

# **LANGUAGE IN INDIA**

**Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow**

**Volume 12 : 4 April 2012**

**ISSN 1930-2940**

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## PASSIVES IN LAI AND MIZO

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Lai and Mizo are Tibeto-Burman languages primarily spoken in neighboring (and overlapping) areas of Chin State, Myanmar and Mizoram State, India. Both belong to the Central subgroup of Kuki-Chin. They are thus closely related, but not mutually intelligible. Most of the differences which impede intelligibility are lexical and relatively easily overcome on continued exposure. The primary examples below are taken from four translations of the Gospel according to Matthew. Those marked 'a' are from *Pathian Lehkabu Thianghlim* (God's Holy Book), the standard Mizo version. Those marked 'b' are from the common language revision (same title) published in 2008. Those marked 'c' are from *Lai Baibal Thiang* (the Holy Bible in Lai), the standard Lai version, as revised in 1999 (principal translator David Van Bik). Those marked 'd' are from *Khamtu Bawipa Jesuh Khrih Biahren Thar* (the New Testament of the Savior Lord Jesus Christ), published in 2002 (principal translator James Sangawi). Examples are cited in the original orthography; the standard orthographies of Lai and Mizo are almost identical. Lai *c*, *ch* and *hng* correspond to Mizo *ch*, *chh* and *ngh*. Mizo represents some long vowels with a circumflex accent, while Lai occasionally uses a doubled vowel letter. Our examples use *tr* and *thr* for the retroflex stops, represented in both standard orthographies as *t* and *th* with a subscribed dot. Both orthographies represent a syllable final glottal stop with the letter *h*, and neither represents tone. The numbers indicate chapter and verse in Matthew. An earlier version of this paper was presented to the UCB-UCLA Joint Conference on Southeast Asian Studies, Los Angeles, 2009.

**Verb stem alternation.** Lai and Mizo both exhibit what is usually referred to as 'verb stem alternation'. This is morphological variation in verbs which depends on a combination of lexical, syntactic and pragmatic conditions; it is characteristic of Kuki-Chin languages and the conditions as well as lexical manifestations differ slightly from one language to another. Alternations are listed for Mizo in Lorrain 1940 and for Lai in Ni Kio 2005. While we cannot go into it in depth here, examples (1) to (6) will give some idea of the phenomenon. The transitive verbs *ngaidam* in Mizo and *ngaihthiam* in Lai mean 'forgive'; each has an alternant, *ngaihdam* and *ngaihthiam* respectively, formed by suffixing a glottal stop to the first syllable. Following the literature, we will call *ngaidam* and *ngaihthiam* the stem I form, and *ngaihdam* and *ngaihthiam* the stem II form. For details on the usage of these forms, see in particular Kathol and VanBik 2000 and Kathol 2003.

- (1) a *Keini pawhin kan englo bâte kan ngaihdam tâk ang khân.*  
 we also-BY 1=PL something owe=PL 1=PL forgive PERF FUT that=as  
 'as we also will forgive what is owed to us'
- b *Kan laka bâte kan ngaidam angin,*  
 1=PL to=P owe=PL 1=PL forgive FUT=as  
 'as we will forgive what is owed to us'
- c *Mi nih kan cungah thratlonak an tuahmi kan ngaihthiam hna bangin*  
 people BY 1=PL on=P evil 3=PL do=REL 1=PL forgive PL like=as  
 'as we forgive the evils people do against us'

- d *Kan cungah thratlonak a tuahtu hna kan ngaihthiam hna bangin*  
 1=PL on=P evil 3 do=REL PL 1=PL forgive PL like=as  
 'as we forgive those who do evil against us' (6:12)

In (1b) *ngaidam* illustrates the use of stem I in active Mizo transitive clauses. In (1cd) *ngaihthiam* illustrates the use of stem II in active Lai transitive clauses. In Mizo (1a), the stem II form is used because of *kha*, which serves to nominalize it.

- (2) a *Kan batte hi min ngaidam ang che,*  
 1=PL owe=PL this 1 forgive FUT IMP  
 'forgive us what we owe'
- b *kan batte hi min ngaihdam sak ang che.*  
 1=PL owe=PL this 1 forgive=BEN FUT IMP  
 'forgive us what we owe'
- c *Kan thratlonak cu kan ngaihthiam ve ko.*  
 1=PL evil that 1=PL forgive also EMPH  
 'forgive us also our evils'
- d *kan thralonak kha kan ngaihthiam ve ko.*  
 1=PL evil that 1=PL forgive also EMPH  
 'forgive us also our evils' (6:12)

In (2a) *ngaidam* illustrates the use of stem I in imperative Mizo transitive clauses. In (2cd) *ngaihthiam* illustrates the use of stem I in imperative Lai transitive clauses. In their original context, (2a) precedes (1a) as in English translations. By contrast (1bcd) precede (2bcd) reflecting the more natural word order of Mizo and Lai. The use of stem I in Mizo does not distinguish imperative clauses from indicative clauses, but in Lai it does. In (2b) the stem II form is used before the benefactive suffix *-sak*; *ngaihdam sak* is the stem I form of the benefactive verb meaning 'forgive'.

