# Chapter 7

# On Two Venitive Verbs in Lan Hmyo

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## [ABSTRACT]

This paper is a brief sketch of deictic motion verbs (hereinafter DMVs) in Lan Hmyo (ISO 639-3: hereinafter LH), particularly venitive verbs. LH is a Hmongic language (West Hmongic, Hmongic, Hmong-Mien), spoken in the central part of Guizhou, China. The author examines the behavior of the DMVs of LH from a crosslinguistic perspective, and analyze the differences observed between two venitive verbs in LH, which requires us to introduce the notion of [home]. The paper further explores the meaning of the two venitive verbs and indicates that some motions can be described out of consideration of whether the motion is [+home] or [-home], and in that case, psychological distance plays a part.

## 1. Introduction

This paper is a brief sketch of deictic motion verbs (hereinafter DMVs) in Lan Hmyo (ISO 639-3: hereinafter LH), particularly venitive verbs.<sup>1</sup> LH is a Hmongic language (West Hmongic, Hmongic, Hmong-Mien), spoken in the central part of Guizhou, China. The target of this paper is a lect spoken in Gaozhai Township, Kaiyang County, Guizhou.<sup>2</sup> After a brief introduction of some key concepts of this study, we first examine the behavior of the DMVs of LH from a crosslinguistic perspective (Section 2). Next, we analyze the differences observed between two venitive verbs in LH, which requires us to introduce the notion of [home] (Section 3). Finally, we explore the meaning of the two venitive verbs in greater detail (Section 4). Section 5 summarizes the paper.

Fillmore (1975, 1997) defines DMVs as verbs denoting a motion that is anchored by the location of speech participants, namely, the speaker or the addressee in a conversation. Fillmore (1975, 1997) propounds the selection criteria of "come" (and "bring") and "go" (and "take") in English as follows:

(a) "(C)ome" and "bring" indicate motion toward the location of either the speaker or the addressee at either coding time or reference time, or toward the location of the home base of either the speaker or the hearer at reference time (1997: 90–91).

(b) "(G)o" and "take" indicate motion toward a location which is distinct from the speaker's location at coding time (1997: 83).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This paper constitutes part of a descriptive study of Lan Hmyo by the author. On the basic concept of the project, see Taguchi (2016).

 $<sup>^2</sup>$  I would like to give special thanks to Mr. Song Yun, a native speaker of Lan Hmyo, who has been working with me as a linguistic consultant.

What Fillmore points to as a key aspect of deictic motions are the locations of the speech act participants (hereinafter SAPs), namely the speaker and the addressee. These locations define the position of the deictic center in describing motions. We call a motion toward the deictic center of motion events a venitive motion, and a verb denoting a venitive motion a venitive verb. The prototypical venitive motion is a motion toward the speaker at speech time (Fillmore's coding time). When a motion is toward a location distinct from the speaker's location at speech time (see (b) above), we call the type of motion a non-venitive motion, and a verb denoting a non-venitive verb.<sup>3</sup> Fillmore adds another possible location of the deictic center: the homebase. Fillmore did not define the notion, but the examples that he uses suggest that homebase typically denotes the home of the person designated by the subject of the motion verb (1997: 91).

In the next section, we examine DMVs in LH based on Fillmore's framework. Following Sawada (2013), we divide the cases of venitive motions into six subcases based on the location of the goal of motion (see Table 1). Note that when the goal is homebase of one of the SAPs (Case 3 and 6), it is neither one of the SAPs' locations at speech time nor one of the SAPs' locations at reference time.<sup>4</sup> This is stipulated in order to prevent subcases from overlapping each other.

#### Table 1 Subcases of venitive motions

- (1) Case 1: Goal is the speaker's location at speech time
- (2) Case 2: Goal is the speaker's location at reference time
- (3) Case 3: Goal is the speaker's homebase
- (4) Case 4: Goal is the addressee's location at speech time
- (5) Case 5: Goal is the addressee's location at reference time
- (6) Case 6: Goal is the addressee's homebase

