

A Grammar of Lao

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For my love

Preface

To understand language, nothing compares with the task of trying to work one's way through the wings of a grand mansion like Lao. It brings unforeseen adventures. Mapping out the lay of the land, one quickly realizes that this house harbors hidden chamber after hidden chamber, secret stairwells, false walls, doorways papered over, whole basements and rooftops undiscovered, mazes, gardens, chapels, cellars and rabbit warrens, it goes on and on without end. So, to repeat a cliché, but a well deserved one: this grammar is incomplete. It is a progress report on a life long project. It is a partial description, an imbalanced description, and in ways an inadequate description. But one has to stop somewhere if the work is to emerge.

One way in which this description merely approximates the phenomenon of interest is through abstracting, following standard descriptive linguistic practice, from social variation inherent in the language. Lao—like any language—is a dynamic, social, variable, changing system of sounds, words, idioms, constructions, and strategies. Lao speakers find themselves in a wide range of social situations which will differently determine how they formulate the things they say: the constructions they employ, the words they select, the way they pronounce those words, among many other points of variation. Speakers respond artfully to local contexts and their social exigencies, applying and negotiating multiple sets of communicative convention, both ritual and mundane. I am painfully aware of the richness of these important complexities, and of the consequences of bracketing them out of the current enterprise. I have tried to represent the social texture of Lao grammar where possible, for example by varying the formality of pronouns used in the example sentences. But dealing in detail with socially sensitive variation in Lao grammar is a topic for a different book.

A second way in which this description merely approximates the phenomenon of interest is that it takes the clause or sentence to be the basic unit of analysis. Many other unit types are relevant. For example, speech is chunked into turns at talk of a few seconds each, and these turns are interleaved in extended sequences, usually conversations. Those sequences, and the complex interactional practices which keep them orderly, have structures of their own, and these structures are seldom if ever described in grammars. Moreover, these linguistic structures occur in fully multimodal contexts, where people simultaneously employ rich semiotic resources which are meaningfully related to their talk (e.g., gesture, eye gaze, bodily comportment). Again, I am painfully aware of these important components of what it takes to speak Lao, and of the consequences of bracketing them out of the present work. It's another topic for a different book.

These uncharacteristic apologies aside, the piece of Lao captured in this book may be a thin slice, but it is not a random one. I have tried to capture a variety of Lao which is typical of everyday, informal conversation among kin and familiars in rural or semi-rural village life. The analyses are based on empirical data from spontaneous speech of semi-rural villagers, of low to average levels of formal education (some non-literate, some with primary school education, some with high school), in narratives and conversation recorded in informal settings. The exclusive consideration of spoken rather than written language, and the emphasis on everyday, informal usage reflects a primary concern with language in its primordial format, and not the very recently emergent, modern, massaged, context-narrow structures which arise in the political environment of media, literacy, and standardization.

A note to the non-specialist reader: This is a technical, reference description, not a primer, and not a rule book. While certain sections (e.g., Chapter 2) are easily accessible by the general reader, most of the work presumes a technical background in linguistics (at least to undergraduate level). If you are a speaker or learner of Lao, you may find this work useful as a reference. But it has no authority in any institutional or otherwise official sense. The book does not prescribe correct ways of speaking Lao. It describes the structures that native Lao speakers produce, even where these ways of speaking might be regarded by those in socio-political authority as incorrect, sub-standard, or otherwise defective. To the extent that it is possible to keep the two apart, this book focuses on the structure

of language, not on ideology about the structure of language. The patterns described here are norms, not rules. If you do not speak Lao and your aim is to learn, you might not find much joy in this book during the earliest stages of your studies. You could instead begin by amassing as many primers or phrase books as you can—none are perfect, all are useful—and work through them methodically, as you practice in the villages of lowland Laos. The main thing is to go forth and speak.

If I fall short of delivering the ‘succinct, rigorous and sensitive masterpiece’ that every language deserves (Ameka, Dench, and Evans 2006:v), I hope at least to have made progress in our understanding of Lao, and the relevance to linguistic science of some of its structures. Much work remains.

Acknowledgements

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A number of sections of this book have appeared in earlier form. I am grateful to the publishers and editors involved for kindly giving me per-

mission to include revised sections of these publications as sections of this book: Case relations in Lao, a radically isolating language (in *Handbook of Case*, ed. A. Malchukov and A. Spencer, Oxford U. Press); Description of reciprocal events in Lao (in *Reciprocals and Semantic Typology*, ed. N. Evans, A. Gaby, S. C. Levinson, and A. Majid, John Benjamins); Verbs and Multi-verb sequences in Lao (in *The Tai-Kadai Languages*, ed. A. V. N. Diller, J. A. Edmondson, and Y. X. Luo, Routledge); Lao linguistics in the 20th century and since (in *Bulletin of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, Special Issue 'Recent Research on Laos', ed. Y. Goudineau and M. Lorrillard); Encoding three-participant events in the Lao clause (*Linguistics* 45.3, 509-538); Depictive and other secondary predication in Lao (in *Secondary Predication and Adverbial Modification*, ed. N. P. Himmelmann and E. Schultze-Berndt. Oxford U. Press); Adjectives in Lao (in *Adjective classes*, ed. R. M. W. Dixon and A. Y. Aikhenvald. Oxford U. Press); Nominal classification in Lao (*Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung*, 57.2/3, 117-143); Linguistic Epidemiology (Routledge-Curzon); Combinatoric properties of natural semantic metalanguage expressions in Lao (in *Meaning and Universal Grammar*, ed. C. Goddard and A. Wierzbicka. John Benjamins); Lao as a national language (in *Laos: Culture and Society*, ed. G. Evans. Silkworm Books). During the time that I have been working on this grammar, I have also worked on a number of narrower topics in Lao semantics and pragmatics. These are being assembled for publication as a separate volume.

Many Lao language examples provided in this book are from a corpus of spontaneous spoken language collected in Vientiane in 1996-1997. This corpus contains several hours of material, on a range of topics and styles, including procedural descriptions, jokes, informal conversation, myths, fables, life-story narratives. These are from a range of speakers, both male and female, varying in age from early teens to mid 80's. Many other examples (and the texts supplied at the end of the book) are from a video-recorded corpus of everyday conversation which I began collecting in 2000. A number of examples are elicited by means of semi-experimental materials (stimulus-based elicitation). Remaining examples are constructed or elicited in consultation with native speaker consultants.

Quotations from Lao language sources are my translation.

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N. J. E.

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Abbreviations and conventions

1 = 1st person
2 = 2nd person
3 = 3rd person
A = agent-like argument of transitive clause
ABL = ablative
ABLE = abilitive
ACHV = achievement
ADJT = adjunct
AFTH = afterthought marker
AGT = agent
ALL = allative
AM = aspectual-modal
ANIM = animate
B = bare
Br = brother
C = child
C.LINK = clause linker
CAN = modal of possibility
CF = counterfactual
CLF = classifier
COMP = complementizer
CONST = constantly
CONT = continuous
CONTR = contrast linker
CT = class term
DEM = demonstrative
DIR = directional
DIST = distal
e = elder

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E = spouse
ECHO = echo-formative
EUPH = euphonious filler
EXP = experiential perfect
F = female
Fa = father
FA = familiar
FAC = factive
FAC.EMPH = factive, emphatic
FAC.EXPLIC = factive, explicating
FAC.FILLIN = factive, filling in presupposed information
FAC.ONRCD = factive, putting on record
FAC.NEWS = factive, proposition is news
FAC.RESIST = factive, resists current stance
FAC.SURPR = factive, proposition is surprising
FAC.WEAK = factive, weakens commitment
FO = formal
G = sibling
HES = hesitation
HUM = human
IDEO = ideophone
IMP = imperative
IMP.PLEAD = imperative, pleading
IMP.RUSH = imperative, rushing
IMP.SOFT = imperative, softening
IMP.SUGG = imperative, suggesting
IMP.UNIMPD = imperative, states that addressee is unimpeded
INTJ = interjection
IRR = irrealis
KNOW.HOW = acquired abilitive
M = male
Mo = mother
NEG = negation
NO.ADO = without ado
NO.HES = without hesitation
NONPROX = nonproximal
NZR = nominalizer
O = patient-like argument of transitive clause

OBJ = object
OBLIG = obligative
OBLIG.CF = counterfactual weak obligative
OBLIG.STR = strong obligative
OBLIG.WEAK = weak obligative
ONOM = onomatopoeic
ORD = ordinal
P = polite
Pa = parent
PCL = particle
PDR = People's Democratic Republic
PERIPH = peripheral
PL = plural
PRF = perfect
PROB = assumptive epistemic 'probably'
PROG = progressive
PSBL = possible
PST.RCNT = recent past
Q = question
Q.EMPH = content question, emphatic
Q.PRESUP = content question, seeks presupposed information
QPLR = polar question
QPLR.AGREE = polar question, seeking agreement
QPLR.INFER = polar question, proposition newly inferred
QPLR.PRESM = polar question, proposition independently presumed
Q.THEME = question thematizer
RDP = reduplication
REG = regularly
REL = relativizer
S = single argument of intransitive clause
SG = singular
SFP = sentence-final particle
SPEC = speculative epistemic
SUBJ = subject
T.LNK = topic linker
THZR = thematizer
TH = theme
TPC = topic

UNKN = unknown

V = verb

VOC = vocative marker

WNDR = wondering

y = younger

Z = sister

- Proper names are glossed with single capital letter.
- Bracketed sections of translations in examples are part of the utterance meaning, but are not explicitly coded in the form of the utterance.
- Bold-marking in examples indicates item of interest.

Part I

Preliminaries

Chapter 1

Overview

Lao is an isolating, analytic tone language with no inflectional morphology and little productive derivational morphology. Most words have one stressed syllable, and many have a non-stressed presyllable in addition. There are five lexical tones (level, high rising, low rising, high falling, low falling).

Two major open class lexical categories are noun and verb, distinguished by a number of distributional properties:

Table 1. Distinguishing properties of the noun and verb classes

Property	Nouns	Verbs
Can be heads of noun phrases in subject function	+	–
Can be possessor in possessive construction	+	–
Can take a modifier linked by the relativizer <i>thii</i> l	+	–
Can be a modifier linked by the relativizer <i>thii</i> l	–	+
Can take direct negation in predicate function	–	+

In the nominal domain, further form classes include personal (definite) pronouns, indefinite pronouns, determiners, and classifiers. The personal pronouns show a thoroughgoing set of distinctions for social deixis, distinguishing in all three persons between bare, familiar, polite and formal person reference. Indefinite pronouns distinguish only between basic ontological categories of person, animate, and thing. The indefinite pronouns also function as interrogative pronouns. There is a complex system of nominal classification, with distinct patterns for numeral classifiers, modifier classifiers, class terms, and kin prefixes. Most words which function as classifiers are not members of a distinct classifier form class, but are open class nouns used in classifier functions, as determined by constructional context.

Noun phrases are basically head-initial, but do not show a high branching hierarchical structure. They are often discontinuous, with head nouns not always adjacent to modifier phrases. Discourse-level reference management (i.e., introducing new referents, tracking already introduced ones) generally follows principles of preferred argument structure, with new

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referents tending not to occur in subject function. A presentational verb-first construction provides a dedicated means for introducing new arguments in non clause-initial position. Subsequent tracking of referents in discourse involves the use of both definite pronouns and zero anaphora. Noun phrases in almost any position may be ellipsed if they are in any sense currently given (definite, accessible) in the discourse, or otherwise contextually retrievable. Exceptions include complements of certain prepositions such as *caak5* ‘from’, *kap2* ‘with’, and *kèè1* ‘to’, and heads of noun phrases with relative clause modifiers.

In the verbal domain, there are distinctions between sub-classes of verbs. One of these is the sub-class of adjectives, whose distinct syntactic properties include the possibility of Type A reduplication. There is a major open class of ideophones. These are distinct from verbs both in form (they tend to be bisyllabic, showing rhyming or alliterative structure) and grammatical behavior (they are constrained to a single construction type, and cannot take aspectual-modal marking).

The basic Lao clause is (schematically) organized as follows:¹

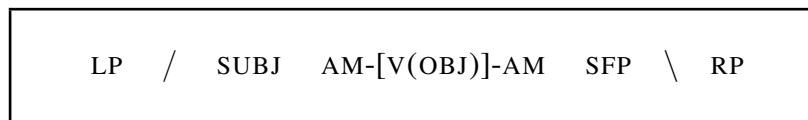


Figure 1.1. Major constituents of the Lao clause

Left and Right Positions are extraclausal slots which may contain any nominal (whether or not it is an argument of the verb), as well as phrases, clauses, or larger structures. While Left Position is not necessarily marked off prosodically in any special way, Right Position is audibly marked off with a comma-like downstep, with lower pitch and volume than the main clause immediately preceding it.

Subject is a straightforward grouping of A (agent-like argument of a transitive verb) and S (single argument of an intransitive verb). Subject is weakly active in clausal organization. For example, subject does not function as a syntactic pivot in cross-clausal relations. Object is the

¹Abbreviations in the Figure are: LP = Left Position, / = left border of the clausal core, AM = Aspectual-Modal markers, SFP = Sentence-Final Particles, \ = right border of the clausal core, RP = Right Position.

patient-like complement of a transitive verb. Objects appear immediately following the verb, with nothing intervening.