Examples (3) and (4) illustrate further conditions on verb stem alternation.

- (3) a *Mi an bawhchhiatte in ngaihdam chuan,*  
 people 3=PL transgress=PL 2=PL forgive if  
 'if you forgive people their transgressings'
- b *An bawhchhiatnaah mite in ngaihdam chuan,*  
 3=PL transgression=PL people=PL 2=PL forgive if  
 'if you forgive people for their transgressions'
- c *Mi nih nan cungah an tuahmi thratlonak kha nan ngaihthiam hna ahcun,*  
 people BY 2=PL on=P 3=PL do=REL evil that 2=PL forgive PL if  
 'if you forgive the evils that people do to you'
- d *Nan cungah thratlonak a tuahmi kha nan ngaihthiam hna ahcun*  
 2=PL on=P evil 3 do=REL that 2=PL forgive PL if  
 'if you forgive the evils that are done to you' (6:14)

In (3ab), Mizo uses the stem II form in if-clauses; this is the case also in Lai (3cd). Here the use of stem II in Mizo distinguishes if-clauses from main clauses, but in Lai it does not.

- (4) a *in Pa vâna miin a ngaidam ve ang che u.*  
2=PL father heaven='s person=BY 3 forgive also FUT 2 PL  
'your heavenly father will forgive you'
- b *in Pa vâna mi pawhin a ngaidam ve ang che u.*  
2=PL father heaven='s person also=BY 3 forgive also FUT 2 PL  
'your heavenly father also will forgive you'
- c *vancung i a ummi nan Pa zong nih an ngaihthiam ve hna lai.*  
heaven P 3 be=REL 2=PL father also BY 3=2 forgive also PL FUT  
'your father who is in heaven also will forgive you'
- d *vancung i nan Pa zong nih an ngaihthiam ve hna lai;*  
heaven P 2=PL father also BY 3=2 forgive also PL FUT  
'your father in heaven also will forgive you' (6:14)

In Mizo (4ab) we again see the stem I form contrasting with the stem II form in Lai (4cd).

Examples (5) and (6) illustrate still further conditions on verb stem alternation.

- (5) a *mite in ngaihdam si loh chuan,*  
people=PL 2=PL forgive but NEG if  
'but if you do not forgive people'
- b *In ngaihdam loh erawh chuan,*  
2=PL forgive NEG but if  
'but if you do not forgive them'
- c *mi thratlonak kha nan ngaihthiam hna lo ahcun*  
people evil that 2=PL forgive PL NEG if  
'if you do not forgive people evil'
- d *mi thratlonak kha nan ngaihthiam hna lo ahcun*  
people evil that 2=PL forgive PL NEG if  
'if you do not forgive people evil' (6:15)

In all the versions of (5), we again see stem II used in if-clauses, contrasting with main clauses in Mizo but not in Lai.

- (6) a *in Pain in bawhchhiate a ngaidam bik lo vang.*  
2=PL father=BY 2=PL transgress=PL 3 forgive more NEG FUT  
'no more will your father forgive your transgressings'
- b *in Pain in bawhchhiatnaahte a ngaidam bik lo vang che u.*  
2=PL father=BY 2=PL transgression=PL 3 forgive more NEG FUT 2 PL  
'no more will your father forgive you your transgressions'

- c *vancung i a ummi nan Pa zong nih thratlonak nan tuahmi kha an ngaithiam*  
 heaven in 3 be=REL 2=PL father also BY evil 2PL do=REL that 3=2 forgive  
*ve hna lai lo.*  
 also PL FUT NEG  
 'your father who is in heaven also will not forgive you the evil you do'
- d *van i nan Pa zong nih an ngaithiam ve hna lai lo.*  
 heaven in 2=PL father also BY 3=2 forgive also PL FUT NEG  
 'your father in heaven also will not forgive you' (6:15)

In (6cd) we see stem I in Lai negative sentences, which contrasts with stem II in affirmative sentences like (4cd). In Mizo there is no contrast; compare (6ab) with (4ab). In negative if-clauses like (5cd), stem II appears (as required by the if-clause) and the stem I requirement of the negative is over-ridden.

