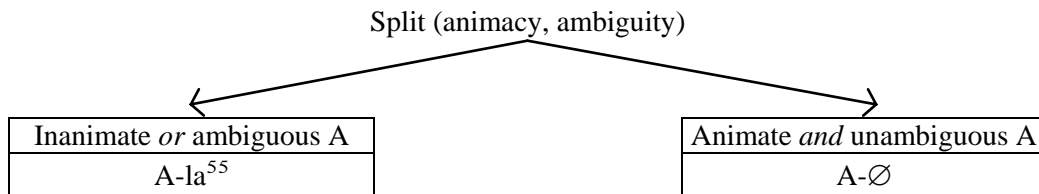


# DIFFERENTIAL CASE MARKING IN BURMESE-LOLO LANGUAGES

ABSTRACT. The Burmese-Lolo languages exhibit several rare Differential Subject/Object Marking patterns with import for typology and syntax. Available data allow us to identify at least four types.

**Type I:** DSM triggered by animacy, A/O-ambiguity, focus Languages: Azhee<sup>1</sup>

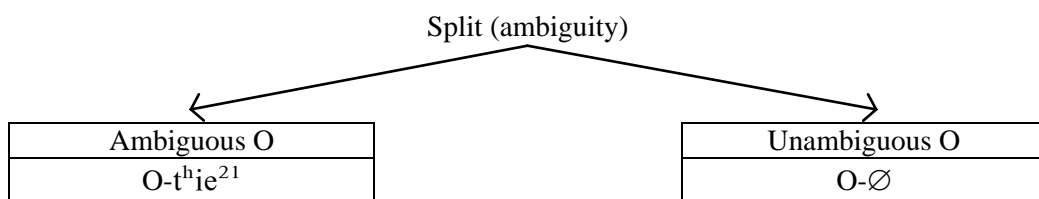
The Azhee case marker **la**<sup>55</sup> marks inanimate subjects or subjects that are ambiguous with objects. The other transitive subjects are not marked (Gerner, forthcoming).



The case marker **la**<sup>55</sup> was reanalyzed as contrastive focus marker that can re-occur with the case marker in reduplicated form (A-la<sup>55</sup>la<sup>55</sup>).

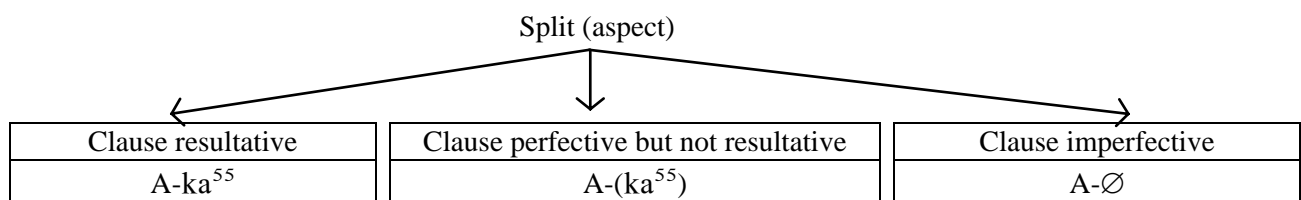
**Type II:** DOM triggered by A/O-ambiguity, focus Languages: Lolo,<sup>2</sup> Lalo, Lahu

The Lolo DO marker **t<sup>hie</sup>**<sup>21</sup> introduces two splits, a primary split by marking ambiguous O against unambiguous O; a secondary split by marking unambiguous focal O against unambiguous non-focal O. Ambiguous O are indifferent to contrastive focus (Gerner 2008).



**Type III:** DSM triggered by aspect Languages: Nesu,<sup>3</sup> Burmese

The Nesu particle **ka**<sup>55</sup> marks subjects differentially depending on the aspect of the whole clause. The subject must be case-marked, if the simple clause encodes a resultative state; it can be case-marked if the clause is perfective without implying a result; it cannot be case-marked if the clause is imperfective (Gerner 2012). The Burmese marker *ká* exhibits similar properties (Jenny 2012).

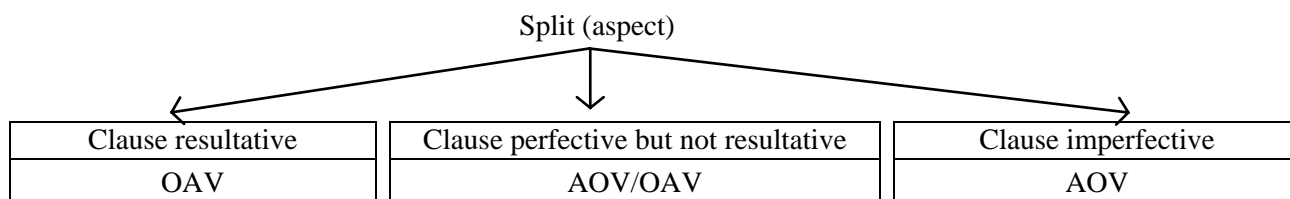


<sup>1</sup> Azhee is a Central Loloish language spoken by about 90,000 natives in Mile county of Yunnan Province (P.R. of China).

<sup>2</sup> Lolo is spoken by about 150,000 natives in Yongren county of Yunnan Province (P.R. of China). Lolo is a Central Loloish language.

<sup>3</sup> Nesu is a Southern Loloish spoken by about 100,000 natives in the district of Gejiu City in Yunnan Province (P.R. of China).

The Nuosu language exhibits an aspect-conditioned word order split for simple clauses (Gerner, 2004). The word order must be AOV, if the simple clause encodes a resultative state; it can be AOV or OAV if the clause is perfective without implying a result; it must AOV if the clause is imperfective (Gerner 2004, 2013).



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<sup>4</sup> Nuosu is the principal language of the Yi Nationality. It is spoken by more than 2,000,000 natives in Sichuan Province (P.R. China). It is a Northern Loloish language.