Chapter 11

COMPLEMENT SENTENCES IN VERB FINAL LANGUAGES:
LISU

1. Introduction

Lisu is a TOPIC prominent, EVENT/Verb final language, that marks the AGENT/EXECUTOR and PROXIMAL EXPERIENCER ROLES, i.e., Agent and Patient, with zero, and the DISTAL EXPERIENCER, i.e., Recipient, with a post-position lê:

(1) làma nya ánà khû-ã
    [tiger TOP dog bite-Dec]
    ‘The tiger bit the dog’

(2) ása nya phwu àma lê gê-ã
    [Asa TOP money who to give-Question]
    ‘Who did Asa give the money to?’

Although EVENT/Verb final, Lisu word order is otherwise ‘free’. It is not SOV, nor is it OSV. Lisu belongs to the type of languages which do not associate the metaphoric category of VOICE with any favored ROLE, and this implies the presence of other characteristics. One of these is the corresponding absence of a Passive (Hope 1974.15, 33 & 72) construction. If there is no preferred VOICE-ROLE pairing, there is no need for a formal mechanism to express the appearance of VOICE with alternative PARTICIPANT-ROLES. Hence, one of the frequent contents of word order is absent, i.e., marking the alternation in the distribution of VOICE among PARTICIPANT-ROLES. Secondly, because there exists no preferred association of VOICE, there can exist no asymmetry between the PARTICIPANT that bears that semantic increment and those that do not. The Lisu verb is VOICE neutral in this respect, carrying no marking of any kind to associate it with one PARTICIPANT-ROLE.
more than another. \(^1\) Simply put, the language has no grammatical subject(s).

2. **TOPIC and FOCUS**

   The grammatical mark of the presence of TOPIC is *nya* (as in [1] and [2]) or intonation. Cf. below. And all PARTICIPANT-ROLES have equal access to the TOPIC category. The mechanism of word order is completely absent as a signal of semantic content within the TOPIC.\(^2\) Contrast this with Mandarin. The Lisu sentence (3), with five TOPICS (*nime* ‘today’, *ngwa* ‘I’, *nwu-hi* ‘your house’, *ása* ‘Asa’, and *yi-nápu* ‘his ear’), permits 120 (5! = 120) paraphrases (Hope 1974.13):

   (3) nime nya ngwa nya nwu hi basyía ása
       [today TOP I TOP you house beside Asa
        lè yí nápu bælætssha fwu γã-û
        to he ear slap send give-Dec]

   ‘This morning beside your house I gave Asa a slap on his ear’

   The postposition *nya* in (1) - (3) is the marker of TOPIC about which Lisu utterances are structured. Lisu TOPICS are all glossed with Definite Articles; and they are all KNOWN, whether GIVEN, RECOVERABLE or COMPUTABLE. Hope’s characterization of them is to say that TOPICS are “presupposed” (Hope 1974.12) and to cite Lyon’s (1968.335-36) description of ‘topic’ as the element “which is given in the general situation”, whether linguistically or extralinguistically. In our translation of these remarks, TOPIC is KNOWN, i.e., those terms which are present in the episodic memories of the speaker and listener; those items that are recognizable, whether conscious and focally attended by the speaker and listener or not, constitute the potential TOPICS of a Lisu sentence. ‘Potential’ is required here because, obviously, not everything that has been mentioned prior to the utterance demands continual mention nor does it necessarily continue as TOPIC. And “in the context of a discourse some or all of the topicalized NPs can be deleted anaphorically” (Hope 1974.13). Each Lisu utterance will normally contain at least one term that is KNOWN and so marked. The exception to the obligatory presence of TOPIC is provided by those utterances that assert existence (Hope 1974.33):

---

\(^1\) Tchekhoff (1980) discusses a category of ‘voice neutral’ verbs in Austronesian.

\(^2\) “… the order of the members of the set is free, and the various topics can occur in any order with reference to one another without any change in meaning or emphasis” (Hope 1974.13).
The absence of the TOPIC marking nya from sentence (4) indicates that (4) is TOPIC-less; at least, there is no continued TOPIC present, and (4) introduces a TOPIC. As indicated by (3), Lisu will permit “a number” (Hope 1974.13) of PARTICIPANTS to appear in the function of TOPIC. The complexities of TOPIC marking accomplish two contents: the signalling of TOPIC itself and also the boundary between TOPIC and FOCUS, and hence the extent of the latter. (Appendix A is a Lisu narrative text repeated from Hope (1974).)

The expression of FOCUS shows the preverbal material to have less than the random sequencing attributed to it above. The content that bears the meaning of FOCUS must follow the expression of TOPIC and lack the TOPIC postposition nya. Thus, in these examples:

(5) ása nya lākō nya ądyą tshī-ą
[Asa TOP bowl TOP water wash-Dec]
‘Asa washed the bowl with water’

ądyą ‘water’, but not ása ‘Asa’ nor lākō ‘bowl’, can be FOCUS. “Where an NP is the focus an optional deletion of the topic marker nya can apply to topics” (Hope 1974.13), so that the above sentence can also be rendered (Hope 1974.44):

(6) ása nya lākō ądyą tshī-ą

Where there are many TOPIC elements, as in (3), “the deletion is not applied to the first few ‘to the left’” (Hope 1974.13); and the PARTICIPANTS that are not followed by nya, but which remain TOPICS, nevertheless, are each marked “by a slight fall in pitch”.