In LH, there are two venitive verbs  $\delta aA$  and luB, and a non-venitive verb muB. The following sentences from texts exemplify these three verbs.<sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Some linguists use "andative" for "non-venitive."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> "Reference time" denotes "the point or period of time that is being referred to or focused on in the sentence." (Fillmore 1997: 17)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Examples used in this paper are of two kinds: Sentences from narrative texts collected in Gaozhai Township by the author, and sentences translated from Chinese by his consultant in elicitation sessions. To elicit DMVs, the author used a questionnaire designed by the Research Group for Mainland Southeast Asian Languages (2003) with some modifications. In elicitation, the author illustrated the situation in Chinese and asked his consultant to translate sentences in the questionnaire into LH. In examples below, information is ordered as follows: a line of text in LH (DMVs in question are in bold), a line of gloss, a line of English translation (when the sentence is taken from a text, the title of the text is given in parentheses), and a line of Chinese text when the example was collected in elicitation (with information on the context in which the sentence was uttered in square brackets). All the DMVs judged as acceptable are divided by slashes (/). In this study, we only use main clauses in direct-style speech as examples, excluding sentences in narrative-style speech or subordinate clauses both in direct-style speech and in narrative-style speech.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Capital letters A, B, and C (and also B' and C') at the end of each word in LH designate tones. B' and C' are tones of recent loanwords.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Abbreviations in examples:

<sup>1:</sup> First person 2: Second person 3: Third person DU: Dual FLL: Filler INTJ: Interjection NEG: Negative Particle PL: Plural PRT: Particle

(1) aiAjaA, miAnaB xaiAszA- niB- 2nonB kanB, kanB xonA- ðaA thonB INTJ 2PL after.all need use 1SG 1SG then come see

miAnaB -siA.

2PL PRT

"Oh, you people must eat me, as I came to see you for that purpose." (A Man Destined to be Eaten by Tigers)

- (2) *muAðanB* **luB** -waC. 2DU come PRT "You two have come home." (*Mountain Witch 2*)
- (3) qoC kanB muB piB nonA naC ðaA -tsoB, jeB wonA... wonA tchiAmaC let 1SG go home eat rice come first FLL2SG 2SG slowly

*nonA kanB.* eat 1SG "Let me go home and eat first, then when I come back, you can eat me as you like." (*A Buffalo and a Tiger*)

The  $\delta aA$  and luB occur in narrative texts in a ratio of around 1:4.  $\delta aA$  in general appears as a verb denoting a concrete motion in the real or possible world. Contrariwise, luB often functions as a verb phrase linker (see Example (4)), or as a grammaticalized verb denoting an aspectual phase of the preceding verb (Example (5)). In this study, we exclude these kinds of tokens of luB from examination.

(4) χοΝΑ- ?miA ntsiB **luB** ?jenA, χοΝΑ- ?miA qweC szB- ?ųøNC, χοΝΑthen take salt(n) come salt(v) then take hang PURP good then

*PmiA aBooB luB tuB, qhenC szB- ndzeC.* take firewood come burn dry PURP dry "Then take some salt and salt (the meat), then hang it appropriately, then burn firewood to dry it." (*How to Make Cured Meat*)<sup>8</sup>

(5) *aAneA aBsuA riA luB -waC*. grandmother thunder sound come PRT "Grandma, it's begun to thunder." (*Mountain Witch 1*)

#### 2. Basic behavior of venitive verbs in Lan Hmyo

It is well-known that languages indicate variations in the applicability of their venitive verb in the six cases defined above. For example, English *come* is applicable in all the cases, whereas Japanese *kuru* is excluded when the goal is the addressee's

PURP: Purposive SG: Singular

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> This example is in narrative-style speech, since most tokens of luB in this function appear in narrative style.

location or the addressee's homebase and the moving entity is the speaker, and Mandarin Chinese *lái* is only applicable when the goal is the speaker's location (Nakazawa 2002, 2008, Sawada 2013).