Aspectual-modal distinctions are marked both preverbally and post-verb-phrasally ('AM' in Figure 1), in a series of ordered slots. Many of the aspectual-modal markers also function as open class items (mostly verbs). Further distinctions in the domain of modality are made by the sentence-final particles, an important and sizeable form class (with at least thirty members). Sentence-final particles make a range of distinctions in illocutionary force, status, and evidentiality. Syntactically, sentence-final particles constitute a robust syntactic end border of the clausal core. They are stressed and prosodically exposed, marking off any post-posed (i.e., right-positioned) material to come. Functionally, sentence-final particles are an important part of the set of aspectual-modal resources, which are distributed across a range of syntactic positions from the clausal core to the periphery and beyond.

Complex clausal grammar centers on the use of multi-verb constructions (or serial verb constructions). These are sequences of verbs or verb phrases which lack overt morphological marking of interrelationships such as subordination or coordination. A great variety of complex syntactic-semantic configurations are covertly coded in these sequences, including complex motion constructions, various types of secondary predication (depictive, resultative, and adverbial constructions), causative constructions, adverbial constructions, complement constructions, and coordinating constructions.

The remainder of this preliminary part covers language background and phonology. Part II consists of a single chapter on final particles. Most of the attention is on sentence-final particles, one of the most important and salient expressive resources of the language. The four chapters in Part III deal with referential expressions, including pronouns, complex noun phrase structures, and strategies for reference management. Part IV concerns the grammar of verbs and predication, including the system of aspectual-modal marking and associated sub-distinctions between verb types, the properties of basic clausal syntax, and the expression of non-canonical event types. There is also a chapter on expressive forms, including ideophones and other sound symbolic or alliterative resources. The nine chapters in Part V lay out the broad range of multi-verb structures. Part VI supplies a set of six spoken texts, taken from recordings of face-to-face conversation.

Chapter 2

Language background

Lao is among a small minority of the world's languages to have achieved national language status. It is the national language of Laos, spoken by over four million people there. It is also spoken by a minority in Northeast Cambodia, and a large minority (at least ten million) in Northeast Thailand (in areas bordering lowland Laos). There are also scattered Lao-speaking villages in Western Cambodia and Central and Eastern Thailand. The dialects spoken in Thailand are undergoing rapid change under the influence of central Thai (Diller 1988, 1991). Lao is also spoken in sizeable expatriate communities in the US, Australia, and France.

Laos shows a very high degree of linguistic diversity, with up to 100 languages from five different major language families spoken in an area smaller than the United Kingdom. See Enfield (2006a, 2006b, 2006e) for discussion of language diversity and endangerment in Laos. For the areal setting of mainland Southeast Asia, see Enfield (2005b). For historical and ethnographic information on Laos and the Lao, see Stuart-Fox (1986, 1997, 1998), Evans (1990, 1997, 2002), Ireson (1996), Pholsena (2006), Rehbein (2007), and many references in those works.

In presenting background information on the language, I first review existing research on the language, and second, discuss the recent historical and social circumstances of Lao's national language status.

2.1 Previous linguistic research on Lao

During the period of French rule in Laos (1893-1954) and up to the establishment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) in 1975, several grammars of Lao appeared, written essentially in the style of European pedagogical grammars (Hospitalier 1937, Phoumi 1967, RLG 1972, Reinhorn 1980, Nginn 1984). Some intellectual activity was ostensibly devoted to grammar, but this mostly related to orthographic conventions. To some degree it also concerned research on the lexicon. This included most notably the work of Sila Vilavong, P. S. Nginn, and Phoumi Vongvichit. The traditions of scholarship (and politics) associated with these

three men are discussed in section 2.2, below.

An important recent development for the state of research on grammar in Laos is the Lao government's 2002 establishment of a Linguistic Research Institute, within the Ministry of Information and Culture of the Lao PDR. The institute director Dr. Thongphet Kingsada (PhD, Linguistics, Hanoi University) is also chief editor of a linguistic journal entitled *Language and life*, which first appeared in January 2003. The first edition includes 10 brief articles (3 in English) on topics ranging from 'Buddhism and the Lao language' to 'Languages and ethnic classification in the Lao PDR' to 'Lao writing and word breaks' to a study of the morphosyntactic differentiation in Lao between the numerals '2100' and '2001'. Comparable venues for publication of such research in linguistics during the Royal Lao Government era (Evans 2002:93ff) included publications of the Literary Committee (e.g., RLG 1972) and the Royal Academic Council (e.g., Dejvongsa et al 1972). There was nothing of this kind in the Lao PDR era until the establishment in 1988 of the Institute of Ethnography (within the Committee for Social Sciences) and a later offspring, the Institute for Cultural Research (under the Ministry of Information and Culture). The Institute for Cultural Research established an academic journal in 1996, the *Lanxang Heritage Journal*. During the few years of its existence, the journal provided the only regular outlet for academic publication of linguistic research by Lao scholars. Otherwise, articles on linguistic matters appear in popular publications such as various Lao language newspapers and periodicals. These tend to be prescriptive discussions of style, or curiosities of correct and incorrect usage. Like their counterparts in other parts of the world, such studies are fun to read, but their main appeal to scholarship relates less to their intended contribution to what we know about the structure of language, and more to their ethnographic appeal as ideologically motivated attempts to portray or manipulate the standard language in various ways.

2.1.1 Typological and descriptive work on Lao

Two significant grammars of Lao written in French during the 20th century are Hospitalier (1937) and Reinhorn (1980).

Hospitalier (1937) is a formidable and penetrating treatment of the Lao language. J-J. Hospitalier had a thorough first-hand knowledge of

Lao, evident, for example, in a brief but insightful section of the grammar on interjections. His discussion of word formation in Lao was similarly incisive. Standards of description in linguistics at the time meant that certain important features of the Lao grammatical system were not described. For example, Hospitalier didn't have the means to properly characterize the system of lexical tone in Lao, and he didn't specify tone in his transcription of Lao examples. About half the book concerns the language's sound system, including its system of writing, and the system for reading tones correctly. Hospitalier went to a great deal of trouble to get permission from the French authorities to use a Lao font in this publication. Generally, Hospitalier used French grammatical categories as a guide for analyzing Lao. For example, he calls nominal classifiers in one of their functions 'articles', in another 'catégories les plus usitées'. He lists stative verbs as adjectives with sub-types like 'determinative adjective'. For its time, the Hospitalier grammar was an impressive achievement, and it has hardly been bettered in the 70 years since.

Reinhorn's (1980) grammar shows some evidence of its more modern intellectual context, with greater attention paid to features of phonological structure such as tones and the set of contrasts in vowel space. But there are no references to literature on linguistic typology, nor is there any theoretically oriented discussion of the comparative status of Lao grammatical structures. The orientation is more to literature than to linguistics, with much attention paid to Indic features of the language—i.e., its orthography and some of its vocabulary. Reinhorn devotes a significant amount of space to morphological analysis of Indic loan words, including Indic affixation and rules of sandhi and vowel mutation in Sanskrit compounds. These phenomena are indeed observable in borrowings, but they are not part of the productive morphosyntactic structures of the Lao language. Besides, most of the borrowings to which those observations apply are exclusive to formal contexts such as literature and higher education. They do not occur in everyday use of Lao. Reinhorn, like Hospitalier in 1937, relied exclusively on constructed examples, despite the fact that by the time of publication it had already become standard in linguistic reference grammars to use examples derived from naturally occurring texts. Reinhorn's treatment of Lao is prescriptive as much if not more than it is descriptive. Further distancing the description from the language as it is actually used by most people, Reinhorn gives a disproportionate amount of attention to Indic features.

Hospitalier's Lao grammar was written while Laos was a colony of France, with the ostensive purpose of providing a pedagogical resource for French people who would travel to Laos for professional reasons. Its simple and pragmatic style reflects this *raison d'être*. The book is organized in the style of traditional European grammar, with no orientation to the value of a description of Lao to the science of linguistics or anthropology. This fits with its historical context, having been completed before the appearance of Bloomfield's classic and influential descriptivist treatise *Language* (Bloomfield 1933). Reinhorn's book, on the other hand, was written at a time when major developments had taken place in linguistic theory, through developments in structuralism (in both linguistics and anthropology), the generativist movement in linguistics, and the comparative science of language typology. Nevertheless, Reinhorn devotes little attention to the possible contribution a grammar of Lao might have made to linguistics and anthropology.

The two French language grammars are similar to grammars written in Lao (Sila 1962, Phoumi 1967, RLG 1972) in that their analysis of Lao follows distinctions in grammatical meaning traditionally made in European languages, such as categories of conjugation, mood and inflection of the verb. But a significant difference between Lao and the average European language is that Lao lacks precisely these categories. Most points of grammatical analysis of this kind are not supported with language internal arguments along lines supplied by modern standard reference grammars. Rather, the grammarian is describing Lao in terms of the resources it has for expressing the grammatical distinctions one has in French or some other 'Standard Average European' grammar. To his credit, Hospitalier makes it explicit that this is his purpose. Nevertheless, in these traditional grammars there is some attention to features of Lao not shared with European languages—for example, in discussion of the system of nominal classification (cf. Chapter 7, below). However, in describing this system neither Hospitalier nor Reinhorn give an analysis of its semantics or morphosyntactic structure, but simply supply a list of forms.

From a modern linguistic point of view, there are a number of features of Lao not normally found in European languages which would nowadays be described on their own terms. One example is the phenomenon of serial verb constructions, a type of complex clause structure that Lao and many other languages—but not European languages like French—feature (cf. Durie 1997, Aikhenvald and Dixon 2006). Such structures are men-

tioned here and there in existing Lao grammars, but (unlike early grammars of African languages) no attention is drawn to their identity as a distinct grammatical category. Another, clearer example concerns the large category of ideophones (or expressives) in Lao (Chapman 1996, Wayland 1996, Trongdee 1996; cf. Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz 2001). A few examples appear in a paragraph of Reinhorn (1980:119), mixed in with examples of other types under the heading ‘onomatopoeics’ as a subsection of ‘predicatives of manner’. Reinhorn does not recognize the distinct grammatical identity of ideophones (cf. Chapman 1996). This may be due to a lack of recognition that a system of this kind—very much colloquial—has a place in a formal grammatical description. Diffloth (2004; cf. 1972, 1976, 1979) argues that one of the reasons that an analysis of these words is hard to pin down is that, like interjections (*ouch!*, etc.), they tend not to be regarded by speakers (or grammarians) as part of real language.

Scholarly works dedicated to linguistic analysis of Lao in the twentieth century are few. In the 1940s, Edward G. Roffe published a concise structuralist account of Lao phonemic structure (Roffe 1946). In the early 1970s, Morev et al (1972) published a grammar of Lao in Russian. From around the same time, a number of scholars associated with Nguyen Dang Liem and others working in the tagmemic tradition at the University of Hawaii made passing references to Lao in broader discussions of grammatical features of Southeast Asian languages (Capell 1979, Nguyen 1974, 1979, Clark 1974). Honts (1979) is the only work among these dedicated solely to Lao. Marybeth Clark’s work began in this period, and has sporadically appeared through subsequent decades (Clark and Prasithratsint 1985, Clark 1985, 1989, 1996).

A highlight of the Hawaii-based research in the 1970s is the work of Arthur Crisfield, whose insightful discussion of Lao sentence-final particles (Crisfield 1974) is the best we have to date on this topic. Crisfield’s (1978) University of Hawaii PhD dissertation dealt with ‘Sound symbolism and the expressive words of Lao’. This topic has since been investigated by Adam Chapman in an Australian National University sub-thesis (Chapman 1996), and by Ratreewayland, in a study of a variety of Lao spoken in Thailand (Wayland 1996; cf. also Trongdee 1996).

The most recent grammatical description of Lao is a German language grammar written by Boike Rehbein and Sisouk Sayaseng (2004). These two had earlier created a language learning course book (Sayaseng and Rehbein 1997), followed by a dictionary (Rehbein and Sayaseng

2000). Their short grammar whose sub-title is ‘phonology, morphology, and pragmatics’ is a useful inventory of basic structures and grammatical forms. The grammar is too brief to include detailed structural analysis or typological comparison, and some features are not mentioned (e.g., ideophones; see Chapter 12 of this book). In its favor, the Rehbein and Sayaseng grammar goes beyond previous grammars in paying attention to social dimensions of language such as speech level, formality, and politeness (Chapters 4 and 5). This is thanks to Rehbein’s perspective as a sociologist and anthropologist (see Rehbein 2007).

Much of my own work on Lao has been typological and descriptive, covering a range of topics (see the chapters of this book), including semantic and grammatical studies of specific lexical domains, the relation between semantic encoding and pragmatic implicature (Enfield 2003a, 2003b), processes of grammaticalization, particularly concerning the well-worn path from verb to verb marker (Enfield 2001a, 2003c, 2004a; cf. Matisoff 1991), lexical semantics (Enfield 2001b, 2002a, 2002b, 2006c, 2007a, 2007b), and explorations of theoretical issues in morphosyntactic description and analysis, making primary reference to data from Lao (Enfield 2002c, 2002d, 2006d).