If one were to ask the question (Hope 1974.56):

(7) ása nya phwu nya āma lē gō-ą
[Asa TOP money TOP who to give-Question]
‘Who did Asa give money to?’

the answer must be as follows, with the answering information preceding the verb and not followed by nya:
(8) (a) ása nya phwų nya alė lé gò-ä
[Asa TOP money TOP Ale to give-Dec]
‘Asa gave the money to Ale’

(b) %āsa nya phwų nya alė lé nya gò-ä
[Asa TOP money TOP Ale to TOP give-Dec]
‘Asa gave the money to Ale’

The response of (8b) shows by its gloss, with English sentence accent reflecting the Lisu FOCUS, that it is not acceptable as an answer to (7). The answer of (8a) is also appropriate to another question (Hope 1974.56):

(9) ása nya phwu ali ye-â
[Asa TOP money how do-Question]
‘What did Asa do with the money?’

It is, of course, possible to question the verb, i.e., to construct questions that require yes-no answers. In Lisu, the yes-no question is marked by â or û; â is the ‘tenseless’ Declarative marker glossed, for example, with dye-â ‘go’ as ‘going’, ‘goes’, ‘will go’, or ‘went’; andû is the ‘tensed’ Declarative marker, that with dye produces the glosses ‘has gone’, or ‘went’ (cf. Hope 1974.156). In each case, the question is indicated by altering the tone on the Declarative from mid to high-fall, much in the way English may convert a statement ²You’re going¹ into a question ²You’re going². Thus, sentences (7) and (9) and these (Hope 1974.157):

(10) ása nya dye-â
[Asa TOP go-]
‘Is Asa going?’

(11) ása nya dye-û
‘Has Asa gone?’

The answer to the questions of (10) and (11) place the answering, ‘focussed’ information or FOCUS in final position. The response to (11) is then

(12) ása nya dye-ä
‘Asa is going’
But other questions and their answers demonstrate a still greater extent in the compass of FOCUS (Hope 1974.71):

(13) ása nya ásyì yê-â
    [Asa TOP what do-Question]
    ‘What is Asa doing?’

A first possible response takes the shape

(14) ása nya ávê  lê  nãtshì  ká-â
    [Asa TOP pig to medicine prick-Dec]
    ‘Asa is giving the pig an injection’

Here, everything to the right of ása nya is the answer, i.e., is the FOCUS. And notice that in contradiction to Hope’s (1974.10) claim that ‘focussed’ information is “never in any sense ‘given’” that the gloss provided for ávê lê in (15) is ‘the pig’, not ‘a pig’. Not only that, but answers such as

(15) %ásã  ná  ávê  lê  ná  nãtshì  (nya)  ká-â

are inappropriate to (13). What is in fact FOCUS in (15), i.e., ávê lê, is marked as non-FOCUS.³

Figure 1 summarizes the possible distribution of the semantics of FOCUS over the components of the PROPOSITION. Other sentential content, “for instance adverbs, intensifiers and negatives, all ... are obligatorily moved [sic] into pre-verbal position in all sentences in which they occur” (Hope 1974.127) and treated, therefore, as non-TOPIC FOCUS.

³ “... nya deletion may not occur if a verbal is the focus” (Hope 1974.13) and this implies for (15) that the FOCUS is ká ’prick’, an inappropriate choice as answer to (13).
3. Auxiliaries

Lisu is a Verb final language of the type that has a well developed auxiliary-like system. The content of the post-verbal verbs varies from deontic, to deictic and orientational, to cognitive, and to manipulative (Hope 1974.126, 133, 134, 141 & 144):

(16) ása nya ami khwa tshà-à
    [Asa TOP fields hoe urgent-Dec]
    ‘It is urgent for Asa to hoe the fields’

(17) ása nya hípywë wa té la-à
    [Asa TOP shack to run come-Dec]
    ‘Asa came running to the shack’

(18) alë nya ása nya ami khwa-à bë-à
    [Ale TOP Asa TOP fields hoe-Dec say-Dec]
    ‘Asa says that Ale is hoeing the fields’

(19) alë nya ása nya ami khwa-à tsi
    [Ale TOP Asa TOP fields hoe-Dec remember
     ɲiŋ-à
     get-Dec]
    ‘Ale remembers that Asa is hoeing the fields’

(20) ása nya zànwë lé thùyë su tyıp-à
    [Asa TOP child to book study cause-Dec]
    ‘Asa made the child study [go to school]’

(21) ása nya alë lë hi gè syà-à
    [Asa TOP Ale to house give make-Dec]
    ‘Asa allowed Ale to build a house’

