This morpheme is found in all three branches of Tai, and in the Kam-Sui and Kadai languages as well. In almost all areas it has Series 2 of the tones, the exception being Hlai.\(^1\) Li reconstructed this morpheme as PT *lïǝk D2 L/S, with a diphthong vowel in order to account for forms such as luuk\(^3\) (Siamese). Li reconstructs PNT *iɔ ~ *iɔ, or alternatively *iũ (with the accent on ŋ), monophthongised to uu in Siamese and Longzhou, and *iɔ ~ *iɔ in NT, with the accent shifted to i, and subsequently monophthongised and shortened (HCT 268). The survey data conform only partially to this general schema.

By contrast, Pittayaporn reconstructs PT *lɯːkD for this item (270). Thurgood reconstructs PKS *laːk⁸ (214). Gokhman reconstructs PT *lūk D², PKS *lak D², and PLi *lïk⁴ (166).

Gōng Qúnhú connects this word, Thai luuk D₂, with Chinese 子 zǐ ‘child’, OC *s-plɨ’.\(^2\)

In the dialect surveys initial l- is found ubiquitously. In the NZh areas -uk⁸ is indeed the most common rime, while -uk⁸ is found in Longzhou and surrounding counties.

-ak Longsheng and Rongshui in the far NE; and in west-central GZh and Qiubei in EY; in the SZh areas, Hengxian;
-ek Zhenning in west-central GZh;
-ak the Longjiang river area as far west as Hechi; in the SZh areas, in Chongzuo in the SW;
-a:k Shangsi and Ningming in the SW;
-i:k Long’an on the lower reaches of the Youjiang river (NZh), and Yongning S and Qinzhou in the east of the SZh area;
-uk Longzhou, Daxin, Cao Bằng Thổ, Lạng Sơn, Napo, and the Nung dialects of EY;
-ok Jingxi and Cao Bằng Nùng and Tày.

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\(^1\) Gàilùn p. 379. For Tai, see CTSB p. 89 (0201).
\(^2\) Gōng Qúnhú, p. 86.
In addition, final -k has been elided or reduced to a glottal stop in some areas:

-ɯ²⁸ south-central and central GZh;
-ɯ² Dushan and Luodian in southern GZh;
-ǝu² Nandan in the central N of GX;
-ǝʔ²⁸ Zhenning in west-central GZh;
-a⁶ Wenshan and Maguan in EY.

In tones, Tone 8 (D2 L or S) is found in the great majority of locations. In areas of Bouyei where final -k has been glottalised, the original D2 tone has been retained, but in places where it has been completely elided, a corresponding open tone is found. The effect of this, it will be noted, is to make lawz ‘which?’ and lwg ‘child’ homophonous in some areas, e.g. Nandan, where both words are pronounced lǝɯ². It is of interest then that both morphemes are written with 勒 lè ‘to bind up’ in this area. This character may represent either lǝk (MC), lǝk¹¹ (PH Binyang), lǝ³¹ (PH Lingui), or le⁴ (SWM), depending on the age and provenance of the reading.

The readings of characters used for this morpheme are of considerable age, at least in the central part of GX. Careful analysis is needed to determine which modern regional or ancient pronunciations they represent.

**Character List**

The following table gives a listing of all characters used for lwg in the traditional texts from all locations. The table also lists the locations where each character or character variant is found.

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3 Elision of final -p, -t, and -k is characteristic of some dialects of Bouyei, and usually takes place after a long vowel.
4 I.e., the open tone with the tone pitch contour most closely matching the original ‘dead syllable’ tone.
5 OCM p. 110. For PH see Lì Liánjìn p. 318 item 3171.