In this section, we examine the behavior of the two venitive verbs of LH by observing whether each is applicable in each of the six cases. The examples attested for each case are as follows:

## Case 1: Goal is the speaker's location at speech time

- (6) taAnaBnaA kanB tsoC ðaA/luB yenAntsuB.
  yesterday 1SG then come/come Guiyang
  [The speaker is now in Guiyang] "I came to Guiyang [the capital city of Guizhou] yesterday."
  [说话人现在在贵阳] 我是昨天到贵阳来的。
- (7) miAnaB zaNC ðaA maNA.
  2PL ascend come PRT
  "Then you come up here." (*Pehoxien and Tigers*)

## Case 2: Goal is the speaker's location at reference time

- (8) *phiAnəAueC aAchiA muB/ðaA/luB thonB kanB*. tomorrow A-chi go/come/come see 1SG [The SAPs are not in Guiyang, but the speaker will be there tomorrow.] "A-chi will come to Guiyang to see me tomorrow."
  [说话的两个人不在贵阳,说话人明天在贵阳] 明天阿七去找我。
- (9) kanB ntseAleC muB, колАпаВ ðaA -seB -liA.
  1SG enter go 2SG come PRT PRT
  "Now I'll break in (the castle), so you come after me." (War of Guizhou)

## Case 3: Goal is the speaker's homebase

(10) taAn, Bn, aA chiA **muB/ðaA/luB** kəB-piB -loA.

yesterday A-chi go/come/come 1-house PRT [The SAPs are not at the speaker's home, and the speaker was not there yesterday.] "A-chi came to my house yesterday."

[说话的两个人不在说话人家,说话人当时不在他自己家] 昨天小李去我家了。

## Case 4: Goal is the addressee's location at speech time

- (11) kanB maB'sanC' tsoC muB/ðaA/luB.
  - 1SG soon then go/come/come

[The speaker is not at the addressee's home and agree to come to the addressee' location through phone.] "I am coming to you."

[说话人不在听话人家, 通过电话说话人答应马上就到听话人家] 我马上 就来。<sup>9</sup>

(12) волА тиА- NGaB luB -jaA kanBnaB zanC ðaA -waC -liA.
2SG NEG descend come NEG 1PL ascend come PRT PRT "If you do not come down, we will come up to you." (Pehoxien and Tigers)

#### Case 5: Goal is the addressee's location at reference time

(13) phiAnəAyeC kaxB muB/ðaA/luB thoxB wonA.
tomorrow 1SG go/come/come see 2SG
[The SAPs are not in Guiyang, but the addressee will be in Guiyang tomorrow.]
"I will come to see you tomorrow."
[说话的两个人不在贵阳,听话人明天在贵阳] 明天我去找你。

(14) kavB 2miA aAzuCtsheA pavA aAqaBtsaB, aAqaBtsaB npaC ðaA havC, 1SG take robe give magpie magpie wear come call miAnaB qeC niB.
2PL curse 3
"I gave a robe to the magpie, and he wore the robe and came to you to call you back, but you cursed at him." (Mountain Witch 2)

#### Case 6: Goal is the addressee's homebase

(15) taAŋəBŋaA kaNB muB/ðaA/luB -qwaC wonA piB -teC.
yesterday 1SG go/come/come PRT 2SG house PRT
[The SAPs are not at the addressee's house, and the addressee was not at his/her home yesterday.] "I came to your home yesterday."
[说话的两个人不在听话人家,听话人当时不在他自己家] 昨天我去过你家了。

Based on these examples, we observe that venitive verbs ( $\delta aA$  or luB) in LH are applicable in all the cases in Table 1: A deictic center can be positioned at any of the six locations. This result is compared with English *come*, Japanese *kuru*, and Mandarin Chinese *lái* (Nakazawa 2002, 2008, Sawada 2013) in Table 2.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Mandarin Chinese cannot use the venitive verb *lái* when the goal is the addressee' location, but contrary to expectations, the expression 我马上就来 can be used in Example (11), where the goal is the addressee's location at the speech time. Nakazawa (2008: 127) treats this expression as idiomatic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> English does not allow *go* to appear in such examples as (11) and (13), but we will not enter into detail here.

	LH ðaA/luB	English <i>come</i>	Japanese kuru	M. Chinese <i>lái</i>
Case 1	+	+	+	+
Case 2	+	+	+	+
Case 3	+	+	+	+
Case 4	+	+	+/	_
Case 5	+	+	+/	_
Case 6	+	+	+/	-

Table 2

Furthermore, the applicability of venitive verbs indicated in Table 2 is not restricted by the selection of the moving entity. As noted above, *kuru* in Japanese is excluded when the goal is the addressee's location or the addressee's homebase and the moving entity is the speaker (indicated by +/- in Table 2). As we see in the examples above, no such restriction is observed in LH (see Examples (11)–(13) and (15)).

