a relative clause precedes the head noun, whereas the latter is a clause in which a relative clause is after the head noun (2003: 91-92).