Thai linguists are beginning to show genuine interest in doing research on Lao, but have tended to concentrate on varieties of Lao spoken in Northeast Thailand, rather than on Lao spoken in Laos (though this is changing). See, for example, studies by Prakhong (1976), Premchu (1979), and Theraphan (1979), cited by Wayland (1996:218). Are the speech varieties of the Isan region of Northeast Thailand to be regarded as Lao? I have argued (Enfield 2002e) that this question concerns ideology and ethnic identity more than linguistic criteria. Isan speech varieties have some commonalities and some differences with Lao as spoken in Laos, and there are significant differences among different varieties in Isan, as well as within Laos. Whether we consider Isan varieties to be Lao or not depends on the nature and scope of our questions. Thanks to the changing political situation which has made Laos more accessible to outsiders, Thai scholars have more recently been able to conduct research on Lao as spoken in Laos itself. See, for example, Osatananda’s (1997) University of Hawaii dissertation on ‘Tone in Vientiane Lao’.

2.1.2 Lexicography

Much of the lexicographic work on Lao is in French, such as Guignard's early dictionary (1912) and Reinhorn's (1970) tome. Cuaz (1904) is an early word list. Kerr's (1972) two-volume Lao-English grammar is an unsurpassed English language source on the Lao lexicon. Important sources for Kerr were French language botanical reference works (Vidal 1960, Deuve 1962, Deuve and Deuve 1963-4), which continue to be important sources for many foreigners working in rural development, biodiversity conservation, and other technical areas. Marcus's (1970) concise Lao-English English-Lao dictionary is well known and widely used, but is little more than a word list. It contains no examples and little grammatical information (see also Boonyavong 1962).

Recent Lao language dictionaries, most notably Onmanisone (1992), are directly based on these English and French language sources. It is reportedly part of the mission of the newly established Linguistic Research Institute to produce a definitive Lao language dictionary which improves upon previous efforts. Shortage of resources make it unlikely that this project will bear fruit in the near future.

Several lexicographic reference works on Lao have been produced in Thailand, including a Lao-Thai-English Dictionary (LTED 1999) and a Lao-Thai dictionary (Viraphong 2000). There is a plethora of reference material on the language of Isan, the Northeast region of Thailand (cf. for example Phinthong 1988, Mollerup 2001, among many others). The volume of research being conducted on Northeastern varieties of Thai reflects a fascination among Thai scholars and laypeople with 'the Lao'.

Lao language lexicography suffers from a problem characteristic of most lexicography, namely a sacrifice of depth for breadth. Despite the large dictionaries and wordlists, there is little focused, in-depth, or theoretically oriented work on lexical semantics (cf. Wierzbicka 1985, 1996, Cruse 1986). This is not a criticism of the dictionary makers who have devoted a great deal of time to collecting data and presenting it in accessible form. It is an issue for all lexicography, particularly where the purpose of such work is to compare the details of lexical semantics across languages as part of the general enterprise of linguistics, namely to establish the ways in which human languages differ, given that the basic ingredients are universal.

2.1.3 Pedagogical material

Probably the most accessible grammatical descriptions of Lao are pedagogical works such as Roffe and Roffe (1958), Yates and Sayasithsena (1970; produced by the US State Department during the Vietnam war), and Hoshino and Marcus (1981). These substantial works include many illustrative examples, but the analyses presented are oriented neither to linguistic typology nor to theoretical or other general linguistic issues.¹ Wright (1994) is a sketch grammar of Lao ostensibly intended for language learners, published by the Thai journal *Language and Linguistics* (Department of Linguistics, Thammasat University, Bangkok). Lao language examples are in Lao script only, making the book inaccessible as a general reference work (i.e., for linguists rather than learners of Lao).

Most recently, John Hartmann, in collaboration with Arthur Crisfield and other colleagues, has developed extensive materials for teaching Lao, making these accessible on a *Lao Language and Culture* website hosted by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Northern Illinois University. A Lao language course book for speakers of German was published in 1997 (Sayaseng and Rehbein 1997), followed by a Lao-German German-Lao dictionary (Rehbein and Sayaseng 2000). Recent years have seen a spate of phrase books on sale in Laos, of varying quality (cf. e.g., Werner 1992, Cummings 1995, Callaghan 1999). An impressive number of foreign residents in Laos learn to speak functional if not excellent Lao. This is helped by the supportive attitude of Lao speakers, and probably also by the fact that English is not widely spoken, making it more difficult to get by in Lao society without being able to speak Lao.

2.1.4 Lao among Tai Languages

Lao is one of many members of the Tai family of languages spoken in Laos, China, Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, and India. Most work on languages of the Tai family in Laos (other than Lao) has concerned the study of the Tai language family more generally, more specifically the comparative and historical study of Tai languages (especially the Southwestern branch). The progenitor of this tradition was William J.

¹Pedagogical works on other languages are more helpful in this respect; cf. Huffman's linguistically sophisticated (1970) description of Khmer.

Gedney (University of Michigan), whose *Selected papers on comparative Tai studies* (Gedney 1989) makes numerous references to Lao and other Tai languages spoken in Laos. Gedney carried out extensive field work in Laos beginning in the 1940s. His many students have continued this project (cf. the work of Bickner, Hartmann, Hudak, Wilaiwan, Chamberlain, Compton, Gething, Sarawit, Strecker, and Jit Phumisak). For work on comparative Tai, see edited collections such as Gething (1975), Harris and Chamberlain (1975), Bickner, Hudak, and Patcharin (1986), Edmondson and Solnit (1988), Compton and Hartmann (1992), Edmondson and Solnit (1997), Diller, Edmondson and Luo (2007), and the monographs by Li (1960) and Luo (1997).

Little of the work in this tradition was carried out in Laos itself, and many mentions of Lao and other Tai languages of Laos are often made in passing rather than being the focus of attention. However, not all of these workers overlook Lao and other languages of Laos. Carol Compton's research has concentrated on Lao verse and song structure as well as versification and rhyme in the spoken language (Compton 1979, 2004). James Chamberlain's work has focused on the comparative ethnobiology of Tai languages (e.g., Chamberlain 1975, 1992, 2000). Much recent work by Chamberlain is based on extensive field work conducted in the course of consultancies relating to the potential impact of major development projects on ethnic groups of the country's rural areas. This has been one of the only practical ways to gain access to minority language speech communities for the purposes of scientific research.

Another important contributor is Anthony V. N. Diller (cf. Diller 1988, 1992, 2004), who has had a long-standing interest in Lao, and has taught it at the Australian National University. More recently, Diller has studied not only historical reconstruction and classification of Tai languages within the Tai family, but historical semantics, or more specifically, comparative grammaticalization (e.g., Diller 2001). Enfield (2003c) is an extended case study in this domain, which while concentrating on Lao, also provides primary data from field investigations of other Tai languages of Laos, including Thai Neua and Lue.

2.1.5 Lao language as part of a broader semiotic system

Many linguists now recognize that production and comprehension of spoken utterances are fundamentally linked to accompanying visual, bodily actions. Research on hand gesture and other aspects of nonverbal behavior has become tied closely to research on the psycholinguistics and semiotics of utterance construction (McNeill 1985, 1992, 2000; Kendon 1972, 1980, 1988; Goldin-Meadow 1999, 2003, and references therein). Hand gestures and other bodily movements are closely integrated with speech in their contribution to building the utterance, the semiotic and psycholinguistic equivalent of the clause (cf. Chafe 1980, 1994). Gestures are now understood to have important cognitive functions for both speakers and addressees.

Enfield (2001c) is an investigation of lip-pointing (i.e., pointing by jutting the lips out while looking in the direction of the referent), a common practice among the Lao, integrated with the use of demonstratives and other deictic speech elements. Related to this, Enfield, Kita and de Ruiter (2007c) investigate the use of pointing gestures during spatial descriptions in discourse by speakers of Lao. Two studies (Enfield 2003d, 2005a) have come from an investigation of the structural properties of 'gesture diagrams', and specifically their use for describing kinship relations and Lao kin terminology, their iconic properties, and their implications for the study of kinship and diagrammatic cognition. Enfield (2004b) presents a study of gestures made during native speaker descriptions of types of Lao fish traps, in which it is demonstrated that sequences of hand gestures show discourse-syntactic organization.

2.1.6 Language endangerment

An important issue in the contemporary linguistics of Laos is language endangerment (Enfield 2006a). Languages around the world are disappearing at a rate of some two per month (Crystal 2000, Nettle and Romaine 2000). One area of research relevant to the problem of language endangerment in Laos is exploration of the conditions and circumstances of language attrition and loss. There is a desperate need for primary field research, given that we know very little about even the number and identity of languages, let alone their structure. In Enfield (2006a), I discuss

theoretical issues concerning language endangerment and research on it in Laos (see also Bradley 2003). There are many dozens of languages spoken in Laos, most of which are spoken by fewer than 5000 people. Some are moribund, with only a few dozen speakers remaining. In this context, to claim that the national language Lao is ‘under pressure’ (Thongphet 2004) is a completely different notion to endangerment. It is simply a way of dramatically expressing the idea that the language, like all languages, is changing. It does not mean that—as in the case of many other languages of Laos—the entire language and the community that speaks it is set to disappear from the face of the earth.

2.2 Lao as a national language

Lao was declared the national language of the Lao PDR, on the establishment of the first government on December 2, 1975. Unlike other national languages, however, the standard is not well codified. As a nation, Laos has experienced long years of difficulty along the road to unification. Many of the political divisions that can be traced across the history of the nation can be seen reflected in current inconsistencies of the language as it is used, and in the arguments which are conducted today, and have been conducted for decades, about the proper shape of the Lao language. The pressures on Lao as a language are also found amongst those on Laos as a nation. There is a tension between the older, ornate traditions associated with Buddhism and aristocracy on the one hand, and the more recent, austere rationalist traditions associated with socialism and science on the other. Also, the Lao are keenly aware of the need to maintain and delineate their nationhood in the face of pressures from outside, most notably those from Thailand.

2.2.1 Variation and efforts at standardization

As a Southwestern Tai language, Lao is closely related to Thai (Li 1960). Lao and Thai share extensive vocabulary, and have very similar phonological and grammatical systems. Because of the mostly one-directional flow of cultural exposure, however, Central Thai is well understood by the Lao, while many speakers of Central Thai would have real difficulty

understanding Lao, due to lack of exposure to the language. It is important to understand for much of the discussion below that Lao and Thai are for all intents and purposes (i.e., in structural linguistic terms) dialects of a single language. This is not meant to downplay in any way the differences between them. For a number of reasons, they should be treated as different languages, that is, as languages each on their own merits. For one thing, this favors the political objective of neither Thai nor Lao nationalism. It is more often the case that Lao is treated by outsiders in terms of how it differs from Thai, and not the other way around, since outsiders are more often familiar with Thai first.

While there are many fascinating differences and similarities between Lao and Thai, the substantive issues related to the career of Lao as a national language almost exclusively concern orthography. The two languages use scripts which are quite similar, and which both derive ultimately from Indic scripts. There is a robust folk (mis)understanding that the languages ‘come from’ Pali and Sanskrit, including the idea that Lao and Thai incorporate higher proportions of Pali, and Sanskrit, respectively.² The Thai and Lao languages do not come from Pali and Sanskrit, in any sense of genealogical continuity. They have heavily borrowed vocabulary from those languages, especially during the 20th Century. Pali and Sanskrit have provided for a range of neologisms required in a rapidly changing political and social world, in a similar way that Greek and Latin have been used creatively in stocking the modern vocabularies of European languages. Pali in particular is important in religion and religious studies in Laos and Thailand. Pali texts are written in Lao monasteries using the ‘dharmic script’, not known by many Lao. Modern Thai orthography exactly replicates the range of Pali and Sanskrit characters, while Lao does not. What many do not realize is that this full complement of Indic characters in Thai orthography is recent, having been introduced only this century. Lao orthography contains 27 consonants, while some 43 (as found in Thai) are required to transcribe Pali. Thus, Pali and San-

²Sanskrit and Pali are separate Indo-Aryan languages, both no longer natively spoken. Sanskrit has its own script (the Devanagari script used in modern Hindi), and is associated mostly with Hindu writings. While Sanskrit remained conservative due to emphasis on retaining the integrity of its original written form, Pali developed out of a spoken descendent of Sanskrit, which was used in the dissemination and subsequent spread of Buddhism. Pali does not have its own script (many different scripts are used for writing Pali), but does require essentially the same range of characters as the Devanagari script, with some minor differences.

skrit texts can be transcribed literally to the letter in regular everyday Thai script.