The language appears to blend all its complex expressions into a single mold, that of S + Aux-like (e.g. [16]) or S + Verb + Aux-like (e.g. [19]), but there is some differentiation within that grammar. Consider these contrasts (Hope 1974.130 & 145):
Although the sentences of (24) are not differentiated in English, the pairs in (22) - (23) give some hint of the semantic difference. In the (a)-members that lack the Declarative -ŋ, one of the terms of the dependent sentence (the one with a TOPIC mark) is taken as the pivot, i.e., ‘Asa is good ...’ or ‘dog meat is good ...’ But in the (b)-members with two Declarative -ŋ, the ‘dependent’ or non-final sentence is taken as holistically, without internal asymmetry, as to what is ‘good’. The occurrence of the TOPIC nya in (22a) and (23a) isolates its object as the pivot of the independent Ɣ-ŋ; and (22a) does not mean ‘The field is good for Asa to hoe’, nor does (23a) mean ‘Asa is good at eating/to eat dog meat’. Since the sentences of (24) lack an occurrence of TOPIC (“the NP’s in such a complement may not be topicalized ... a very rare restriction” [Hope 1974.145]. But cf. [4].), there is nothing in (24a) to identify the pivot of the potential asymmetry. The absence of the -ŋ in the dependent clause does not itself signal the presence of a pivot, but it must provide the context in which that contrast may function.
Forms like $xg$ ‘good’, that may occur with sentences without Declarative -$q$ on their final Verb, are called ‘[+ Aux]’, and those that may occur with the Verb final Declarative are ‘[- Aux]’. Hence, $xg$ is [± Aux]. Others that pattern like $xg$ are (Hope 1974.129):

- $hv$ ‘difficult’
- $phfv$ ‘surprising’
- $dy$ ‘fearsome’
- $stv$ ‘shameful’
- $ng$ ‘factual’
- $m$ ‘genuine’

Some Verbs are strictly [- Aux] and always appear with a Declarative -$q$ on the sentence preceding them. These seem to correspond most closely to Givón’s (1980) cognitive verbal class (Hope 1974.133):

- $bdzv$ ‘hear’
- $dvdzv$ ‘think’
- $bg$ ‘say, intend’
- $m$ ‘teach, show’
- $nyi$ ‘ask’
- $mu$ ‘see’
- $tsi$ ‘remember’
- $kw$ ‘consider’

Cf. (18) - (19) above. About (19) and the Auxiliaries $ts$ ‘remember’, $dvdzv$ ‘think’, $kw$ ‘consider’, they “and some others not listed, can only occur as verbs commanding a complement $S$ if they are in turn commanded by a higher auxiliary verb such as $m$ ‘obtain, be successful’ or $ny$ ‘try’” (Hope 1974.133). That is, they are like Givón’s (1980) intermediate class of ‘modal’ verbs, ‘suppose’, ‘manage’, etc. in which the manner of the progression of the EVENT is expressed.

Some Verbs are always [+ Aux]. One group of these is the following deontic-like (Hope 1974.122):

- $ty$ ‘weakly expedient’
- $thv$ ‘common, usual’
- $w$ ‘obligatory’
- $ty$ ‘precendented’
- $ty$ ‘needful’
- $ty$ ‘free from taboo’

as in

(25) ása $ny$ ami $khw$ $thv$-g

[Asa TOP field hoe expedient-Dec]

‘Asa may as well hoe the field’
A class that centers semantically about ‘ability’ is also [+ Aux] (Hope 1974.123):

\[kwú \text{ ‘mentally able’} \quad khwu \text{ ‘physically able’}\]
\[bala \text{ ‘able (no hindrance)’} \quad p̄š \text{ ‘preceded’}\]
\[bwu \text{ ‘disinterested’}\]

(26) ása nyu ami khwa tyū-qa
[Asa TOP field hoe needed-Dec]
‘Asa’s hoeing the field was needed’

With the exception of \(bwu\) ‘disinterested’ (Hope 1974.164), these [+ Aux] forms do not occur without a ‘sentential complement’ (Hope 1974.124):

(27) ása nyu ami khwa kwú-qa
[Asa TOP field hoe physically.able-Dec]
‘Asa is able (knows how to) hoe fields’

(28) ása nyu ami khwa bwu-qa
[Asa TOP field hoe disinterested-Dec]
‘Asa is tired of hoeing fields’

(29) ása nyu bwu-qa
[Asa TOP lazy-Dec]
‘Asa is lazy’

(30) *ása nyu kwú-qa
[Asa TOP physically.able-Dec]

Another set similar to the above, and which differs only in pivoting upon patients, while the previous group selected agents, is (Hope 1974.124):

\[fwu \text{ ‘require a } \quad p̄w̄ \text{ ‘to last, be used up } \quad \text{lot of time’}\]
\[\text{at a slow rate’}\]

\[mi \text{ ‘tasty’}\]

(31) dza nyu nyíme dzà mi-qa
[rice TOP today eat tasty-Dec]
‘Today the rice is tasty’
And like the above, they require a complement (Hope 1974.125):

(32) *dza nyu mi-ŋ

We add here the [+ Aux] di ‘roomy’, that is isolated (by Hope 1974.125-26) only in that its pivot is taken to be a locative:

(33) (a) nwu dzakā nyu hama yītā di-ŋ
    [you granary TOP elephant lie roomy-Dec]
    ‘Your granary is roomy enough for an elephant to lie in’

(b) *nwu dzakā di-ŋ

There is, finally, a set of [+ Aux] forms that do not have ROLE restrictions on what may be taken as pivot (as all the above [+ Aux] do) (Hope 1974.126):

pyo ‘enjoyable’ tshā ‘urgent’
da ‘able’ sa ‘easy’
ŋa ‘possible’ xa ‘good’
khū “natural” hi ‘difficult’