**Agreement.** Both Lai and Mizo exhibit agreement in person and number between the verb and its subject and object. This phenomenon too is characteristic of Kuki-Chin languages, and the details differ slightly from one language to another. Agreement appears as particles which precede or follow the verb, with subject agreement preceding object agreement when both are present. As with verb stem alternation, we cannot give a full discussion here, but (1) to (6) contain enough examples to suggest what is involved. For a full description of agreement in Lai, see Bedell 1998 and for agreement in Mizo, see Bedell 2001c. In (1), *kan* preceding *ngaidam*, *ngaihdam* or *ngaihthiam* indicates agreement with a first person plural subject. In (1a) the subject is the pronoun *keini* 'we'; otherwise the subject is absent and identifiable only by the agreement particle. These verbs are transitive with overt direct objects in each case. In Mizo there is no agreement with a third person object, but in (1cd) Lai *hna* follows *ngaihthiam* and indicates agreement with a third person plural object. (1cd) also contain relative clauses; in (1c) *an* indicates agreement of the verb *tuah* 'do' with its subject *mi* 'people', and in (1d) *a* marks neutralized agreement of the same verb with its relativized subject. The remaining instances of *kan* and *hna* are not verbal agreement particles, but belong to noun phrases. In (2ab) Mizo *min* indicates agreement with a first person object, while in (2cd) Lai *kan* indicates the same agreement. It is clear that *kan* in (2cd) indicates object rather than subject agreement because imperative verbs do not agree with their subjects in the same way as other verbs do.

*In* before *ngaihdam* in Mizo (3ab) and *nan* before *ngaihthiam* in Lai (3cd) indicate agreement with a second person plural subject. Lai *hna* in (3cd) indicates agreement with a third person plural object in the same way as in (1cd), and Lai *an*, *a* and *hna* following *ngaihthiam* in 3(cd) indicate agreement in the same way as in (1cd). Mizo *an* in (3ab) and Lai *nan* before *cungah* in (3cd) are not verbal agreement particles, but belong to noun phrases. In (4ab) Mizo *a* before *ngaidam* indicates agreement with a third person singular subject; *che* following the future particle *ang* indicates agreement with a second person object and the following *u* indicates that that object is plural. In (4cd) Lai *an* before *ngaihthiam* indicates agreement with a third person singular subject and also agreement with a second person object. The *hna* preceding the future particle indicates that the second person object is plural. In (4c) the *a* preceding the verb *um* 'be' marks neutralized agreement with the relativized subject. Mizo *in* in (4ab) and Lai *nan* in (4cd) are not verbal agreement particles, but belong to noun phrases. Mizo *in* and Lai *nan* and *hna* in (5) indicate agreement in exactly the same way as in (3); Mizo *a*, *che* and *u* and Lai *a*, *an* and *hna* in (6) indicate agreement in exactly the same way as in (4). Mizo *in* and Lai *nan* in (6), as in (4) are not verbal agreement particles, but belong to noun phrases.

An interesting point that follows from the examples in (1) through (6) is that the transitive verbs *ngaidam* in Mizo and *ngaithiam* in Lai meaning 'forgive' may take either a human object or an abstract object or both. The abstract object may also appear as a postpositional phrase. The same is true of English *forgive*.

- (7) *I forgive you.*  
*I forgive your transgressions.*  
*I forgive you your transgressions.*  
*I forgive you for your transgressions.*

Thus in (1abc), (2), (3cd) and (6a) there is one abstract object; in (1d), (4), (5ab) and (6) there is one human object; in (3a), (5cd) and (6c) there are two objects, one abstract and one human; and in (3b) and (6b) there is one human object and one postpositional phrase. Since both Lai and Mizo allow agreement of the verb with at most one object, and person agreement only with first or second person objects, the variations in thematic structure directly affect the agreement patterns. The agreement patterns are not directly affected by verb stem alternation.