Here is a sample of printed Lao script (see Hoshino and Marcus 1981 for a description of the system):

ໄຊຊະນະຂອງການປະຕິວັດເຮົານັບມື້
 ມີຄວາມຫມາຍອັນຍິ່ງໃຫຍ່ທີ່ສຸດ, ມັນໄດ້
 ກ້າວໄປສູ່ໄລຍະປະຫວັດສາດອັນໃຫຍ່, ມີ
 ຫນ້າທີ່ອັນໃຫຍ່ໃນສະພາບການໃຫຍ່, ມັນ
 ຮຽກຮ້ອງຕ້ອງການໃຫ້ມີຄົນໃຫຍ່, ດ້ານ
 ຄວາມຮູ້ຄວາມສາມາດ, ດ້ານຫລັກຫມັ້ນ
 ຄຸນສົມບັດ ສິນທຳປະຕິວັດ ອັນໃຫຍ່, ເຖິງ
 ວ່າ ການ ດໍ່ສູ້ ຍັງ ມີ ຄວາມຫຍຸ້ງຍາກລຳ
 ບາກບາວນານແລະສັບສົນປານໃດກໍ່ຕາມ

Figure 2.1. Sample of printed Lao script

The numerous regional dialects of Lao show considerable variation. Not only do people from different regions speak with markedly different accents, they also display significant differences in regular vocabulary, as well as subtle grammatical and idiomatic differences. These differences may identify a person's background, and thereby indicate much about their likely history and, probably, their position in society. Each regional variety of Lao has one or two salient diagnostic indicators (among many actual distinctions), which are emblematic of that variety, and generally known. For example, the Southernmost varieties of Lao have a characteristic high-falling pronunciation of the tone inherent in 'live' syllables with 'low' consonant initials (such as *laaw2* 'Lao', *maa2* 'come', *khuu2* 'teacher'). This pronunciation is immediately diagnostic of a speaker's Southern origin, and is said to be a loud, heavy, or rough style. On the other hand, the variety of Lao spoken in Luang Prabang includes a distinctive high falling-rising tone in 'live' syllables with 'high' consonant initials (such as *hiin3* 'stone', *maa3* 'dog', *muu3* 'pig'). This pronunciation is considered typical of the 'softness' or 'lightness' of that variety. There are also some lexical stereotypes which are diagnostic of regional varieties, such as Phou-Thai *kiloe* 'where' (cf. Vientiane *saj3*), or Lu-

ang Prabang *eew* ‘play, pass time’ (cf. Vientiane *lin5*). These examples show features which have achieved privileged status as folk diagnostics of speakers’ regional origin. Each variety of course has many other distinctive features, but these have not achieved the same diagnostic status, and are not consciously recognized, nor publicly emblematic in the same way as those other more stigmatized features.

It is of course natural to find extensive dialect variation in any region (Chambers 1995:229ff), and out of this arises the political, cultural, and practical imperative for establishing and properly codifying an official standard language. The standard is a vehicle for leveling regional variation in administration, education, and the media, as well as providing a benchmark of prestige and correctness, regardless of the variety spoken in an individual’s own region or home. Establishment of a standard requires an effective level of codification (i.e., official specifications in grammar books, particularly concerning pronunciation and spelling).

If it is possible to identify a spoken standard for Lao, it would have to be the Vientiane variety. Vientiane is at the geographical and political centre of the country. While Vientiane Lao could be defined as either the variety of Lao spoken in Vientiane, or the variety of Lao spoken by those who have grown up in Vientiane (or whose families have been in Vientiane for some number of generations), the former definition would allow no generalization about the form of the language itself, since a huge proportion of the population of the capital are speakers of regional varieties, born and raised in the provinces. An important measure of standard pronunciation is the language used in national television and radio programming, which tends to follow the phonology of native Vientiane speakers, and tends not to include regional vocabulary. But pinpointing the distinctive features of this standard is complicated by the fact that the target is shifting. The pronunciation of Vientiane Lao is nowhere codified, and its form has been affected over the decades through major demographic changes, including influx of regional speakers, as wartime refugees during the 1960s and early 1970s, as incoming revolutionaries taking power immediately after 1975, and as economic migrants since the 1990s, permitted by increasing urban development and eased travel restrictions. The outpouring of post-1975 refugees must also have had some effect.

So, while there is no official standardization of the spoken form of Lao, and while it is perhaps even impossible to say exactly what constitutes the Vientiane variety of Lao, there is no doubt an implicit concept of

a neutral, central style. There is at the very least a notion of toning down one's native, regional speech when in the capital, or indeed when dealing with speakers from outside one's own area, particularly when in some official setting. People are willing and able to curtail the most representative features of their own non-neutral regional variety. There is thus a natural tendency to neutralize differences, at least for the pragmatic purpose of facilitating communication. If a standard or central spoken Lao can be characterized, it is central partly in the geographical sense (i.e., spoken by natives of the geographical and political centre) and partly in Diller's (1991:110) third sense of 'central' language: 'the intermediate or shared variety, similar to a lingua franca or koine', that is, a variety in which the most salient regional stereotype features are bleached away.

Spoken Lao rates poorly in terms of Diller's (1991:99-100) checklist of national language functions. If we take the Vientiane variety as a spoken standard, then it probably passes the criteria of (a) being understood by a majority of national residents; (b) being used in electronic media for the majority of official or national level programming; and (c) being the norm for impersonal announcements (at the very least in terms of vocabulary selection, and to some extent in terms of toning down regional pronunciation). But as a standard for pronunciation, Vientiane Lao probably fails to pass other of Diller's national language criteria, namely (d) being the national medium of instruction; (e) being the sole language of official government business; (f) being the prestige dialect for social mobility; (g) being used for religious purposes; and (h) being enforced institutionally. There is little pressure on regional speakers to pronounce Lao as it is pronounced by natives of Vientiane.

Where Lao does have a much stronger sense of standardization is in its written form, a focus of greater concern in the history of Lao as a national language. Today's written conventions of Lao do pass the standard criteria of being used as the national medium of instruction, the language of official business, and the object of institutional maintenance.³ But the nature of the written language is such that it may be pronounced in a range of regional accents. Most of the discussion in the rest of this chapter concentrates on the history and development of the written language, since

³This does not mean that the standards of the language are faithfully adhered to. There remains a margin for slippage in the writing of Lao, as persistent variation in spelling of many words will attest.

this has been the native preoccupation.⁴

The area of strongest standardization of Lao is print media. Publication of printed material is subject to official approval by the Lao government, which since 1975 has done well in seeing that a standard writing system (following Phoumi's grammar; see below) is adhered to. However, while it is often observed that print media can be one of the strongest forces of language standardization (cf. Ivarsson 1999), this is compromised by limited readership of Lao language newspapers. Major Vientiane dailies *Vientiane Mai* ('New Vientiane') and *Pasason* ('The People') are distributed to government offices, shops, hotels, other workplaces and some private homes, but few newsagents have existed until recently. So, a well standardized orthography in the Lao press does not have the significant consequences for a general standardization of the language that one might expect.

Radio programming across the country tends to have strong regional orientation, with a large percentage of local programming done in local dialects. Rural areas are, however, exposed to a certain degree of 'central Lao' via national news reports produced in Vientiane. As already mentioned, spoken Lao has been much less effectively standardized, and this is reflected in, and partly contributed to by, the less unified spoken conventions in regional radio programming.

Since the first half of the 20th Century, a number of government bodies have been set up to take responsibility for language standardization, including production of Lao language educational materials, research on Lao grammar, language, and literature, authorization of neologisms, borrowings and revisions in the language, and production of an official dictionary. In the 1930's, the Buddhist Academic Council, presided over by Prince Phetsarath, was responsible for recommendations regarding Lao orthography, including the attempted addition (attributed to Sila Vilavong) to the Lao alphabet of 14 supplementary consonants, making up the full complement of orthographic distinctions required for transcribing Pali (Bizot 1996). The early 1940s saw developments in language standardization associated with the Lao Nhay movement, in which the 'simple etymological spelling' associated with P. S. Nginn took hold (see Ivarsson (1999) for detailed discussion). Again the Buddhist Academic

⁴For example, in ICR (1995), an important volume on language policy in Laos, almost no-one among over 25 contributors identifies regional pronunciation as an issue. Bounyok (1995:98) is one exception.

Council was involved in this process, along with the *École Française d'Extrême-Orient*. In August 1948, the Committee for Compiling and Authorizing the Spelling of Lao Words was set up (by Royal Decree No. 67), and this was soon followed by the establishment of the long-standing Literary Committee, under the Ministry of Education (by Prime Minister's Decree No. 407, August 27 1951). The Committee was to contain 24 members, and the first five appointed were Kou Aphay, P. S. Nginn, Phuy Panya, Sila Vilavong, and Bong Souvannavong. Sila left the Committee at the end of 1963. In 1970, The Committee became the Lao Royal Academic Council (by Royal Ordinance No. 72, February 23, 1970). It was to last five years until the demise of the Royal Lao Government in 1975.

The reforms introduced by the post-1975 government were implemented effectively without the need for a distinct official regulatory body. The policy was clearly laid out by Phoumi (1967), and there was little debate. The reforms adopted had already been well established for at least twenty years in the revolutionary Liberated Zone.

On 8-10 October 1990, a major conference 'The Round Table on Lao Language Policy' was held in Vientiane, organized by the Institute for Cultural Research under the Ministry of Information and Culture. A number of the papers presented were collected and published as a volume (ICR 1995; see below for further discussion). A common demand was the need for an institute or academy to oversee and authorize decisions about the language, particularly concerning the incorporation of neologisms, and decisions about orthographic convention. Accordingly the conclusion of the meeting saw an official recommendation that an academy or unit be set up to work at least on problems of standardizing orthography (Houmphanh 1995:5). This was set up formally in 2002.

Lao linguistic scholarship has been closely involved with institutions concerned with regulation and standardization of the language. The three figures of greatest importance are P. S. Nginn, Sila Vilavong, and Phoumi Vongvichit, noted by Khamphao (1995:15) as synonymous with the three most important views of the last 70 years regarding how Lao language should be written.

Sila Vilavong, the most prominent figure of traditional (i.e., pre-revolutionary) Lao scholarship, produced a range of works on aspects of Lao culture, and today there is a romanticized notion of his scholarship (cf. Outhin et al 1990). Sila instigated an early, unsuccessful attempt to in-

corporate the full complement of Indic characters (following Pali) into Lao orthography, so that Indic etymology could be reproduced letter for letter in the everyday spelling system (cf. Bizot 1996, Ivarsson 1999, Sila 1996[1938]). This attempt is found in Sila's grammar, published in 1935 by the then recently established Chantabouri Buddhist Academic Council. One of Sila's primary concerns was to promote religious studies, and the move to make Pali accessible to anyone who knew Lao was seen as a crucial step in doing this (Sila 1935:x, cited in Thongphet 1995:103). This project ran into problems due especially to the Lao nationalist desire for the language to be clearly distinct from Thai, which had already incorporated the full complement of Indic characters. Sila's approach was taken by many to be dangerously close to aping developments in Thai orthography at the time (see Diller 1991, Ivarsson 1999). Much later, Sila's proposals for the Lao orthography were also seen as less practical and more elitist, in opposition to fundamental principles of Phoumi's revolutionary grammar (see below).

Pierre Somchin Nginn was head of the long-standing Literary Committee, and presided over the publication of the Royal Lao Government official Grammar of Lao, published in 1972 (RLG 1972). Nginn's view of Lao grammar and orthography was more progressive than Sila's, whereby he partly followed a principle of simplicity and 'phonetic' spelling, while allowing for Indic etymology to be reflected in the spelling of borrowings, at least to the extent that existing Lao characters could facilitate this.

More recently, Phoumi Vongvichit has had the most direct hand in determining the current state of Lao orthographic convention, as well as being a leading political figure throughout the history of the revolutionary struggle. The 'cultural tsar' of the Lao revolution (Stuart-Fox 1997:5), Phoumi was a 'revolutionary activist member ... of the traditional Lao elite', who became Interior Minister of the Pathet Lao resistance government when it was formed in 1950, later becoming Minister of Education, Culture, and Information and a member of the inner cabinet and the Political Bureau of the government of the Lao PDR upon its formation in 1975 (Stuart-Fox 1997:78-9, 170, 186). Phoumi published his *Lao Grammar* in the heartland of the revolutionary struggle in 1967. The book was widely distributed after the revolution in 1975, and is perhaps more significant in Laos as a historical and culturally symbolic document than as an academic contribution either to linguistic description or to language standardization. (See below for further discussion of Phoumi's gram-

mar.) Since his death in 1994, Phoumi has received mixed respect within the academic community. Compare, for example, the strong support from younger scholars seen in Thongphet (1995) and Khamhoung (1995), as opposed to Thongkham and Souvan's (1997:ii) tepid if not overtly negative mention of his role in the context of Sila's much earlier traditionalist work.

'Grammar' in the Lao academy is a normative idea. Rules of grammar prescribe what is correct and proscribe what is incorrect. Further, the intellectual focus is almost exclusively on orthographic convention, i.e., correct spelling. Much about the overall grammar of the language (see further chapters of this book) is little described and little explored by Lao scholars. Work on morphology and syntax is explicitly (and sometimes inappropriately) modeled on traditional European grammar (see section 2.1, above; cf. Diller 1988, 1993 on a similar situation in Thai).

With the establishment of the Lao PDR in 1975, the politically motivated reforms embodied in Phoumi's *Lao Grammar* (see section 2.2.2 below) were officially adopted. The positions of Phoumi on the one hand, and Nginn, along with Sila, on the other, have polarized, symbolizing the forces of old versus new, pre-revolutionary versus revolutionary, traditional versus progressive, religious versus scientific. When Phoumi's grammar became the national standard, his reforms were accepted and adopted. But since the perestroika of the late 1980's, many aspects of culture and society associated with socialist ideology have decreased in popularity (especially in Vientiane), and have been toned down, tolerated rather than actively supported. Since the early nineties (e.g., Houmphanh 1996[1990]), and particularly since Phoumi's death in 1994 (cf. Sisaveuy 1996), the feeling in Vientiane has been that Phoumi's reforms are out of date, having already served their purpose in contributing to a certain phase of the revolution (Houmphanh 1996[1990]:167). In a rather different tone, Thongkham and Souvan (1997:ii) imply that Phoumi's grammar crowned a long history of steady deterioration of the ideal embodied in Sila's four-volume grammar of more than three decades earlier (Sila 1935). While commentators are almost unanimous that the reforms are inappropriate for contemporary Lao, there remains the problem of determining what the new alternatives are. It is useful in this connection to look at the debate which occurred in the decade or so before liberation.