(34) ása nyu ami khwa da-ŋ
    [Asa TOP fields hoe acceptable-Dec]
    ‘It is acceptable for Asa to hoe fields’

(35) ása nyu ami khwa da-ŋ
    [Asa TOP fields hoe able-Dec]
    ‘Asa is able to hoe/skilled at hoeing fields’

(36) ami nyu khwa da-ŋ
    [fields TOP hoe able-Dec]
    ‘Fields are ‘hoe-able’
    ‘The fields are ready for hoeing’

It is contrasts like that between (35) and (36) which show that the asymmetrical presence of nya following ása or ami is reflected in the semantics that selects each, ‘Asa’ or ‘field’, as the pivot, or equivalently, as the element most closely associated with da ‘able/acceptable’. Sentence (34) emphasizes that the absence of Declarative -ŋ only enables this selection
(while not forcing it) because that sentence is taken homogeneously, without internal prejudice as to what is related to *da*.

The Verbs that occur as last members in a complex expression are summarized by their English glosses in Figure 2. The so-called *[- Aux]* Verbs, which always occur with the Declarative marker on the Verb of the preceding sentence seem to be semantically coherent — from our English perspective — as ‘cognitive’ Verbs (Givón 1980.345-47 et passim). But those that allow or require the absence of the Declarative *-q* seem less coherent internally. Givón’s (1980.342-44 et passim) idea of ‘modality’ is roughly applicable to those that occur with or without a preceding Declarative. The contents of ‘difficult’ and ‘fearsome’ clearly address the mode in which some EVENT is performed, but the operation of ‘modality’ is less obvious in ‘surprising’ (as opposed to ‘precedent’ in the [+ Aux] group), in ‘shameful’ (as opposed to ‘free from taboo’ in the [+ Aux] group), etc. There are, however, additional [+ Aux] Verbs that fall into Givón’s ‘manipulative’ class. See *tyq ‘cause’* and *sya ‘make’* in sentences (20) - (21) above and these (Hope 1974.144):

(37)  ása nyu zàngwę lé thur̄su tyęq-á  
[Asa TOP child to book study cause-Dec]  
‘Asa made the child study/go to school’

(38)  átu nyu ása thyę kąle tyęq-á  
[fire TOP Asa flee happen cause-Dec]  
‘Fire caused Asa to flee’

The presence of *kąle* in (38) marks an ‘indirect’ causation that is necessary.
with Agents like ‘fire’ (Hope 1974.145), and **possible** with Agents like Asa. Compare (37) with (38) and with (39) and (40), respectively (Hope 1974.144-45):

(39) ása nya zànwẹ thù?ə su kəle tye-ə
    [Asa TOP child book study happen cause-Dec]
    ‘Asa instituted children’s schooling’
    [Lit. ‘Asa caused it to happen that children study books’]

(40) *átú nya ása thye tye-ə
    [fire TOP Asa flee cause-Dec]

Some less manipulative-like and more modal-like Verbs occur solely as [+Aux] (Hope 1974.143):

(41) ása nya ami khwa nyi-ə
    [Asa TOP field hoe try-Dec]
    ‘Asa is trying to hoe the field’

(42) (a) ása nya ami khwa mə-ə
    [Asa TOP field hoe get-Dec]
    ‘Asa got to hoe the field’

(b) ása nya am∂u gə mə-ə
    [Asa TOP horse chase get-Dec]
    ‘Asa got to chase the horse’
    ‘Asa caught the horse’

4. **Complexity**

It is, nevertheless, the case that [+Aux] Verbs **differ** from the other matrix Verbs. Sentences that precede the [+Aux] Verbs all “are required to occur in focus position immediately before the commanding [matrix, PWD] verb” (Hope 1974.128); and “complement sentences commanded by such verbs [“an adjectival auxiliary verb” (Hope 1974.127)] may not be topicalized or extraposed in any way” (Hope 1974.128). And, with the exception of (24a), all may be seen as organized about some **TOPIC** expressed initially in the complex, which **TOPIC** is remarked upon by the final, [+Aux] Verb; and that requires a **FOCUS** immediately preceding the [+Aux] Verb:
COMPLEMENT SENTENCES IN VERB FINAL LANGUAGES: LISU

The whole asserts that the TOPIC has some property (the EVENT) with respect to the propositional context expressed as FOCUS. E.g. more literally (33a) is ‘Your granary is roomy ... with respect to an elephant lying [in it]’; (35) is ‘Asa is able ... with respect to hoeing fields’; (36) is ‘The fields are acceptable ... with respect to hoeing’; and so forth. Sentence (34) differs from (35) only in that it is seen as comparable to (4). The sequence ása nya ami khwa is taken in its entirety as the FOCUS (and with no announced/KNOWN TOPIC for da); the entire content of ása nya ami khwa is the predicative target of the EVENT da, which has the more ambient gloss ‘acceptable’ in place of ‘able’. All those [+ Aux] Verbs require a propositional/sentential FOCUS ‘complement’. That is what isolates the [+ Aux] Verbs.