#### 3. Differences between the two venitive verbs in LH

So far, we have treated the two venitive verbs  $\delta aA$  and luB indifferently. In this section, we explore how these two verbs differ. I hypothesize that the two verbs differ in terms of a feature [home],  $\delta aA$  being specified as [-home], and luB being specified as [+home]. [Home] is a feature of a motion that distinguishes whether the goal of motion is the place to which the moving entity belongs: If it is, then the motion is [+home]; if it is not, then the motion is [-home] (Sawada 2003).<sup>11</sup> The following three sentences are relevant examples.

- (16) taAŋəBŋaA kaNB luB/\*ðaA piB 2moNB tsaB. yesterday 1SG come/come house late very "I came home very late yesterday." 我昨天很晚才回家。
- (17) taAŋəBŋaA воNA **luB/\*ðaA** piB 2moNB tsaB. yesterday 2SG come/come house late very "You came home very late yesterday."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> [Home] is distinct from Fillmore's homebase, which is the home of the moving entity, whereas the location of [home] varies depending on the context (see Section 4). Sawada (2003) used the term [Home position] to explain the behaviors of DMVs in Lhaovo, a Tibeto-Burman language. He defines the term as "a moving entity's home" that is "temporary or permanent" (2003: 346). This author basically follows Sawada's definition, but uses the shorter term [Home]. A different term [Base] has been proposed to explain the analogous behaviors of DMVs in some Oto-Manguean languages, such as Mixtec (Kuiper and Merrifield 1975) and Zapotec (Speck and Pickett 1976). They define the term as "the place where the person in motion normally or expectedly returns." (Speck and Pickett 1976: 61).

你昨天很晚才回家。

(18) taAŋəBŋaA aAchiA luB/\*ðaA piB 2monB tsaB. yesterday A-chi come/come house late very "A-chi came home very late yesterday." 阿七昨天很晚才回家。

In these sentences where the moving entity moves to its home,  $\delta aA$  is strictly excluded and only *luB* is applicable. Thus, the author concludes that  $\delta aA$  has the feature [-home]. When the goal of motion is [-home], not only  $\delta aA$  but also *luB* is applicable (see Examples (6), (8), (10), (11), (13), and (15)). We will return to this issue in the next section.

Note that it is not the case that  $\delta aA$  means "to come" and *luB* means "to come back": Path is not the relevant feature here. The following two sentences make this point clear. Both sentences involve returning motions. In Example (19), the moving entity returns from his home to somewhere other than his/her home, and in Example (20), the moving entity returns from somewhere other than his/her home to his/her home. If Path is the relevant feature, we expect the same verbs in (19) and (20), since the motions described in those examples are a returning motion. As we see below, however,  $\delta aA$  is not applicable in (20). These examples indicate that the difference in Path is not the feature that critically distinguishes the two.<sup>12</sup>

(19) kaNB tiB jiAjiC maB'saNC' tsoC toNB ðaA/luB.
1SG take thing soon then return come/come
[The SAPs are talking in the street. The speaker will go home and fetch a thing to the place where they are now.] "I will go home to take a thing and come back soon."

[说话人和听话人在外面(路边)说话,说话人要回家去取东西,再回到现在他所在地]我去拿东西马上就回来。

(20) kanB maB'sanC' tsoC tonB luB/\*ðaA.

1SG soon then return come/come

[The SAPs are talking in the speaker's home. The speaker will go out for a while and come back soon.] "I'll come back soon."

[说话人和听话人在说话人的家里说话,说话人要出去一会儿准备再回家。] 我马上就回来。

## 4. Variability and relevance of [home]

We have observed that in cases of [-home] venitive motions, not only  $\partial aA$  but also *luB* is applicable. The author proposes an assumption to explain this fact: The location of [home] can vary. It is prototypically the mover's home, but it can be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Note that in Examples (19) and (20), a Path verb *toNB* 'return' is used. According to the consultant of this paper, this verb may be omitted.

established somewhere else temporarily.<sup>13</sup> In Example (6), repeated as (21) below, coming to Guiyang is typically interpreted as a journey from one's home, which is a salient case of a [-home] motion. Thus,  $\delta aA$  is a natural choice. However, if the moving entity stays for a while in Guiyang, then Guiyang can be interpreted as his/her "home." According to the consultant of this paper, it is only under this special setting that a motion from another location to Guiyang can be denoted by *luB*. This explains the applicability of *luB* in Example (21).