Lao was first officially adopted as the language of education in (Royal Lao Government controlled) Laos in 1962, under the National Educa-

tional Reform Act (RLG 1962, cited in Chamberlain 1978:267). While the diversity of pronunciation in various dialects of Lao was apparently considered tolerable ('most Lao scholars agree ... that promoting a standard pronunciation is neither feasible nor necessarily desirable', Chamberlain 1978:267), the issue that generated lively debate was the standardization of the system of writing (Chamberlain 1978, Houmphanh 1996[1990]). The situation is summed up by Allan Kerr in the preface to his 1972 Lao-English Dictionary: 'A major difficulty which confronted the compiler was the fact that the spelling of Lao words has not been standardized; this is particularly true in the case of words of Pali and Sanskrit origin. The chief guide for correct spelling is a special directive sent by the King of Laos to the Comité Littéraire, which states as a general principle that all words are to be spelled exactly as they are pronounced. However, this has thus far been an ideal rather than an accomplished fact In determining which of a series of [variant spellings] should be treated as a main entry the compiler has had the temerity to make decisions in doubtful cases His decisions represent a compromise between the attitude of the traditionalists who oppose change of any kind and that of the modernists who are eager to change everything.' (Kerr 1972:ix.)

The debate was highly politicized. The original directive (Royal Ordinance Number 10, January 27, 1949, for which consult Khamphao 1995, RLG 1972), was interpreted in different ways (or to different degrees of strictness) by different political factions of the then coalition government. Article 2, the relevant section of this brief document, reads:

The orthography of Lao words, and of words borrowed into Lao from foreign languages, follows pronunciation used in Laos.

The traditionalists wanted aspects of original Pali or Sanskrit spelling retained in loanwords from those languages, creating apparently arbitrary complexity for those unfamiliar with Indic etymology. These spellings would have to be learnt by memory, rather than directly reflecting pronunciation in predictable fashion. Houmphanh (1996[1990]: 163, cf. also ICR 1995) mentions the added issue of foreign borrowings and neologisms, with regard to which there were many different opinions, and no unified resolutions.

Chamberlain (1978:269) reports that at the time the Lao Patriotic Front 'followed a stricter interpretation of the Royal Ordinance'. Thus,

not only would they dispose of spellings which used final consonants alien to Lao phonology, they would also overtly write in the epenthetic vowels which are automatically inserted between consonants in erstwhile clusters.

While various interpretations were subject to public debate in the Royal Lao Government occupied areas of lowland Laos, there was no such discussion in the revolutionary Liberated Zone, where this stricter interpretation (which would eventually prevail), had been accepted and applied by revolutionary forces since at least the early 1950s.⁵ A symbolic struggle between grammars directly reflected the political struggle between communist forces in the Liberated Zone, and royalist forces in the lowlands. Competing interpretations carried potent symbolism, throughout the embattled period up to 1975, and well beyond.⁶

2.2.2 Revolutionary reforms

Phoumi's *Lao Grammar* was published by the Lao Patriotic Front at Sam Neua in 1967. The book was widely distributed after the establishment of the Lao PDR in 1975, and had far-reaching effect. It set in place as a national standard the revolutionary forces' strict interpretation of the 1949 Royal Ordinance, which had already been the norm in the Liberated Zone for at least 20 years. Phoumi takes a strongly political stance in his Introduction, stressing the nation-unifying function of a 'scientific' grammar, an urgent requirement at that time of struggle to unite the nation under socialism. He commits to words the principles of language reform in Laos which were established and carried through until his death:

Every country in the world has its own principles of speech and writing, its own linguistic principles which may demonstrate the style and honor of the nation, and demonstrate the cultural independence of the nation, along with independence in political, economic and other arenas. Laos has gone back and forth as a colonized state

⁵Those who were producing Lao language documents in the Liberated Zone constituted a small community in comparison to those in Royal Lao Government areas at the time.

⁶Many overseas communities of Lao, who fled Laos under the revolutionary government, continue to publish their community materials using orthographic conventions based on the more traditional interpretation of the 1949 Royal Ordinance.

of various foreign nations for many centuries. Whichever country has colonized us, that country has brought its language to be used here and mixed with Lao, causing Lao to lose its original former content, bit by bit. Most importantly, this has been the case during the time that Laos has been an 'old-style' colony of the French colonialists, and a 'new-style' colony of the American imperialists. They have tried to incite and force Lao people to popularize speaking and studying their languages, and so then to abandon and forget our own Lao language, little by little. Furthermore, activities along the borders adjoining various neighboring countries have led a certain number of Lao people, who do not remember their Lao well, to introduce those foreign languages and mix them with Lao, causing their already degraded Lao to further depart from original principles, on a daily basis. The result of this situation is that Lao people speak and write Lao without unity, where those who live close to the border with whichever country it may be, or who have studied the language of that country, write and speak according to the style and the accent of that country. Since Lao does not yet have unified principles of writing and speech, we Lao neither like to, nor dare to write books or translate books into Lao, which means that the cultural struggle of our Lao nation is not as strong as other areas of the struggle. This has considerable negative consequences for our struggle to seize control of the nation and fight American imperialism. The preservation and renovation of the nation's orthography, idiom, literature and cultural principles demonstrates the patriotic spirit, the fine tradition and heritage of bravery which was passed down to us from our forebearers ... The leading idea in my research and writing of this book 'Lao Grammar' is for the grammar of Lao to belong to the nation, and to the people, and for it to be progressive, modern, and scientific ... Every principle and every term used herein is intended to be simple, so that the general populace, of high or low education, may easily understand ... My greatest concern in writing this book is to have people understand and utilize the principles and the various terms in the easiest possible way. (Phoumi 1967:5-8)

Thus, two crucial principles guided Phoumi's reforms: first, to preserve the language as uniquely Lao and free of unwelcome foreign (especially Thai) influence, and second, to facilitate the greatest access to literacy for the population as a whole, not just the well educated and priv-

ileged. Adult education was an important focus of educational policy in the new government, and much of this was aimed at non-Lao speaking minorities (Stuart-Fox 1986:147-8).

It is interesting to consider why it is that while in the passage quoted above, Phoumi names the French and the Americans, but doesn't name the Thai, even though he is so obviously referring to them. The passage about 'neighboring countries' could only be referring to Thailand, particularly obvious given the distribution of political control during the time the book was written. Thai influence was also already a topic of scholarly debate in Royal Lao Government areas of lowland Laos when Phoumi's grammar was published. Evidently, Thai was then noticeably influencing not only Lao orthography, but also Lao pronunciation, in daily life, as well as in the mass media.

Phoumi's changes to the orthography fully reflected the Lao Patriotic Front's stricter interpretation of the royal directive to spell words according to their pronunciation. This especially concerned the spelling of Indic loanwords whose original pronunciation (and thus, their spelling) included a far greater range of syllable-final consonants than were found in the phonology of spoken Lao.

The most famous and most potent symbol of Phoumi's reforms was the removal from the Lao alphabet of the letter 'r', representing the alveolar trill [r] (for impassioned discussions, see Bounleuth 1995:37-39, Sisaveuy 1996:98-99). This reform had already been long in place in revolutionary writing in the Liberated Zone. For example, in a Neo Lao Issara information sheet, dated 1955, the Lao letter 'r' does not appear. While Central (normative standard) Thai has a spoken contrast between /l/ and /r/, there is no such contrast in spoken Lao, and /r/ is not part of the sound system.⁷ As Thongphet puts it, 'no linguist, phonetician or phonologist would ever say that Lao had the sound [r]' (Thongphet 1995:104). Reinhorn (1970:x) says that 'r' exists for Lao language 'purely in theory'. If a word beginning with /r/ in Central Thai is also found in Lao, the Thai /r/ will correspond in spoken Lao to either /l/ or /h/ (see Enfield 1999 for details).

⁷As Grant Evans (personal communication) has pointed out, there are cases where 'r' is pronounced by Lao people. These are marked usages, licensed either by the particular cultural context (e.g., religious formality), or the particular words being pronounced (e.g., foreign names).

Given Phoumi's premisses, his reasoning for removing 'r' was rational. Why should the language retain an orthographic distinction ('l' vs. 'r') which reflects no spoken distinction, and thus must be remembered either arbitrarily (thus harder to learn), or with explicit reference to a distinction made in a foreign language (i.e., Thai, where orthography reflects etymology)? The removal of 'r' nicely served both of Phoumi's aims in linguistic reform: to exclude 'non-Lao' elements, and to make the system simpler and thus easier to learn for those with lower levels of education (i.e., by not having to remember by rote, or by knowledge of Thai, which Lao words pronounced with /l/ are spelt with 'r' and which are spelt with 'l').⁸ There is an increasing popular preference in recent years to tend towards the preservation of etymology in loanwords where possible.

Moving away from the issue of spelling, there are other aspects of the language which have been similarly subject to politically-motivated reforms, although it seems these were not overtly published and distributed in the same way. Many changes were brought in either explicitly, or by example, during a nationwide massive increase in education immediately after 1975 (Stuart-Fox 1986:145), of which a major proportion was ideological and political in nature (cf. also Stuart-Fox 1997, Chapter 6). See Enfield (1999:274ff) for more detailed discussion of a range of cases, including politeness particles, honorific pronouns, political slogans, and the abolition of Indicisms in official terminology.

2.2.3 Contemporary debate

Within the debate among today's community of Lao concerned with the state of the language, we can discern a number of divisions, related in general to the partition of new versus old. But since there are three main movements in the standardization of Lao, as discussed above, the line may be drawn in different places. The extremes are the (post-) Phoumi-ist position (e.g., Thongphet 1995) on the one hand, and the Sila-ist position (e.g., Thongkham and Souvan 1997), on the other. The Nginn-ist

⁸Diller (1991) reports similar issues in Thailand, where the orthographic 'r' vs. 'l' distinction is not colloquially pronounced by most Thai. He writes, 'Occasionally higher government units take direct linguistic action. On 12 January 1988 the Prime Minister's office issued a proclamation warning the bureaucracy to pronounce r- and l- distinctly...' (Diller 1991:112).

approach is progressive and rationalist from the Sila-ist point of view, but conservative and traditional from the Phoumi-ist point of view. From the perspective of modern socialist principles, and a concern for the integrity of the present government's cultural policies, only the Phoumi-ist position is politically correct. But for those with a more general nationalist concern that Lao be kept safely distinct from Thai, only Sila's approach looks problematic. For those who are concerned that Buddhism be better served in education and in general public life, neither the Nginn nor Phoumi approaches offer the promise of what Sila had planned.

The career of Lao as a national language continues to produce a complex weaving (see Enfield 1999:277ff for further elaboration), whose pattern emerges from oppositions of rationalist versus traditional, progressive versus conservative, concerned with emblems versus concerned with matters of principle. We move now from language ideology to language structure, beginning with the phonological system.

Chapter 3

Phonology

Phonological structure of Lao words may be specified in terms of a set of initial consonants, a set of final consonants, a set of vowels, a set of lexical tones, and a phonotactic template. Words are generally monosyllabic, but not exclusively. As a tone language, Lao is fairly typical of the mainland Southeast Asian type. Five distinct pitch contours serve to distinguish between lexical items. For example, the segmental string *saw* means different things depending on the pitch contour with which it is pronounced: *saw1* ‘to hire or rent’, *saw2* ‘to cease’, *saw3* ‘a post’, *saw4* ‘morning’, *saw5* ‘sad’.¹

3.1 Phonotactics

The underlying segmental template for the word is as follows:

$$C_0 V_0 C_1 V_1 V_2 C_2$$

Figure 3.1. Segmental slots in the Lao word

In all words, slots C_1 and V_1 must be realized, but C_1V_1 alone is not a possible word: in addition to C_1V_1 , either V_2 , C_2 , or both must also be realized. I shall refer to C_1 as the major-initial consonant, and C_2 as the final consonant. The slots labeled C_0 and V_0 constitute the minor syllable, in those words which have one. (If either C_0 or V_0 is realized, they must both be realized.) Minor syllables are unstressed, and do not show distinctive tone independent of the stressed, major syllable to which they attach. De-stressed affixes or clitics behave like minor syllables in this respect (e.g., class terms and modifier classifiers discussed in Chapter 7; some of the aspectual-modal markers discussed in Chapter 9). The slot C_0 allows only a restricted subset of initial consonants (e.g., *b-* is rare,

¹There is considerable phonological variation in the many regional dialects of Lao, including significant variation in the system of lexical tones. The present description is based on the speech of people who are at least second generation residents of the city of Vientiane.

palatal and velar nasals do not occur), and the same is true for vowels in V_0 (only /a, i, u/ are allowed, with no length contrast). A long vowel in the major syllable is analyzed as a single vowel occurring twice in succession, i.e., in adjacent slots. If V_1 and V_2 are not identical, then V_1 may be one of /i/, /u/, or /ù/, and V_2 must be /a/.

While many words have one major syllable, a significant number of words have multiple syllables. Most of these are either borrowings (e.g., Indic-based neologisms like *thoo2lathat1* ‘television’ or *lat1thatham2-manuun2* ‘constitution’), or reduplicative/alliterative structures such as found in ideophones (e.g., *thii1-lii1* ‘running madly’, *kòng1-dòng1* ‘swinging heavily’).