**Case.** Since both Lai and Mizo have rather complex agreement patterns of verbs with their subjects and objects, it is appropriate to ask about case marking, since there is a functional overlap of the two: both agreement and case marking serve as glue to hold clauses together. Judging from the literature, there is a typical Kuki-Chin case marking system, though the details differ from one language to another. Again we refer to examples (1) to (6) to illustrate the phenomenon without attempting a comprehensive analysis. The primary phenomenon to be accounted for is Mizo *-in*, seen in (1a), (4ab) and (6ab), and Lai *nih*, seen in (1c), (3c), (4cd) and (6cd). These particles attach to the subject noun phrase of a transitive verb, and for this reason they are usually described as 'ergative case markers'. For Mizo, see Chhangte 1993 (pp. 60-61); for Lai, see Peterson 2003 (pp. 411-12). Those examples where they do not appear contain no overt subjects of transitive verbs. Mizo *-in* is treated orthographically as a suffix and Lai *nih* as a separate word, but this is probably not syntactically significant. Mizo *-in* may lose its vowel when suffixed to a two or more syllable word which ends in a vowel. They often follow the head noun of the noun phrase they attach to, but they may be separated from it by modifiers like Mizo *vâna mi* 'heavenly' in (4ab) or adverbial particles like Mizo *pawh* 'also' in (1a) and (4b) or Lai *zong* 'also' in (4cd) and (6cd). We gloss both as BY reflecting our view that these particles are not case markers, but rather agentive postpositions. There are several reasons for this unorthodox position, one of which will come up in the discussion below.

Subjects of intransitive verbs and objects of transitive verbs are not case marked in either language. Unmarked human objects in our Mizo examples are *mi* in (3a) and *mite* in (3b) and (5a); unmarked abstract objects are *kan englo bâte* in (1a), *kan laka bâte* in (1b), *an bawhchhiate* in (3a), *an bawhchhianaahte* in (3b), *in bawhchhiate* in (6a), *in bawhchhianaahte* in (6b). Unmarked human objects in our Lai examples are *kan cungah thratlonak a tuahtu hna* in (1d) and *mi* in (5cd); unmarked abstract objects are *thratlonak* in (3d) and (6c), *kan cungah thratlonak* in (1cd), and *mi nih kan cungah thratlonak an tuahtu* in (1c). The subjects of intransitive verbs and objects of transitive verbs are often (more often in Lai than in Mizo) followed by a deictic particle with a context oriented function. Mizo examples are *hi* 'this' in *kan batte hi* (2ab), and Lai examples are *cu* 'that' in *kan thratlonak cu* (2c), and *kha* 'that' in *thratlonak kha* (5cd), *kan thratlonak kha* (2d), *mi nih nan cungah an tuahtu thratlonak kha* (3c), *thratlonak nan tuahtu kha* in (6c), and *nan cungah thratlonak a tuahtu kha* in (3d). Though it is often possible to identify noun phrases as intransitive subjects or transitive objects by the presence of *hi*, *cu* or *kha*, clearly they are not case markers. They may occur with transitive subjects (followed by *-in* or *nih*) and they also appear at the ends of clauses, as with Mizo *kha* in (1a). For a discussion of these deictics in Lai, see Bedell 2001b.

Also customarily identified as case markers are Mizo *-ah* (locative), *în* (instrumental) and *-a* (genitive) and Lai *ah* (locative), *in* (instrumental or ablative) and *he* (comitative). See the references in fn. 6. (1) to (6) do not contain many examples, but we see Mizo *-ah* in *an bawhchhiatnaah* in (3b) and *in bawhchhiatnaah* in (6b) and *-a* in *kan laka* 'to us' in (1b) and *vâna mi* 'heavenly' in (4ab). It may be that *-a* is a variant of *-ah*. We see Lai *ah* in *kan cungah* 'to us' in (1cd) and in *nan cungah* 'to you' in (3cd); *i* in *vancung i a ummi nan Pa*, *vancung i nan Pa* and *van i nan Pa* 'your father (who is) in heaven' in 4(cd) and (6cd) is a variant of *ah*. Mizo *laka* in (1b) and Lai *cungah* in (1cd) and (3cd) also illustrate a characteristic Kuki-Chin structure: a compound postposition made up of a 'relational noun' Mizo *lak* or Lai *cung* plus *-ah*. For a discussion of compound postpositions in Lai, see Bedell 2000. The postpositional part is often treated as a suffix, and glossed here as P. Noun phrases accompanied by any of these putative case markers are never arguments for purposes of agreement, and we see no good reason to consider them case markers rather than simply postpositions. It may be best to regard Lai and Mizo as not exhibiting case (as opposed to postpositions).