(21) taAŋəBŋaA kaNB tsoC ðaA/luB ueNAntsuB. (= 6) yesterday 1SG then come/come Guiyang [The speaker is now in Guiyang] "I came to Guiyang [the capital city of Guizhou] yesterday."
[说活人现在在贵阳] 我是昨天到贵阳来的。

Cases such as Example (8), (10), (11), (13) and (15) can be understood in the same way. If the moving entity has visited the goal, luB is applicable.<sup>14</sup> In the following example, the speaker returns from a place other than his/her home to another place where he/she is now. As we can see below, luB is strongly preferred here, although the place where the speaker is located is not his/her permanent home.

(22) kanB muB maB jiAjiC maB'sanC' tsoC tonB luB/\*ðaA.
1SG go buy thing soon then return come
[The SAPs are talking in the street. The speaker will go and buy a thing and come back to the place where they are now.] "I will go to buy a thing and come back soon."
[说话人和听话人在外面说话,说话人要去买东西再回到现在他所在的地

方。] 我去买东西马上就回来。

Although this assumption explains the examples listed so far in this paper, other attested examples of  $\partial aA$  and luB require us to posit another assumption: Some motions can be described out of consideration of whether the motion is [+home] or [-home], and in that case, psychological distance plays a part. In other words, there are two layers of meaning to  $\partial aA$  and luB, one layer that is relevant to [home] and another that is not. In Example (23) below, in which the SAPs are in the same room, both  $\partial aA$  and luB are applicable. According to the consultant of this paper, the meaning of the sentence slightly changes depending on which verb is used. If one uses  $\partial aA$ , one demands that the addressee come over there at all cost, while use of *luB* conveys no such connotation. This suggests that in cases where [home] is irrelevant,  $\partial aA$  implies that there is some psychological distance from the goal, whereas *luB* lacks such an implication.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The same assumption was made in the case of [Home position] in Lhaovo (Sawada 2003: 346) and in the case of [Base] in Zapotec (Speck and Pickett 1976: 62).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> According to the consultant of this paper, this interpretation and use of luB is rather marginal.

(23) *BONA ðaA/luB* lanC 2neA.
2SG come/come look a.little [The SAPs are talking in a room. The speaker tells the addressee to come nearer and look at something in the speaker's hand.] "Come and look at this." [两个人在说话人家的同一个房间里,说话人叫听话人过来看说话人手里的东西。] 你来看一下。

When the speaker thinks that the moving entity willingly moves to the goal, *luB* is strongly preferred, as in the following example. This suggests that *luB* implies that the goal is not distant.

(24) *luB/\*ðaA* seB, *luB/\*ðaA* seB.
come/come PRT come/come PRT
[The speaker tells the child that is in front of him/her to come closer.] Come!
[让自己目前的孩子过来。] 来来来。

The next dialogue from a text is another example in point. Here, the speaker of the first utterance comes to the front of the addressee's house and asks the addressee to let him in. The distance to the goal is not long and luB is used. Note that as the moving entity has never been to the location, [home] does not seem relevant here.

(25) ... təAloBnaA, kanB **luB** волА piB thonB taAtchoC puC. old.man 1SG come 2SG house look.for place sleep "I'd like to come to your house and find a place to sleep."

təAloBnaA zoCseA, naB KONA tsoC- **luB** kəB-piB puC. old.man tell FLL 2SG then come 1SG-house sleep The old man said, "Then, you come to my house and sleep." (*Pehoxien and Tigers*)

#### 5. Summary

Although further study is required to fully explore the meaning of  $\delta aA$  and luB, the facts above suggest that there are two layers of meaning in  $\delta aA$  and luB, one relevant to [home] and the other not. They also suggest that when [home] is relevant,  $\delta aA$  describes [+home] motions and luB describes [-home] motions, and that when [home] is not invoked in the context, then  $\delta aA$  implies that the goal is psychologically distant from the moving entity, whereas luB implies that the goal is not distant from it. These points are summarized in Table 3.

	Relevance of [home]		
	+	—	
ðaA	[-home]	distant	
luB	[+home]	not distant	

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