3.2 Major-initial consonants

Table 2 shows the set of consonants which may occur in the major-initial consonant slot:

Table 2. Major-initial consonants (occurring in C_1 slot)

		Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	Voiceless unaspirated	p-	t-	c-	k-	ʔ-
	Voiceless aspirated	p^h-	t^h-		k^h-	
	Voiced	b-	d-			
Fricatives		f-	s-			h-
Nasals		m-	n-	ɲ-	ŋ-	
Lateral			l-			
Glides		v-		j-		

A few points may be noted. First, *t-* is not only distinct in voicing from the other alveolar stops, but is also typically produced with tongue contact further forward (apico-dental). Second, the three-way distinction in voice onset time for stops is not found post-coronally, with gaps in the palatal and velar series. Third, initial *v-* is always labio-dental, and varies in whether its manner of articulation is fricative or approximant (the latter is more common). In contrast with its counterpart in final position, initial *v-* is never pronounced as a bilabial approximant *w-*.

3.3 Final consonants

The set of consonants which may appear in syllable-final C₂ slot is less than half the size of the set of major-initials. There are no contrasts in voice onset time of stops in C₂ position. There are no palatals, no fricatives, and no lateral. There is no short-long vowel distinction before final -ʔ. Final -w represents the same phoneme as initial v-. The difference in transcription reflects a significant audible difference in pronunciation.

Table 3. Final consonants (occurring in C₂ slot)

		Labial	Coronal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	Voiceless checked	-p	-t	-k	-ʔ
Nasals		-m	-n	-ŋ	
Glides		-w	-j		

3.4 Vowels

The set of vowels is large in typological terms, with nine distinct points in the vowel space, and with a short-long vowel distinction:

Table 4. Vowels

	unrounded		rounded	
	front	central	back	
high	i i:		ɯ ɯ:	u u:
mid	e e:	ə ə:		o o:
low	ɛ ɛ:	a a:		ɔ ɔ:
diphthongs	ia, ua, ɯa (and in Northern varieties au)			

3.5 Tones

There are five distinct lexical tones in the variety of Lao spoken by natives of Vientiane (cf. Osatananda 1997). I refer to these using the numerals 1-5. Tone 1 has a level contour, around the middle of the pitch range

(e.g., *khaa1* ‘galangal’, *khat1* ‘select’). Tone 2 has a high-rising contour, beginning around the mid range and going to high (e.g., *khaa2* ‘to be stuck’, *khat2* ‘contrary’). Tone 3 has a low-rising contour, beginning around the bottom of the pitch range and rising sharply (e.g., *khaa3* ‘leg’, *kaa3* ‘crow’). Sometimes Tone 3 is pronounced as a low, level tone, without a rising offset. Tone 4 has a high-falling contour, beginning at the top of the pitch range and falling sharply (e.g., *khaa4* ‘commerce’, *khaat4* ‘hope’). Tone 5 has a mid-falling contour, beginning at the middle of the pitch range and falling to low (e.g., *khaa5* ‘slave’, *khaat5* ‘torn’).

There are constraints on the occurrence of certain tones with certain syllable types, depending on (a) whether the major-initial consonant is a non-aspirated stop (b-, d-, p-, t-, c-, k-, ?-) or j- (versus any other consonant initial), (b) whether there is a final stop consonant, and (c) if so, whether the vowel is short or long. The constraints are as follows:

1. If C_1 is a non-aspirated stop or j- and C_2 is not a stop, Tones 2 and 5 do not occur (cf. *paal* ‘forest’ versus *paa3* ‘fish’ versus *paa4* ‘elder aunt (Pa.eZ)’).
2. If C_2 is a stop and the vowel is short, tones 3, 4, and 5 do not occur (cf. *khop1* ‘meet’ versus *khop2* ‘bite’); in addition, if C_1 is a non-aspirated stop or j-, Tone 1 does not occur (cf. *kop2* ‘frog sp.’).
3. If C_2 is a stop and the vowel is long, tones 1, 2, and 3 do not occur (cf. *saap4* ‘to know’ versus *saap5* ‘dank’); in addition, if C_1 is a non-aspirated stop or j-, Tone 4 does not occur (cf. *daap5* ‘sword’).

These constraints can be interpreted with reference to traditional, historical-comparative description of the tone system of Lao. Traditional analysis (Gedney 1989) makes reference to three parameters which determine the tone category of a word. First, the initial consonant of a syllable will belong to one of three classes (as determined by the manner of articulation of the syllable in Proto Southwestern Tai): low (reconstructed as ‘voiceless, plus friction’), middle (reconstructed as ‘voiceless, minus friction’), or low (reconstructed as voiced). Second, a syllable will be either ‘live’ (i.e., with vocalic or sonorant final) or ‘dead’ (i.e., with stop final). Third, if ‘live’, it makes a difference whether the syllable is historically unmarked for tone (A), or historically marked as Tone 1 (B) or Tone 2 (C).

Fourth, if ‘dead’ (D), it makes a difference whether a syllable has a long or a short vowel. This set of possibilities allows a historical-comparative map of the Lao tone system, as follows (for further information, see Gedney 1989):

Table 5. Modern Lao examples of reflexes of traditional Tai tones

	A	B	C	D _{short}	D _{long}
VOICELESS, +FRICTION	<i>khaa3</i> ‘leg’	<i>khaa1</i> ‘galangal’	<i>khaa5</i> ‘slave’	<i>khat2</i> ‘contrary’	<i>khaat5</i> ‘torn’
VOICELESS, -FRICTION	<i>kaa3</i> ‘crow’	<i>kaa1</i> ‘fish sp.’	<i>kaa4</i> ‘dare’	<i>kat2</i> ‘bite’	<i>kaat5</i> ‘cabbage’
VOICED	<i>khaa2</i> ‘stuck’	<i>khaa1</i> ‘cost’	<i>khaa4</i> ‘commerce’	<i>khat1</i> ‘select’	<i>khaat4</i> ‘hope’

3.6 Transcription

Tables 6, 7, and 8 lay out the transcription system used in this book.

Table 6. Transcription system: Consonants

		Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	Voiceless unaspirated	p	t	c	k	q
	Voiceless aspirated	ph	th		kh	
	Voiced	b	d			
Fricatives	Voiceless	f	s			h
Nasals	Voiced	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	
Liquid	Lateral		l			
Glides	Voiced	v/w		j		

3.7 Remark

I have aimed in this chapter to state the bare essentials of Lao phonology. Much more needs to be said about the vagaries of phonological structure,

Table 7. Transcription system: Vowels

	unrounded			rounded
	front	central	back	
high	i ii		ù ùù	u uu
mid	ê êê	e ee		o oo
low	è èè	a aa		ò òò
diphthongs	ia, ua, ùa			

Table 8. Transcription system: Tones

Tones
1. mid level
2. high rising
3. low rising
4. high falling
5. low falling
∅. unstressed

including phonotactic distributions of both segments and tones, the interaction of tone and morphosyntax, the phonetics of tone (where more than mere pitch distinctions are certainly involved), and dialect and other sociolinguistic variation. The problem of intonation, in particular, is a major topic for investigation.

Part II

Particles

Chapter 4

Sentence-final and phrase-final particles

4.1 Sentence-final particles

Sentence-final particles make a range of distinctions in the domains of status, illocutionary force, and evidentiality. Their meanings are primarily related to matters of the speech event. They convey messages which modify relations between speech act participants and the proposition encoded in the core of the utterance, typically concerning interlocutors' (relative) epistemic stance(s) toward what is being said. Accordingly, sentence-final particles occur almost exclusively in conversation, not in written or otherwise formal speech. They are the main means for making illocutionary and other interactionally-grounded distinctions, including marking polar questions, imperatives, assertions of different strengths and with different types of epistemic quality, as well as encoding evidential, modal, and related information at the clause level. Syntactically, they occur at the right border of the clausal core (cf. Figure 1.1). If the sentence-final particles constitute a closed class, it is a relatively porous one. There is significant dialectal and sociolinguistic variation.¹

To illustrate the phenomenon, here is a declarative sentence:

- (1) *saam3 khon2 taaj3*
three person die
'Three people died.'

This can be converted into a question by adding a sentence-final particle, such as the unmarked polar question particle *bòò3*, the new inference polar question particle *vaa3*, or the independent presumption polar question particle *tii4*:

- (2) *saam3 khon2 taaj3 bòò3*
three person die QPLR
'Is it the case that three people died?'

¹In these ways, Lao sentence-final particles are like sentence-final particles found across languages of mainland Southeast Asia (see for example Gibbons 1980, Kwok 1984, Luke 1990, Matthews and Yip 1994:338ff on Cantonese; Crisfield 1974 on Lao; Cooke 1989 on Thai; Thompson 1987 on Vietnamese; Huffman 1970 on Khmer).

- (3) *saam3 khon2 taaj3 ti4*
 three person die QPLR.PRESM
 ‘Surely I’m correct in thinking that three people died?’
- (4) *saam3 khon2 taaj3 vaa3*
 three person die QPLR.INFER
 ‘Do I rightly infer that three people died?’

Sentence-final particles occur in a clause-final slot, after all verb complements and postverbal aspectual-modal marking. They occur after a point of possible syntactic completion of an utterance, and may therefore be taken to mark the right border of a clause. Material which appears in Right Position appears after any sentence-final particles (see Figure 1.1, above).

The following example shows a postposed element to the right of the sentence-final particle (cf. example (2)):

- (5) *taaj3 b003, saam3 khon2*
 die QPLR three person
 ‘(They) died, three people?’

Crisfield (1974) describes around 30 Lao particles. His brief but pioneering analysis offers many insightful and sensitive observations on their semantics. The following section surveys the most common particles, including most of those listed by Crisfield.

Within the space constraints of this chapter, the most effective way to describe the sentence-final particles is to illustrate their use in natural discourse, with attention to the interactional contexts in which they are embedded. The basic descriptive approach is to paraphrase the speaker’s meaning (cf. Wierzbicka 2003). The particles are glossed and explicated with examples, under three rubrics: interrogative, declarative, imperative.

Table 9. Sentence- and phrase-final particles discussed in this chapter

Interrogative particles	<i>bòò3</i>	Polar question, unmarked (QPLR)
	<i>vaa3</i>	Polar question, proposition newly inferred (QPLR.INFER)
	<i>tii4</i>	Polar question, proposition independently presumed (QPLR.PRESM)
	<i>nòq1</i>	Polar question, seeks agreement (QPLR.AGREE)
	<i>kòq2</i>	Content question, asks for information currently presupposed (Q.PRESUP)
	<i>hùù2</i>	Content question, emphatic, shows mild annoyance at not knowing (Q.EMPH)
	<i>nòò4</i>	Wondering, ‘out-loud’ question to oneself (Q.WNDR)
	<i>buq2</i>	Rhetorical question, speaker does not know (Q.UNKN)
	Factive particles	<i>dêj2</i>
<i>dêê4</i>		Factive, fills in addr with information presupposed in current discourse but unknown to addr (FAC.FILLIN)
<i>juu1</i>		Factive, weakens speaker’s commitment to proposition (FAC.WEAK)
<i>dòòk5</i>		Factive, resists addressee’s current stance or presumption (FAC.RESIST)
<i>sam4</i>		Factive, proposition is unexpected or surprising given the context (FAC.SURPR)
<i>naa3</i>		Factive, makes explicit something which addressee should already have known (FAC.EXPLIC)
<i>veej4</i>		Factive, emphatic (FAC.EMPH)
<i>dee4</i>		Factive, puts on record this was said (FAC.ONRCD)
<i>lèq1</i>		Factive, confirms something already intended (FAC.PRF)
Imperative particles	<i>mèè4</i>	Imperative, states addr is unimpeded (IMP.UNIMPD)
	<i>saa3</i>	Imperative, suggests action to addr (IMP.SUGG)
	<i>dèè1</i>	Imperative, softens or plays down burden of request (IMP.SOFT)
	<i>vaj2</i>	Imperative, asks addr to hurry (IMP.RUSH)
	<i>duu2</i>	Imperative, pleading ‘do it for me’ (IMP.PLEAD)
Other particles	<i>dêê2</i>	Themmatizes, asks ‘What about X?’ (Q.THEME)
	<i>qeej4</i>	Vocative marker (VOC)
	<i>kadaaj1</i>	Afterthought marker (AFTH)
	<i>baat5-niø</i>	Themmatizer (THZR)

The list of particles given here is not exhaustive. The aim is to represent the particles which are most common, and which therefore have a relatively high functional load.

4.1.1 Interrogative particles

bòò3 – ‘Is P the case?’ (polar question, unmarked = QPLR)

Bòò3 is the unmarked polar question particle. When appended to a proposition, it expresses the idea that (a) the speaker does not know whether the proposition is true or not, and (b) they want the addressee to tell them.

Here is an example from a conversation between two friends who worked together in the same organization some years earlier, and who are now catching up, and gossiping about the speaker’s previous boss. The speaker is describing a boyfriend her boss previously had. After making some statements about the way the boyfriend looked, the speaker asks if her addressee has ever actually seen him. Having no particular reason to suspect the answer will be yes or no (since the two interlocutors had different bosses), the speaker marks the question with *bòò3*:

- (6) *caw4 hên3 bòò3*
 2SG.P see QPLR
 ‘Did you see (him)?’