**Passive constructions.** Now let us look carefully at example (8).

- (8) a *i sualte ngaihdam a ni tawh*,  
 2 sin=PL forgive 3 be PERF  
 'your sins have been forgiven'
- b *i sualte ngaihdam a ni ta e*,  
 2 sin=PL forgive 3 be PERF for  
 'for your sins have been forgiven'
- c *na sualnak cu ngaihthiam na si cang*  
 2 sin that forgive 2 be PERF  
 'you have been forgiven your sins'
- d *na sualnak cu ngaihthiam asi cang*  
 2 sin that forgive 3=be PERF  
 'your sins have been forgiven' (9: 2)

(8) features the same verbs, Mizo *ngaidam* and Lai *ngaihthiam* 'forgive', as in (1) to (6). In all four variants, these verbs appear in their stem II forms, Mizo *ngaihdam* and Lai *ngaihthiam*. In Mizo, stem II distinguishes (8ab) from examples like (1b), (2a), (4ab) and (6ab). But in Lai, it does not distinguish (8cd) from the corresponding Lai examples. In (8), there is no subject agreement particle preceding the main verb; one appears after the main verb accompanying an auxiliary: *ni* in Mizo and *si* in Lai. These auxiliaries serve as copula in both languages. In Mizo (8ab) the subject of the sentence is apparently *i sualte* 'your sins', though this is not clearly indicated. The absence of *-in* is not conclusive, since these could be intransitive clauses, and the subject agreement particle *a* is also not conclusive, since the absent agent could be third person singular. Lai (8d) has the same structure as Mizo (8ab), but (8c) has a significant difference. There, as clearly shown by the agreement particle *na* preceding the auxiliary *si*, the subject is 'you'. And 'you' is the human object of *ngaihthiam* along side the abstract object *na sualnak* 'your sins'. We submit that (8) are passive constructions which show that this syntactic phenomenon exists in both Mizo and Lai. For a discussion of passives in Lai, see Bedell 2001a.

Example (9) is a parallel set with a different verb, *pe* 'give', which takes both a human object and an abstract object. The stem II forms corresponding to stem I *pe* are *pêk* in Mizo and *pek* in Lai.

- (9) a *Lei leh vâna thuneihna zawng zawng ka hnênah pêk a ni tawh.*  
 earth and heaven='s power all 1 to=P give 3 be PERF  
 'all power of heaven and earth has been given to me'
- b *Lei leh vâna thuneihna zawng zawng pêk ka ni ta.*  
 earth and heaven='s power all give 1 be PERF  
 'I have been given all power of heaven and earth'
- c *Vancung le vawlei cung i a ummi nawlgeihnak vialte cu pek ka si cang.*  
 heaven and earth on P 3 be=REL power all that give 1 be PERF  
 'I have been given all power that is in heaven and earth'
- d *Lei le van i nawlgeihnak vialte cu pek ka si cang.*  
 earth and heaven in power all that give 1 be PERF  
 'I have been given all power in heaven and earth' (28:18)

In Mizo (9a), the subject apparently is *lei leh vâna thuneihna zawng zawng* 'all power of heaven and earth', though the agreement particle *a* does not unambiguously determine this just as in (8ab). In (9b) we see the same phenomenon as in Lai (8c). The agreement particle *ka* shows clearly that the subject of (9b) is 'I', the human object of *pêk*, 'give', which corresponds to the postpositional phrase *ka hnênah* 'to me' in (9a). In both Lai versions (9cd) the subject is 'I' as shown by the agreement particle *ka*.

While in (8) and (9) all the versions are passive, this is not the case in (10).

- (10) a *I mi baptis ka trûl zâwk si a,*  
 2 1 baptize 1 need rather still and  
 'I need you to baptize me'
- b *Mi baptis tûr i ni zâwk si a,*  
 1 baptize should 2 be rather still and  
 'you should baptize me'
- c *Keimah pei nangmah nih tipil pek awk ka si cu,*  
 I EMPH you BY baptism give should 1 be that  
 'I should be baptized by you'
- d *Keimah pei nangmah nih baptisma na ka pek awk a si cu, (3:14)*  
 I EMPH you BY baptism 2 1 give should 3 be that  
 'it should be that you baptize me'

Lai (10c) is clearly passive: it has a stem II verb form (*pek*, though this not distinctive in Lai), it has the passive auxiliary (*si*), and its subject 'I' as shown by the agreement particle *ka* is the human object of *pek*. It differs from (8c) and (9cd) in the presence of the nominal auxiliary *awk* and in the presence of overt pronouns due to the contrast. Lai (10d) is equally clearly not passive: it has a stem II verb form (*pek*) but that verb form is clearly active and transitive as shown by the two agreement particles which precede it (*na* and *ka*). It has an auxiliary (*si*) but that is not a passive auxiliary but rather allows *awk* 'should' to agree with its subject, the clause *keimah pei nangmah nih baptisma na ka pek* 'you baptize me'. For a discussion of the syntax of Lai *awk*, see Bedell 2007. The particle *pei* in (10cd) requires the presence of a deictic (here *cu* 'that') at the end of its clause.