As to whether or not the sentences preceding [+ Aux] forms are complements, we must recall that these ‘complement sentences’ are all incapable of functioning as TOPIC to their matrix Verbs, as individual PARTICIPANTS do in simple sentences, i.e., (30). They, therefore, lack a primary component of the ‘complement sentence’ category as suggested by Noonan (1985.43), i.e., they are not arguments of verbs. However, those Verbs that are [± Aux] are capable of appearing with a TOPIC sentence and without a separately expressed FOCUS. Compare (22b) — here (43) — with (44) (Hope 1974.131-32):

(43) [ása nya]TOP [ami khwa-a]FOCUS [xà-a]EVENT
    [Asa TOP fields hoe-Dec good-Dec]
    ‘It’s good that Asa hoes fields’

(44) [ása ami khwa-a nya]TOP [xà-a]FOCUS/EVENT
    [Asa fields hoe-Dec TOP good-Dec]
    ‘That Asa hoes the fields is good’
    ‘It is good when Asa hoes the fields’
    ‘When/If Asa hoes the fields it will be good’
    ‘Since Asa is hoeing the fields all is well’

While (43) is

TOPIC FOCUS EVENT

(44) is
and the sole candidate for a FOCUS in (44) is \( xg \) ‘good’. Notice that in (44) the sentential TOPIC \( \text{ása ami khoa-q nya} \) has no TOPIC internal to it and note the multiple glosses. Hope (1974.131-32) attempts to see a distinct “deep structure difference” between (44) with the first two glosses and (44) with the second two glosses, even though “there are no surface structure differences” (Hope 1974.132) in (44). But we can also see the glosses of (44) as simply different English renditions of one coherent Lisu form. The tenseless Declarative \(-q\) permits the future time ‘When/If ...’ as well as the ‘Since ...’ gloss and the panchronic ‘It is good when ...’ gloss. The absence of an internal TOPIC generates the gloss ‘That Asa hoes fields is good’, in addition to accounting for a symmetrical distribution of attention across ‘Asa’, ‘field’, and ‘hoe’ in all the glosses.

The complex S\(-q\) nya construction occurs only with [- Aux] Verbs of Group II in Figure 2 (Hope 1974.131); and although we have no examples of S\(-q\) nya so occurring with the ‘cognitive’ [- Aux] Verbs, we may infer that such is possible with them as well. What this means effectively is that if nya follows an S, then that S will be marked for Declarative, i.e., \(-q\) or \(-u\) will be present.

Notice that sentence (44), which is schematically S\(-q\) nya + V, contains no nya or TOPIC internal to the sentence. We may take this as a step in the reduction of a PROPOSITION from an ASSERTION to a MENTION.4 Movement from DIVERSITY towards UNITY is confirmed by constructions in which the sentence is followed by the ‘classifier’ (Hope 1974.89) \( ma \) (Hope 1974.131):

\[
\text{(45) } \begin{array} {llllllllll} \text{ása m\text{"o}gw\text{"}á} & \text{gw\text{"}á} & \text{nya} & \text{xu-\text{"}u} \\
\text{Asa song sing NOM TOP good-Dec} \\
\text{‘Asa’s singing of songs is good’} \\
\text{‘Asa’s way of singing songs is good’}
\end{array}
\]

4 Hope (1974.127) observes:

The categories in the base which are governed by the restrictions mentioned above [i.e., which are absent in this context, PWD] are aspect markers, those sentence markers which indicate whether the speaker is making a statement, asking a question or giving an order, and finally those ‘modal’ markers which indicate whether the speaker is expecting his utterance to be news, is making an hypothesis, is being emphatic, etc.

That is, what is absent is the semantics associated with the presence of ASSERTION.
Such ‘nominalized’ constructions are not possible with the [+ Aux] Verbs of Figure 2. Sentences (45) - (46) contrast with (44) and those like it in that (45) - (46) select the performance of the event or the manner of performance of the event. It is as if the whole describes a semantic complex that is looked at aspectually as PERFECTIVE (RESULTATIVE) or as IMPERFECTIVE. The semantic components of (44) are not so melded as to support a single perspective, and the topicalization of that sentence creates a form that is the ‘subject’ of χₜₜ or the background to an ‘ambient subject’, i.e., ‘it’ or ‘all’. The sentences of (45) - (46) contain no nya internal to the nominalizations and when such appears to be the case (Hope 1974.131):

(47) āsa nya pāṭsi-wa dye-qa ma nya phēfu-qa
[Asa TOP plain-to go Dec NOM TOP strange-Dec]
‘Asa’s going to the plain was surprising’

several changes accompany the appearance of the additional nya. First, the S- nya form becomes S-qa -ma nya. That is, the Declarative -qa occurs. And second, the gloss of the matrix Verb changes from ‘surprising’ to ‘strange’. Hope (1974.131) remarks of (47) that “In this sentence the Agentive of the complement sentence has been topicalized and the marker nya has separated [Emphasis mine, PWD] the word āsa from the rest of the sentence”. By its topicalization, āsa nya becomes the TOPIC of phēfu ‘strange’ (not ‘surprising’), leaving pāṭsi-wa dye-qa ma nya as a second TOPIC. Another example of this type is (Hope 1974.110):