In another example, the speaker is on a visit to another’s house. She wants to chew betel nut, and has not brought paraphernalia of her own. She asks whether her hosts have anything for her to chew:

- (7) *mii2 ñang3 khiaw4 bòò3*
 there.is INDEF.INAN chew QPLR
 ‘Is there anything to chew?’

In another example, some friends are talking, and one asks the other to report on a wedding he had recently been to:

- (8) *pên3 cang1 daj3, muan1 bòò3, pajø kin3 dòòng3, mùù4*
 COP way INDEF fun QPLR DIR.ABL eat wedding day
nan4
 DEM.NONPROX
 ‘How (was it), was it fun, going to the wedding that day?’

In another example, two men are discussing route directions through nearby countryside areas, and one is trying to clarify which location is being discussed. He asks if the intended location has rice paddies:

- (9) *mii2 naa2 bðð3, juu1 han5*
 there.is paddy QPLR be.at DEM.DIST
 ‘Are there paddies, there?’

In each of the above cases, by virtue of being marked by *bðð3*, the proposition becomes a straightforward polar question. The meaning expressed by the speaker is that they want to know if the proposition is true, but this meaning does not convey any added, special epistemic terms of the question. This special work is the business of other interrogative particles, to which we now turn.

vaa3 – ‘Do I rightly infer that P is the case?’ (polar question, proposition newly inferred = QPLR.INFER)

The particle *vaa3* takes a proposition and turns it into a polar question, encoding the same basic function as *bðð3*, but conveying in addition the idea that the speaker has some newly inferred reason to believe that P is the case.

For example, a speaker is about to relate a narrative for the tape recorder, and the tape recorder has been switched on, but he doesn’t realize it yet. There is a moment of silence as I am waiting for him to start, but he is waiting for me to attend to the recording equipment. My prolonged inaction and expectant look give him reason to infer that he is supposed to start without further ado, and he asks, marking this new inference with *vaa3*, if it is in fact so:

- (10) *dajø vaw4 leej2 vaa3 niø*
 ACHV speak NO.ADO QPLR.INFER TPC
 ‘Do I rightly infer that I am to just go ahead and speak then?’

In another example, a man describes his first conversation with his (then not yet) mother-in-law. When he asks after her husband (i.e., the father of his intended bride), the mother-in-law-to-be explains that the husband does not live there, and that he is a Frenchman who was in Laos temporarily and has gone back to France. He gathers that she didn’t go

with him, and asks, marking this inference with *vaa3*, whether it is in fact so:

- (11) *caw4 bə̀ø mùa2 nam2 phen1 vaa3*
 2SG.P NEG return with 3.P QPLR.INFER
 ‘Do I rightly infer that you didn’t go back with him?’

In a third example, a woman has just finished preparations to chew betel, and has set down the basket of betel-chewing paraphernalia. Then seeing her host reaching toward the basket, she infers that the host intends to chew betel nut herself. She asks whether this is in fact so:

- (12) *caw4 khiaw4 vaa3*
 2SG.P chew QPLR.INFER
 ‘Do I rightly infer that you’re going to chew (betel nut too)?’

In a fourth example, a younger man is talking with an older man. The younger man asks, ‘Who has been out collecting bamboo shoots?’. The older man looks to where the younger man is looking and sees a sack of shoots leaning against the door. He infers that these are the bamboo shoots the speaker must be referring to, and asks whether this is in fact so:

- (13) *juu1 naj2 thaj1 hanø vaa3*
 be.at in sack TPC.DIST QPLR.INFER
 ‘Do I rightly infer (that you mean) those in the sack there?’

Finally, a woman is telling a former work-mate about her new co-workers. She describes one girl’s figure as being *ñaj1* ‘large’, which is ambiguous: it could mean ‘tall’, ‘big-framed’, or ‘fat’. The former work-mate infers that it means ‘fat’, and asks whether this is in fact so:

- (14) *tuj4 vaa3*
 fat QPLR.INFER
 ‘Do I rightly infer that (you mean she’s) fat?’

In each of these cases, the proposition being questioned is something that is newly inferred or inferable from the immediate context, and the speaker is marking this inference with *vaa3*, and asking if it is in fact the case.

tii4 – ‘Surely I’m correct in thinking P is the case!?’ (polar question, proposition independently presumed = QPLR.PRESM)

The particle *tii4* marks a polar question, and conveys the idea that the speaker has independent reason to believe that P is the case, but now has some reason to require that this be confirmed. The speaker is saying something like: ‘I am already fairly certain that this is the case, please confirm that I’m not wrong’.

For example, Speaker A is explaining that he intends to collect a certain type of fish trap in order to donate it to a collection of traps housed at a government fishery office. He begins by saying ‘(We’ll) take (the trap) and put (it) aside as a-’ (see (15)), pausing where he should provide a noun phrase,² but then abandons this, passing over the word he should have supplied here, then continuing. A few lines earlier he had used an obscure word *kudang3*, which refers to a storehouse, but it seems clear from the context that what the speaker wants to say is *thilanùk1* ‘souvenir’, as Speaker B proposes:

- (15) A *qaw3 pajø vaj4 pên3- juu1 kom3 pamong4*
 take DIR.ABL keep COP be.at department fishery
hanø lèq5
 TPC.DIST FAC.PRF
 ‘(We’ll) take (the trap) and put (it) aside as a- at the Fishery Department there.’
- B *thilanùk1 tii4*
 souvenir QPLR.PRESM
 ‘A souvenir, you surely mean?’

In another example, the speaker is asking about who is going on a planned driving trip. The car involved has a small number of seats, and it appears obvious that the addressee—the driver—is unlikely to want to take more than three passengers. Two of these passengers are already known. Another very likely passenger is the driver’s wife, whose name is Da, but there are also a number of people who are with Da and who may want or expect to be able to come on this trip. The speaker asks if it will

²Ellipsis is not possible here, since the argument in question is not a core argument but a non-core complement of the copula *pên3*; cf. Chapter 17, section 17.1.3.3.

only be Da coming along, using *tii4* to convey the idea that he is already pretty sure that this is the case, but that since it's not actually up to him, he still needs to check:

- (16) *siø paj3 tèè1 daa3 hanø tii4, bðø paj3 nam2*
 IRR go only D TPC.DIST QPLR.PRESM NEG go with
kadaaj1
 AFTH
 'It's only going to be Da going, surely? (The others) won't go along.'

Finally, a hotel manager relates a story of how a hotel guest got into a fight with another hotel guest. The speaker says, 'That guy was from Iraq, and he came along and another guy criticized his hairstyle, "Oh, this guy's hairstyle, why's it like this?!"' The speaker then quotes what the Iraqi said in response, before the fight erupted:

- (17) *song2 phom3 kaø lùang1 khòòng3 haw2 tii4*
 form hair T.LNK matter of 1.FA QPLR.PRESM
 'The hairstyle is my business, surely?!'

In each of these cases, by using *tii4*, the speaker conveys that the proposition being questioned is something that is already, independently figured or presumed to be the case (i.e., independent of what is going on in the context—this is what distinguishes *tii4* from *vaa3*, above), but that the speaker is nevertheless asking the addressee to confirm that it is in fact the case. As the above examples illustrate, this single underlying meaning can be used to quite different pragmatic effects.

nòq1 – 'P is the case, don't you agree?' (polar question, seeking agreement = QPLR.AGREE)

By adding the particle *nòq1* to a statement, a speaker takes a proposition and turns it into a polar question style request for agreement. Examples like the following are very common in everyday speech, where interlocutors have common access to some evaluable phenomenon:

- (18) a. *hòòn4 nòq1*
 hot QPLR.AGREE
 'It's hot, don't you agree?'

- b. *qee5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- (19) a. *sèèp4 nòq1*
delicious QPLR.AGREE
'Delicious, don't you agree?'
- b. *sèèp4*
delicious
'(Yes,) delicious.'

In another example, a woman is talking to her friend about a colleague of hers. She lists a number of this colleague's behaviors that have created problems in her workplace. She cites the colleague's inappropriate way of dressing. The addressee states that this is strange, using *nòq1* to elicit agreement on this judgment from the first speaker, which is immediately forthcoming:

- (20) a. *pèèk5 nòq1*
weird QPLR.AGREE
'Weird, huh?'
- b. *qee5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'

In another example, two men are talking about different possible routes to take in order to get to a certain village. One proposes that to go via a village called Kilometre 40 would be a short way. By adding *nòq1* to this statement, he elicits agreement from his addressee (in the form of a 'head toss', a sharp up-turn of the head which functions something like a nod):

- (21) a. *khaw5 lak2 sii1-sip2 hanø lèq2, kaj4 hanø*
enter km four-ten TPC.DIST FAC.PRF close TPC.DIST
lèq1 nòq1
FAC.PRF QPLR.AGREE
'Enter at Kilometre 40, it's near right?'
- b. (head toss) (i.e., 'Yes, right.')

The very common particle *nòq1* is not a straightforward interrogative, in that it doesn't request information as such. It is grouped with the other

interrogatives because it makes relevant a direct response by the addressee (and if no response is forthcoming, this will be pragmatically marked). This response should be agreement (or disagreement) with some stated stance towards a discourse or situational topic.

kòq1 – ‘remind me WH?’ (content question, asks for information currently being presupposed = Q.PRESUP)

The particle *kòq1* is specialized for content questions (‘WH-questions’) where the information sought after is currently presumed in the discourse, but is either previously known to the speaker but now forgotten, or is as yet unknown to the speaker (e.g., when one walks in on a conversation where speakers are referring to ‘he’ and ‘she’). By adding *kòq1* to a content question, the speaker turns a request for some piece of information into a request for a reminder of that information (Crisfield 1974:43):

- (22) *mèèn1 ñang3 kòq1*
 COP INDEF.INAN Q.PRESUP
 ‘What was that again?’
- (23) *hèn3 phaj3 kòq1*
 see INDEF.HUM Q.PRESUP
 ‘Who did (you) see again?’
- (24) *hêt1 nèèw2 daj3 kòq1*
 do manner INDEF Q.PRESUP
 ‘How is it done again?’

In another example, a hotel manager is describing a fight which took place in the hotel between guests. The speaker can’t remember which country the various parties came from:

- (25) A *maa2 tèè1 saj3 kòq2, mòd3 nan4*
 come from INDEF.PLACE Q.PRESUP bloke DEM.NONPROX
naø hùù2
 TPC.PERIPH Q.EMPH
 ‘(He) came from where again, that bloke, huh?’
thaaw4 qanaa1 tat2 phom3 bòn1 nii4
 fellow HES cut hair place DEM
 ‘The fellow um (who) cut (his) hair here.’

- khon2 ñang3 kòq2*
 person INDEF.INAN Q.PRESUP
 ‘What was he again?’
- B *khon2 qanø qii3lak1*
 person HES Iraq
 ‘An um Iraqi.’

This particle is not used with polar questions.

hùù2 – ‘WH the heck?’ (content question, emphatic, shows mild annoyance at not knowing = Q.EMPH)

The particle *hùù2* is usually used with content questions, but sometimes with polar questions as well. It implies impatience or mild annoyance, possibly directed at the speaker himself for not knowing. For example (see also the first line of example (25), above):

- (26) *khaw3 hêt1 ñang3 juu1 phun4 hùù2*
 3PL.B do INDEF.INAN be.at DEM.FAR Q.EMPH
 ‘What the heck are they doing over there (I wonder)?’
- (27) *man2 qañuuq1 cak2 pii3 hùù2*
 3.B age how.many year Q.EMPH
 ‘How the heck old is he (I wonder)?’
- (28) *mùng2 siø paj3 bòð3 hùù2*
 2SG.B IRR go QPLR Q.EMPH
 ‘Are you going or what?’

nòð4 – ‘I wonder if/WH?’ (question, makes ‘out-loud’ question to oneself, not expecting answer = Q.WNDR)

The particle *nòð4* is usually used with content questions, but sometimes with polar questions as well. It conveys a kind of speaker-directed question which does not really expect an answer. The question is simply something that the speaker wonders out loud. For example:

- (29) *khaw3 paj3 saj3 nòð4*
 3PL.B go INDEF.PLACE Q.WNDR
 ‘Where have they gone, I wonder?’

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- (30) *man2 siø hêt1 ñang3 haj5 kin3 nòð4*
3.B IRR make INDEF.INAN give eat Q.WNDR
'What will she make to eat, I wonder?'

It is also possible to combine *nòð4* with a polar question particle:

- (31) *khaw3 siø paj3 bòð3 nòð4*
3PL.B IRR go QPLR Q.WNDR
'Will they go, I wonder?'

buq2 – 'I don't know if/WH.' (rhetorical question, poses question but foregrounds the idea that speaker does not know and does not expect an answer = Q.UNKN)

The particle *buq2* is usually used with content questions, but sometimes with polar questions as well. It is a way of stating a kind of rhetorical question. While *nòð4* is a question that doesn't expect an answer, *buq2* is hardly even a question. That is, *buq2* helps to package an utterance as a question in formal terms, but the speaker foregrounds the idea that they do not know the answer, nor do they expect an answer. For example:

- (32) *khaw3 paj3 saj3 buq2*
3PL.B go INDEF.PLACE Q.UNKN
'Who knows where they have gone?'
- (33) *man2 siø hêt1 ñang3 haj5 kin3 buq2*
3.B IRR make INDEF.INAN give eat Q.UNKN
'Who knows what will she make to eat?'