Mizo (10a) is also not passive. The verb *baptis* 'baptize' has no alternation, so we don't know whether it is stem I or II, but like *pek* in (10d) it has full transitive agreement (*i* and *mi*). It does not contain the Mizo passive auxiliary (*ni*), and seems complex like Lai (10d). Mizo (10b) is a more difficult case, because it does contain an auxiliary (*ni*). However, *baptis* shows object agreement (*mi*) and subject agreement (*i*) of the auxiliary is with the subject of *baptis* rather than the object. It really cannot be passive. The presence of a first person object agreement particle in Mizo normally suppresses subject agreement with the same verb. See Bedell 2001c for discussion. Thus (10a) is unusual and possibly archaic.

One further point is to be made from (10c). Though passive, it contains the particle *nih* often described as an 'ergative case marker', which by definition should mark the subject argument of a transitive verb. But in (10c) *nangmah* 'you' is not the subject, but rather *keimah* 'I'. This is shown clearly by the agreement on the auxiliary: *ka si* and not *na si*. This is in contrast with (10d), where the same phrase *nangmah nih* is the syntactic subject of the verb *pek* 'give' as is clear from *na ka pek* 'you give to me'. Explicit agents like *nangmah nih* in (10c) are not common in Lai; (10c) is a unique example in our texts. There are no examples in Mizo, and the discussion by Rodingliana 2004 (pp. 224-26) suggests that Mizo *-in* is in fact not used in this way.

- (11) *Lalan in a sâ.*  
'Lala constructed a building.'
- (12) *In chu Lala sak a ni.*  
'A building was constructed by Lala.'

In (12) the verb *sak* 'build' is a stem II form; neither noun phrase *in chu* 'a building' (the subject) or *Lala* (the agent) is marked with *-in*.

**Is there a Lai passive?** The earliest grammar of Lai, Newland 1897, does not contain any section on passive. There is a list of examples of *si*, which he calls an 'affix' which is also 'the verb to be or become'. One of his examples (p. 39) may be a passive:

- (13) *Lark" sung, a she"?*  
'Is this to be taken?'

In modern orthography, this would be *lak cang a si?* and if it is indeed passive, it should mean 'has it been taken?' A much more sophisticated grammar, Hay-Neave 1953, says:

- (14) There is no Passive Voice. When a Passive construction occurs in English this is altered in Lai Chin to the Active Voice in such a way as to give the same meaning. Thus "I am going tomorrow" would be translated in Lai Chin by "I will go tomorrow", and "He is loved by the girl" becomes "The girl loves him". (Verbs 1, p. 13)

Like Newland 1897, Hay-Neave 1953 contains a few possible passives.

- (15) *Mahhi zungzaal tuah awk a si.*  
'This will always be done.' ('Conversation with a Policeman' 35, p. 159)
- (16) *Zu din awk a si cang.*  
'The zu is now ready for drinking.' ('Manufacture of Zu Beer' 33, p. 175)

(15) is a unique example glossed as passive by Hay-Neave; (16), if it is indeed a passive, could be glossed more literally: 'the zu should now be drunk.' Both examples have third person subjects and objects and therefore are not as clear as might be desired. Note also that, like (10cd), both contain *awk*. F. K. Lehman (personal communication), reports that during his fieldwork in Chin State in the 1960s he attempted to elicit passive sentences without success. The late Rev. David Van Bik, who was responsible for the 'c' examples in this discussion, stoutly maintained that Lai has no passive. A recent grammatical sketch of Lai, Peterson 2003, has no discussion of passives, though Bedell 2001a is listed in the references.

By contrast, an early grammar of Mizo, Lorrain and Savidge 1898, of a similar size and scope to Newland 1897, has a section on 'Passive Voice' (p. 26). Two of their examples comparing active and passive are (17) and (18):

- (17)        *Ka vêl a che.*  
              'I beat you'
- (18)        *I velh ka ni.*  
              'I am beaten by you,'