(48) lụ nya dzagwuu wa pɛ ye-qa nya
[car TOP road at reach go-Dec TOP
nà ɛ-qa
stop COMP-Dec]
‘When the car reached the road, it stopped’

As in (47), the EXECUTOR TOPIC of the matrix EVENT/Verb nà ɛ-qa ‘stopped’ is lụ nya ‘the car’, more clearly so than in (47). This leaves dzagwuu wa pɛ ye qa nya ‘(it) reached the road’, which has no internal TOPIC, as a second TOPIC to nà ɛ-qa. And it has an adverbial gloss ‘When ...’ comparable to (44). The
difference between (44) and (47) - (48) is only the presence of a second EXECUTOR (or other ROLE filling) PARTICIPANT-TOPIC (i.e., ása nya or ƚû nya) that is missing in (44). Sentences (47) - (48) parallel those of (43) with the difference that FOCUS is isolated on the EVENT/Verb, e.g. phéfwu.

**TOPEIC TOPEIC FOCUS**

5. **Conclusion**

We may then construct a scale for Lisu ‘complement sentences’ as in Figure 3. The square brackets indicate a ‘dependent’ sentence. Vertically, on the right in Figure 3, from bottom to top there is a decrease in the DIVERSITY of the PROPOSITION until at the top, the result is a unitized term that serves as FOCUS. At the bottom right, we have a common Lisu utterance with a TOPIC and an EVENT as FOCUS. Above that, no TOPIC is present and the result is entirely FOCUS (e.g. [4] and [24b]). At the top, with no TOPIC nya and no Declarative -q, the result is even more constrained and requires a following EVENT. The three points parallel the three classes of EVENTS/Verbs listed in Figure 2.

At the midpoint in this transition, a second possibility appears with the addition of TOPIC nya. The PROPOSITION at this juncture has no internal TOPIC

---

**Figure 3: Complexity in Lisu.**
and may then itself function as a unit TOPIC, e.g. (44); and when further coalesced, first by the addition of the Classifier ma and further by the removal of the Declarative -ŋ, the content of the PROPOSITION may finally designate the result or the performance/activity of the PROPOSITIONAL content rather than that content ASSERTED. These possibilities occur only with the non-manipulative Verbs of II (and III) in Figure 2.

The organization of sentential complexity in Lisu, which is seen in the movement from DIVERSITY to UNITY, towards becoming FOCUS-like (the vertical path in Figure 3) or towards becoming TOPIC-like (the angled path in Figure 3), recognizes the principal components of the Lisu PROPOSITION: EVENT, FOCUS, and TOPIC.

Appendix A
Lisu Narrative Text


(1) ɲ̄g anyí thî ma dyu-ŋ
    there last-year one one have-DEC
    ‘There is a story of long ago’

(2) nyì syí
two siblings
    ‘The two brothers’

(3) yíwà nyì syí áŋá amyà ma dyu-ŋ
    they two siblings buffalo many ones have-DEC
    ‘The two of them had many buffalo’

(4) áŋá-b'lu-ŋ thî ma dyu-ŋ
    buffalo-ant-DIM one one have-DEC
    ‘They had a miniature buffalo’

(5) áŋá-b'lu-ŋ thî ma dyu-ŋ bg-ŋ nga
    buffalo-ant-DIM one one have-DEC say-DEC TOP
    ‘And so the younger brother was made to look after it daily’
yí nyiẓà láu tyë-à thà nyi thà
WH Y.Bro. watch cause-DEC one day one

nyì lè
day ADV

(6) láu tyë ju bë-à nüà, sà khu láu
watch cause fact say-DEC TOP, three year watch
‘And then, after looking after it for three years,

γà-à ju bë-à nüà, áŋà-bëlu-à gu nà
COMP-DEC fact say-DEC TOP, buffalo-ant-DIM that one
that miniature buffalo spoke to the orphan boy

zàthi-à lá pùxwà thywè γà-à
orphan-DIM to speech speak give-DEC

(7) pùxwà thywè γà-à ju bë-à
speech speak give-DEC fact say-DEC
and said’,

(8) nüà, ‘hà mèkhà bë-à nüà nüw kàku nüw
TOP soon evening say-DEC TOP you
E.Bro. you
“This evening your elder brother and his wife will give you

mâlà, nüw là hi bwe γà-à’
E.Bro.Wi. you to house apportion give-DEC
your share of the household goods”.

(9) áŋà-bëlu-à nüà the pùxwà thywè γà-à
miniature-buffalo-DIM TOP so speech speak give-DEC
‘So said the miniature buffalo’

(10) ‘zàthi-ù nüw ásyi-é thà nüw
orphan-VOC you what don’t want
“Orphan, don’t you take anything.
(11) dza phwu sə pə tshābu sə pə the rice white three parcels salt three parcels this
Three parcels of milled rice, and three parcels of salt — take only
le̱ nwe’
only want
this”.