Example (18) is recognizably passive: it has the stem II form *velh* of the verb *vêl* 'beat', the passive auxiliary *ni*, and the subject of the sentence as indicated by the agreement marker *ka* is 'I'. The only difference from our examples (8ab) and (9ab) is that it retains agreement as indicated by the marker *i* with the agent 'you'. This suggests some variation in Mizo grammar either historical or geographical. Lorrain's dictionary (1940) contains no grammar, but 'in passive voice' is listed under the conditions for the use of stem II (p. xi). A recent grammar, Chhangte 1993, omits consideration of passives, but as mentioned above Rodingliana 2004 contains a discussion of Mizo passives in comparison with English. Examples (8), (9) and (10) show clearly that Lai has passive sentences, directly comparable with those traditionally recognized for Mizo. They don't show what role the passive construction plays in these languages (in particular how it is used in ordinary conversation), which will require further investigation. Judging by our particular texts, passives are rather more frequent in Lai than in Mizo. To explain the failure of grammars to recognize the existence of Lai passives, it may be sufficient to call attention once more to verb stem alternation. Though both Lai and Mizo use stem II in passives, only in Mizo is the verb form distinct from that used in corresponding actives. According to Keenan 1985 (p. 250):

... what is distinctive about the form of passive sentences is their verb phrase (VP), and passive VPs are naturally expressed as syntactic and morphological modifications of transitive verbs (TVs).

It is precisely here that Lai differs from Mizo, and lacks the most salient feature of passives cross-linguistically. In this connection it is worth emphasizing that what we have called the 'passive auxiliary' is not unique to passive constructions; see for example (10b) above.

**More passives.** This discussion of passives in Lai and Mizo will close with a selection of further examples illustrating variation in passive constructions. In (19) three of the four versions are passive.

- (19) a        *thing tin rah thraa rah lo apiang an kit a, meiah an paih*  
              tree every fruit good bear NEG whatever 3=PL cut-down and fire=in 3=PL throw  
              *thrîn.*  
              constantly

'they cut down every tree which does not bear good fruit and throw it into the fire'

- b *thing eng pawh rah thraa rah lo chu kiha meia tuah mai tûr a ni.*  
tree whatever fruit good bear NEG that cut-down=and fire=on put directly should 3 be  
'any tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and put right on the fire'
- c *thei thra a tlai lomi paoh cu hau an si lai i mei chungah paih*  
fruit good 3 bear NEG=REL all that cut-down 3=PL be FUT and fire in=P throw  
*an si lai.*  
3=PL be FUT  
'every one which does not bear good fruit will be cut down and will be thrown into  
the fire'
- d *Thei thra a tlai lomi paoh cu hau i mei ah paih an si lai.*  
fruit good 3 bear NEG=REL all that cut-down and fire in throw 3=PL be FUT  
'every one which does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire'  
(3:10)

In (19b) *kih* is the stem II form corresponding to stem I *kit* in (19a). The verbs *paih* 'throw' in (19a) and *tuah* 'put (wood on a fire)' in (19b) do not show alternation. (19b) is a passive, but (19a) is not, (19cd) differ in that the former contains two full conjoined passive verb phrases, while the latter has conjunction of the main verb only with a single passive auxiliary. This is also true of (19ab) though in (19a) the verb phrases are not passive.

Examples (20) are a similar set.

- (20) a *chi hi a dâk tawh chuan enginnge an tihal leh ang?*  
salt this 3 be-flavorless PERF if how=Q 3=PL CAUS=be-salty again FUT  
'if salt has lost its flavor, how will they make it salty again?'
- b *chi hi da ta ang se, engtia leh tûr nge ni ang?*  
salt this be-flavorless PERF FUT IMP how restore should Q be FUT  
'suppose salt should become flavorless, how should it be restored?'
- c *cite kha a sinak cu a loh ahcun, zeitindah alter khawh a si thran*  
salt that 3 be=ness that 3 disappear if how=Q be-salty=CAUS can 3 be again  
*ti lai?*  
still FUT  
'if salt loses its essence, how can it be made salty again?'
- d *cite nih a alnak a zemh ahcun zeitindah alter thran khawh a si ti lai?*  
salt BY 3 salty=ness 3 lose if how=Q be-salty=CAUS again can 3 be still FUT  
'if salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? (5:13)

In (20b), *leh* is the stem II form corresponding to stem I *lêt* 'restore'. The passive auxiliary *ni* does not show subject agreement because the subject is being questioned by the complex interrogative *engtia leh tûr nge*. For some discussion of complex interrogatives, see Bedell 2005. In (20a), *tihal* is the stem II form corresponding to *ti-al* 'make salty'. The stem II form is used because of the (non-subject) interrogative. Notice also that *dâk* in (20a) is the stem II form in an if-clause corresponding to *da* in (20b) in an imperative. (20cd) are both passive, and illustrate the option to place

some verbal particles (here *thran* 'again') either with the main verb as in (20d) or with the auxiliary as in (20c).

Example (21) is another set.

- (21) a *tihhluma a awm tûrzaia te, ni thum nia kaihtawha a awm tûrzaia*  
 kill=P 3 be should=way and day three day=on raise=P 3 be should=way  
 'that he would be put to death, and on the third day he would be raised up'
- b *tihhluma a awm tûr leh ni thum ni-a kaihtawha a awm tûr*  
 kill=P 3 be should and day three day=on raise=P 3 be should  
 'that he would be put to death, and on the third day he would be raised up'
- c *An ka thah lai i nithum ni ah nunter ka si thran lai,*  
 3=PL 1 kill FUT and day=three day in live=CAUS 1 be again FUT  
 'they will kill me and in three days I will be made to live again'
- d *an thah i ni thumnak ah thawhter a si lainak kha*  
 3=PL kill and day three=ORD on rise=CAUS 3 be FUT=NOM that  
 'that they would kill him and on the third day he would be raised' (16:21)

In (21ab), *tihhlum* is a stem II form corresponding to stem I *tihlum*, and *kaihtawh* is a stem II form corresponding to stem I *kaiho*. But these are not Mizo passives; stem II forms are used because of nominalization apparently due to indirect discourse. Both stem II forms are followed by a suffixed postposition *-a*. *Awm* 'be' is not the passive auxiliary, but a locative/existential verb. Lai (21d) is also a nominalized indirect discourse construction, but it contains a passive on the causative verb *thawhter*. (21c) has put the sentence into direct discourse and is also passive.

Example (22) is another set.

- (22) a *Israel hnam zînga berâm bo hnênah lo chuan tirh ka ni lo ve,*  
 Israel tribe among=P sheep lost to=P NEG if send 1 be NEG EMPH  
 'I have been sent only to the lost sheep among the people of Israel'
- b *Berâm bo, Israel hnam hnênah lo chuan tirh ka ni lo ve,*  
 sheep lost Israel tribe to=P NEG if send 1 be NEG EMPH  
 'I have been sent only to the lost sheep, the people of Israel.'
- c *Israelmi lak i a tlaumi tuu hna sin lawngah pei thlah ka si ko cu,*  
 Israel=people among P 3 lose=REL sheep PL to only=P EMPH send 1 be EMPH that  
 'I have been sent only to the sheep who are lost among the Israelites'
- d *Kei cu Israel chung i tuu thlau hna sin lawngah thlah ka si,*  
 I that Israel in P sheep lost PL to only=P send 1 be  
 'I have been sent only to the lost sheep in Israel' (15:24)

In (22) all the versions are passive; in (22ab) *tirh* is a stem II form corresponding to *tîr*, and these sentences illustrate a double negative idiom. Lai (22c) should be compared with (10cd) and fn.13 above.

Examples (23) and (24) together are a final set.

- (23) a *ka ruai chu ka peih ta;*  
1 feast that 1 prepare PERF  
'I have prepared my feast'
- b *ruai chu ka peih ta a,*  
feast that 1 prepare PERF and  
'I have prepared the feast, and ...'
- c *Rawl danghnak cu timh a si dih cang.*  
food service that prepare 3 be all PERF  
'the feast has all been prepared'
- d *Zanriah cu timh a si cang,*  
dinner that prepare 3 be PERF  
'dinner has been prepared' (22:4)
- (24) a *Lawi chaw peih a ni ta,*  
wedding food prepare 2 be PERF  
'the wedding meal has been prepared'
- b *Ruai chu peih a ni ta,*  
feast that prepare 3 be PERF  
'the feast has been prepared'
- c *Nupi thrit rawldanghnak ka tuahmi cu timh dih a si cang;*  
bride bind food=service 1 do=REL that prepare all 3 be PERF  
'the wedding feast I arranged has all been prepared'
- d *Thritumhnak cu timh a si cang,*  
wedding-feast that prepare 3 be PERF  
'the wedding feast has been prepared' (22: 8)

(23ab) are not passive in contrast to passive (24ab). The Mizo verb *peih* 'prepare' does not exhibit alternation. All the Lai versions (23cd) and (24cd) are passive. (23c) and (24c) differ in the position of the quantificational particle *dih* 'all' resembling (20cd).

### Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
BEN	benefactive suffix
BY	agentive postposition (or ergative case marker)
CAUS	causative prefix or suffix
EMPH	emphatic particle
FUT	future particle
IMP	imperative particle
NEG	negative particle
NOM	nominalizing suffix
ORD	ordinal suffix

P	postposition
PL	plural suffix or particle
Q	interrogative particle
REL	relative suffix
PERF	perfect particle

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