(12) áŋá-bəalu-ə nya the thywə yə yə-ู่
top miniature-buffalo-DIM TOP this speak give COMP-DECL
‘The buffalo said this to him’

(13) atsísthi yída yə yu bə-Ų nya yí kükku actually return COMP fact say-DEC TOP he E.Bro.
‘And when in fact they did return home, his elder brother
yí málà yí lè hi bwe yə-ู่
he E.Bro.Wi. he to house apportion give-DEC
and his wife gave him his share of the household goods’

(14) bwe yə yə-腴 yu bə-Ų nya yí apportion give COMP-DEC fact say-DEC TOP he
‘After they had given him his share, he took the buffalo’s
xə áŋá-bəlu-ə nù zwu-Ű hínıyí ENT buffalo-miniature-DIM words take-DEC CAUSE
advice, obeyed and thus took only three parcels of milled rice
yí nù naná-腴 hínıyí dza-phwu sə pə he words listen-DEC CAUSE rice-white three parcels
and three of salt’
tshābu sə pə the le̱ nwe-腴
salt three parcels this only want-DECL

(15) bə-Ų bə-Ų nya yíwà nyì zỳ bə-Ų say-DEC say-DEC TOP they two people say-DEC
Later they both built a house’
nya hi syā-ŋ
TOP house make-DEC

lûkhwa hi syā-ŋ
lavender house make-DEC
'They build a house out of a lavender bush'

syā ħə ŋu bəŋ-ŋu nyə, syā du
make COMP fact say-DEC TOP make appear
'When they had finished the building, and the house was complete,
le-ŋu ŋu bəŋ-ŋu nyə, āŋâ-bılı-ŋu nyə
become-DEC fact say-DEC TOP buffalo-miniature-DIM TOP
the miniature buffalo told him',
yí lâ bəŋ ħə-ŋ
he to say give-DEC

‘dzwâ dzwo yí kânyâ gâ ye
there there he after follow go
'Go down there and follow them.

zâthi-â ńwu thì nyì thì nyì ńwa the
orphan-VOC you one day one day me this
Orphan, about your riding me this much day after day,
kâ dzi-â ma āsyî wûñyi dzi-â
amount ride-DEC NOM what CAUSE ride-QUEST
why do you do it?

ńwu zâmə nwe-ŋ
you wife want-QUEST
Do you want a wife?

ńwu zâmə nwe-ŋ, ńwa bəŋ ħə-ŋ
you wife want-DEC me say give-IMP
If you want a wife, tell me’
(22) ‘uwe-ŋ
want-DEC
“I do.

(23) hamäsà ali ŋ-ŋ
now which do-QUEST
But at the moment what can I do?

(24) ḳwa nya ásyi-é mà dyu’
top what not have
I have nothing”

(25) zâthiy-ŋ nya the bg-ŋ
orphan-DIM TOP this say-DEC
‘The orphan said this’

(26) áthe ḳu bg-ŋ nya ‘gwé lwùbŋ yí khè-ŋ
this fact say-DEC TOP there pool WH edge-to
‘This being so, “Let us both go over there to the edge of the pool”

dye-ŋ àzwù nyì zŋ
go-IMP we two person

(27) dye ḳè ḳu bg-ŋ nya wusa ámì xə
go COMP fact say-DEC TOP Wusa daughter ENT
‘After they had done this, the daughters of Wusa came to

ₐdyŋ kânyá la-ŋ lwùbwŋ wa
water play come-DEC pool at
play in the water at the pool’

(28) kânyá la-ŋ bg-ŋ ‘zâthiy-ŋ nwu ali thè
pool come say-DEC orphan-VOC you which one
So, “Orphan, which one do you want?”

ₐm nwe-ŋ’
one want-Quest
(29) ‘gwe bəthỳi nyìi thì ma nwe-ƛ’
there coat green one one want-DEC
“There, the one with the green coat”

(30) ‘zàthỳi-ƛ nwe-ƛ bə-ƛ nya gwa yí bəthỳi
orphan-VOC want say-DEC TOP there one coat
“Orphan, if you want her, go there and steal her coat so that
ámé dye khwù sàtyì,’
quickly go steal hide
you can hide it”

(31) ánà-bůlu-ƛ the bə ṣə-ƛ bə-ƛ nya,
buffalo-ant-DIM this say give-DEC say-DEC TOP
‘The miniature buffalo said this, and so the orphan boy went and
zàthỳi-ƛ xə yí bəthỳi dye khwù sàtyì-ƛ
orphan-DIM ENT he coat go steal hide-DEC
stole he coat to hide it’

(32) khwù sàtyì-ƛ yu bə-ƛ nya, swu nya
steal hide-DEC fact say-DEC TOP people TOP
‘And then the people all went home, the friends that is,
yìdye ṣə gwu-ƛ yí thywèphə thà
return COMP all-DEC he friends sort
but she stayed’

(33) ‘zàthỳi-ƛ nwu sàtyì-ą nyu átí li ṣə-ƛ’
orphan-VOC you hide-DEC TOP little return give-IMP
“Orphan, if you have hidden it, please give it back”

(34) ‘ŋwa nyu mà sàtyì,’
I TOP not hide
“I didn’t hide it”

(35) ‘nwu sàtyì-ą yu phà
you hide-DEC fact EXPECT
“I expect you really did.”
(36) นูุ สั้ตยิ่ง น้า ฮิ้ว ลิ่ วั่น มา ‘
you hide-DEC TOP little return give PLEAD
If you hid it please give it back to me, I beg you”

(37) ‘อิว้า น้า มา ลิ่ วั่น ‘
ah I TOP not return give
“Oh, no, I won’t give it back.

(38) สั้ตยิ่ง อิว้า สั้ตยิ่ง นู
hide-DEC I hide-DEC fact
I did hide it.

(39) นูุ อิว้า นเวว น้า อิว้า นูุ ลิ่ ลิ่ you me want-DEC TOP I you to return

วั่นมา ‘
give-DEC
If you will love me I’ll give it back”

(40) ‘สักกิ่ง อิเวว นู
orphan-VOC want-DEC fact
“Orphan, I will love you”

(41) ‘อิเวว น้า สะ ฮิ่ว ก็ ป ยิ่ง นูุ ลิ่ ฮิ่ว want-DEC TOP three years reach go-DEC you to
“O.K., if you will love me, in three years time I will give it back

ลิ่ วั่นมา ‘
return give-DEC
to you”

(42) อิเท อิผ้ว น้า วุส้า ฮิ่ว อิผ้ว
this fact say-DEC TOP Wusa daughter ENT

ฮิ่ว สักกิ่ง ฮิ่ว อิว
orphan-DIM to marry-DEC fact
‘This being the case, Wusa’s daughter married the orphan boy’
Appendix B on Relative Clauses

A different use of the Classifier *ma* occurs in these phrases (Hope 1974.77, 80, 83, 86 & 112):

(1) thyu bû thyu swá lá khwa-â ma
    [person rich person poor to oppress-Dec one]
    ‘rich people who oppress the poor’

(2) láthyu akhe the-â ma
    [person very clever-Dec one]
    ‘the person who is very clever’

(3) láthyu yàphyi thyi-â ma
    [person opium smoke-Dec one]
    ‘the one who smokes opium’

(4) âme thè demi wa ása yà-â ma
    [yesterday on field at Asa reap-Dec one]
    ‘that which Asa reaped in the fields yesterday’

(5) âmu ása dyu-â ma
    [horse Asa have-Dec one]
    ‘the horse which Asa has’

All these relative clauses lack internal TOPICS. Secondly, the head of each (where present. Cf. the free relative of [3].) is placed initially, but internal to the clause. With the addition of *nya* to place them in the context of a larger utterance, these clauses appear exactly like the TOPICS of (47) and (48). There are also these types of clauses (Hope 1974.83, 84 & 112):
Where the relationship acquires a lesser activity and becomes one of characterization rather than performance, the Declarative -ŋ (or even an EVENT/Verb) is omitted. In Figure 3, the relative clause-like material is comparable to the sentential TOPICS of (47) - (48); and the more adjectival-like (more UNITIZED and less PROPOSITION-like) material is comparable to the TOPICS of (45) - (46). The diversity of ma prompts Hope (1974.89) to remark that “The definition of ma in semantic terms is impossible, as it is open-ended and all-inclusive, referring to as many different objects as there are nouns in the language. In fact it has no meaning, rather than a lot of meanings”.

There are at least two additional and distinct formations of modification (Hope 1974.75, 77, 78 & 81):

(9) (a) làthyu yí yàphi thyř-a íña
[personWH-opium smoke-Dec one]
‘the person who smokes opium’

(b) yàphi thyř-a íña làthyu
[opium smoke-Dec one person]
‘the person who smokes opium’

(c) yàphi thyř íña làthyu
[opium smoke one person]
‘the opium-smoking person’

(10) (a) làthyu yí the-a íña
[personWH-clever-Dec one]
‘the person who is clever’
Elsewhere, yí functions to create “deverbal nouns” (Hope 1974.112):

(11) (a) yí na
‘disease’
(b) na
‘to be sick, sore’

(12) (a) yí phwĩ
‘price’
(b) phwĩ
‘to honour, value’

(13) (a) yí fwũ
‘egg’
(b) fwũ
‘to lay eggs’

(14) (a) yí nga
‘black (colour name)’
(b) nga
‘to be black’

The same yí appears to create nouns from classifiers (Hope 1974.95 & 113):

(15) yí dzi
‘a tree trunk’

(16) yí sì
‘globules, fruit’

and it acts as a pronoun (Hope 1974.109), with indeterminate number
COMPLEMENT SENTENCES IN VERB FINAL LANGUAGES: LISU

reference:

(17) mà só / yí mà ‘îlə hè
[not know he not return yet]
‘(I) don’t know. They have not come home yet’

yí designates a content as inclusive; it exhausts the range of its semantic reach and creates a DOMAIN-like entity. Thus in (9) yí exhausts ‘those-who-haven’t-come-home-yet’, but in (10):

(18) ngwanwù nga thà ‘îtá-a / yí-wà nga nè-wa
[we TOP here lie-Dec they TOP that-at
‘îtá-a
lie-Dec]
‘We have been sleeping here, but they have been sleeping there’

the DOMAIN of ‘those-who-have-been-sleeping’ is divided (‘here’ versus ‘there’) and yíwà is required. Compare also (Hope 1974.94):

(19) làthyu yí bwu
[personWH- group]
‘people in groups’

(20) làthyu thì bwu
[personone group]
‘one group of people’

The phrase of (20) creates a DOMAIN of ‘people-in-groups’ while (19) has many distributions of people into groups.