It is also possible to combine *buq2* with a polar question particle, such as *bòð3* in the following example:

- (34) *khaw3 siø paj3 bòð3 buq2*
3PL.B IRR go QPLR Q.UNKN
'Who knows whether they will go?'

4.1.2 *Factive particles*

dêj2 – 'P is the case, maybe you don't think so' (factive, proposition is news to the addressee = FAC.NEWS)

The particle *dêj2* is attached to an assertion when a speaker wants to explicitly convey that this is being offered as new or possibly surprising information, as if the speaker appends ‘I’m telling you, since it might be that you don’t think it’s the case’.

For example, a speaker is talking about the period immediately following the 1975 revolution in Laos. In the early phase of the new government, people had to attend regular political seminars, propaganda training sessions emblematic of those times. The speaker points out that while these political seminars are no longer attended by everyday citizens, they still regularly occur in official circles. Since they are no longer a public phenomenon, it might be that the addressee thinks that these seminar sessions have been discontinued completely. The speaker uses *dêj2* to convey the idea that this is, perhaps surprisingly, not so:

- (35) *diaw3-nii4 kaø ñang2 hian2 juu1 dêj2*
 now T.LNK STILL study CONT FAC.NEWS
 ‘Now (they) still study, as you might not think.’

In another example, a speaker is describing how to build a chicken coop. He explains that it is not necessary to construct a roost for each and every chicken. This is because chickens don’t all lay eggs at the same time. He is aware that his addressee knows nothing about raising chickens, and it might be that the addressee simply figures that each chicken should have its own personal roost. The speaker marks this possibly surprising information with *dêj2*:

- (36) *man2 bəø khaj1 phòdm4 kan3 dêj2, kaj1*
 3.B NEG have.eggs together COLL FAC.NEWS chicken
 ‘They don’t lay eggs at the same time, you might not think this, chickens.’

In another example, the speaker is telling a story about a mother and child returning to their field hut in the early evening. An animal is following them in the distance, but its form is barely visible in the fading light. Normally, one would take this to be a large domestic animal such as a cow or buffalo, or in some parts of Laos, a horse. But no, this is a story about an attack by a tiger. A critical piece of the story is that nobody expects to see a tiger approaching:

- (37) *man2 bə̀ɸ mə̀n1 nɣua2 laɸ bə̀ɸ mə̀n1 maa4 tham2madaa3*
 3.B NEG COP cow and NEG COP horse ordinary
dəj2 baat5-niɸ, man2 mə̀n1 sù3-khoong1 dəj2
 FAC.NEWS THZR 3.B COP tiger-sp. FAC.NEWS
 ‘It wasn’t a cow and it wasn’t an ordinary horse, despite what you
 might think, now. It was a tiger, you see.’

Finally, a speaker describes conditions under re-education in post-revolutionary Laos. These were in fact prison conditions, but the way it is officially talked about—as ‘education’ and ‘seminars’—does not suggest this. An addressee who did not experience this might therefore not be expected to think that attendants were literally imprisoned. The speaker makes this assertion, explicitly marking with *dəj2* that it is likely to be surprising information:

- (38) *nii3 bə̀ɸ daj4 dəj2, nii3 lə̀ɸ khaw3 siɸ ñing2 taaj3*
 flee NEG CAN FAC.NEWS flee and 3PL.B IRR shoot die
 ‘(One) couldn’t flee you know, flee and they’d shoot (you) dead.’

dêê4 – ‘P is the case, I think you don’t know it’ (factive, filling in addressee with information which is presupposed in current discourse but unknown to addressee = FAC.FILLIN)

The particle *dêê4* is close in meaning to *dəj2*. It is used for stating something that the listener might not realize, but they should or must realize in order to comprehend or properly appreciate something in the context (e.g., what has just been said). It is a way of signaling that you are filling in some needed information. It typically occurs in elaborating or accounting for something that has just been stated, but which the addressee may not yet have fully appreciated. An example is from early in a narrative about an eccentric, clever character called Siang Miang. A king confronts a thorny problem and asks that Siang Miang be brought to help him solve it. Someone is ‘sent off to find him’. However, why someone needs to be sent off to find him might not be clear to a listener. The speaker’s next utterance accounts for this, explaining that Siang Miang’s house is far away. He marks this with *dêê4*:

- (39) *hùan2 phen1 kaj3 dêê4*
 house 3.P far FAC.FILLIN
 ‘His house was far away, you must understand.’

In another example, a speaker has used the word *phèè4*, which is undergoing semantic change. The speaker has to pause to discuss which meaning he intends. The word *phèè4* previously meant ‘to win, to defeat, to be victorious’, while it is now very often used with the opposite meaning, ‘to lose, to be defeated, to be vanquished’. He explains, ‘Nowadays, if we say *phèè4* it means “to lose” ... but in the old days, *phèè4* meant “to be (more) capable”; in boat-racing or in racing buffaloes’,

- (40) *mèèn1 phèè4 dèè4*
 COP *phèè4* FAC.FILLIN
 ‘It is *phèè4*, you must understand.’

juu1 – ‘P is the case, (but) not to a great degree’ (factive, weakens the speaker’s commitment to the proposition = FAC.WEAK)

The particle *juu1*, otherwise a locative verb ‘to be at’ or a means of expressing continuity of action (cf. Chapter 9), can be used for downplaying a speaker’s commitment to an assertion, or attenuating a speaker’s commitment to its truth. The meaning expressed when one adds *juu1* to an assertion is ‘You could say it’s the case, but you couldn’t say it’s very much the case’. It is common with adjectives:

- (41) Q *sèèp4 bòò3*
 delicious QPLR
 ‘Is (it) delicious?’
 A *sèèp4 juu1*
 delicious FAC.WEAK
 ‘(It’s) reasonably delicious (not very).’

It may also be used with other kinds of verbs, including the postverbal modal *daj4* ‘can’. For example, a speaker is asked about his experience in sport, in a prelude to a series of questions about the rules of various games. The speaker’s use of *juu1* as a sentence-final particle conveys the idea that while the assertion—‘Yes, I have’—is true, the speaker wants to downplay the strength of it, so as not to appear to be claiming he is an expert:

- (42) Q *caw4 kheej2 lin5 kilaa2 bòò3*
 2SG.P EXP play sport QPLR
 ‘Have you ever played sport?’

A *qee5 khòðj5 kaø kheej2 lin5 juu1*
 INTJ 1SG.P T.LNK EXP play FAC.WEAK
 ‘Uh-huh, I have played a bit.’

In another example, a man has recently had an accident, and is asked about his recovery. His response is marked by *juu1*, indicating less-than-full commitment to the assertion:

- (43) Q *ñaaŋ1 daj4 bòð3 laø*
 walk CAN QPLR PCL
 ‘Can you walk already?’
 A *daj4 juu1*
 CAN FAC.WEAK
 ‘(I) can, a little.’

dòðk5 – ‘P is the case, not like what you seem to think’ (factive, resists the addressee’s current stance or presumption = FAC.RESIST)

The particle *dòðk5* is negatively valenced, and typically occurs with explicitly negated assertions. When a speaker appends *dòðk5* to an assertion, this conveys a kind of resistance, a meaning along the lines ‘This is the case, in contrast to what you seem to think’. For example, one person says that there is salt in the cupboard, and another checks and sees none, saying:

- (44) *bòø mii2 dòðk5*
 NEG there.is FAC.RESIST
 ‘There isn’t any (contrary to what you seem to think).’

In another example, the speakers are eating a meal together. One of the speakers is a guest, and praises the meal. In response to this, out of politeness, the host herself says that to the contrary the meal is not very good. In this context, the assertion which goes contrary to what the first speaker has just said is, accordingly, marked with *dòðk5*:

- (45) A *kin3 khaw5 sèèp4*
 eat rice delicious
 ‘The meal is delicious.’

- B *bə̀p sə̀p4 paan3 daj3 dək5*
 NEG delicious extent INDEF FAC.RESIST
 ‘It’s not very delicious (contrary to your stance).’

The particle *dək5* need not always be appended to a negatively-marked assertion. The following example is from Crisfield (1974:43, his translation):

- (46) *paj3 juu1 dək5*
 go CONT FAC.RESIST
 ‘Oh, indeed I am going!’

In another example, the speaker works in a hotel which hosts large numbers of short-stay guests from South Asian and Middle Eastern countries. He is asked if there have ever been physical fights arising from tensions between these guests. The question itself seems to betray some possible doubt as to the truth of the proposition. The speaker marks his response with *dək5*, conveying the idea that the assertion is true ‘contrary to what you seem to think’:

- (47) *qooj4 qanə-nii4 niə man2 kaə mii2 juu1*
 INTJ MC.INAN-DEM TPC 3.B T.LNK there.is CONT
lujə-luj4 dək5
 REG FAC.RESIST
 ‘Oy, this happens all the time (contrary to what you seem to expect).’

Note the distinction from the particle *dəj2*, above. The particle *dəj2* conveys the idea that the assertion is news to the addressee, because the addressee might not think that it is the case. By contrast, *dək5* conveys the idea that the truth is not what the addressee appears to think. In this way, *dəj2* emphasizes an informative, news-giving function, while *dək5* has a more resistant, disagreeing function. Accordingly, *dək5* is more natural as a direct, negating response to something just asserted.

sam4 – ‘P is the case, contrary to what one might expect in the context’ (factive, proposition is unexpected or surprising given the context = FAC.SURPR)

The meaning expressed by the particle *sam4* is similar to *dòdòk5* in marking that an assertion is somehow counter to expectation. The nature of the counter-expectation differs from *dòdòk5* in that *sam4* is less about the addressee's supposition in particular, but more about the likely expectation that anybody would have given what is known from the narrative. That is, *dòdòk5* is more closely tied to the speech event participants, *sam4* to the internal logic of the narrated event. *Sam4* may often be translated as 'after all', since it marks an assertion of some state of affairs as being is the opposite of what one would have expected.

In the following example, a couple have found a goose at the market which they want to buy, but they don't have enough money with them. They rush home to get the money, but when they get back to market to buy the goose, it had been sold to someone else. The ultimate outcome—they didn't get the goose—it not the expected or hoped-for one, and this is marked, accordingly, with *sam4*:

- (48) *qoo4 laø bðø daj4 sam4*
 INTJ and NEG acquire FAC.SURPR
 'Oh, and (they) didn't get (it) after all.'

Another example is from the fable of Miss Mola. She never commits to one thing. Having been abandoned by her un-trusting husband, she is now starving. Seeing a crow carrying a fish she chases after it, wanting the fish, but then seeing a dog carrying meat, she goes after the dog instead, wanting the meat, only to notice once again the crow, abandoning her chase for the meat, and so on. She is never satisfied:

- (49) *jaak5 daj4 laaj3, kaø bðø dajø kin3 sam4*
 want acquire much T.LNK NEG ACHV eat FAC.SURPR
 '(She) wanted to get a lot, (but she) didn't get to eat at all.'

In a final example, a speaker is talking about a guest at a wedding he attended. This guest spent the entire evening on the dance floor. The speaker finds it remarkable that she didn't sit down once:

- (50) *qoo4 bðø dajø nang1 hòt4 tang1 sam4*
 INTJ NEG ACHV sit reach chair FAC.SURPR
 'Oh, (she) didn't even sit on a chair.'

The assertion that she didn't once sit down is marked here with *sam4* in order to convey the idea that this is counter to expectation, given the type of context. The particle *sam4* does not target any supposition or expectation of the current speech act participants per se, but rather anyone's expectations given the internal logic of the discourse or situational context.

naa3 – 'P is the case, as you should have already understood' (factive, makes explicit something which the addressee should already have known = FAC.EXPLIC)

The particle *naa3* is used to convey the meaning that an assertion is something which the speaker figures should already be understood by the addressee. It conveys insistence and mild annoyance at the addressee's current failure to understand the relevance of something happening or being said.

For example, a speaker is describing a collision between a motorcycle and a bicycle. The explanation becomes fairly involved:

- (51) *ngoo2 maa2 cang1 sii4 naa3*
 turn come like thus FAC.EXPLIC
 '(They) turned like this (gesturing), you should already understand (I don't think you get it yet).'

In another example, the speaker is describing how people construct chicken coops. He says that coops should be built facing east, as it is said to result in the chickens being more fertile. As soon as he has said this, he goes on to make the explicit assertion that he is talking about people's BELIEFS, implying that this is probably just superstition. His use of the particle *naa3* here is a way to convey that the addressee should already realize this, and should not have taken the speaker himself to have been professing these superstitions:

- (52) *vaw4 khuam2-sua1 naa3*
 speak NZR-believe FAC.EXPLIC
 '(I'm) speaking of beliefs, you must understand (i.e., don't take me to be professing these beliefs myself, I'm only describing them to you).'

In another example, a group is discussing which one amongst them is capable of telling a fable for the tape recorder. One speaker points to another and says, ‘This bloke has lots of stories, for sure.’ The speaker’s subsequent utterance gives an account for why he made this assertion, namely that the fellow in question was once a *lam* singer.³ The speaker’s use of *naa3* marks this assertion as something the addressee needs to have known, or should have known, in order to understand the prior utterance:

- (53) *qanø-nii4 kheej2 hêt1 mòð3-lam2 naa3*
 CLF.INAN-DEM EXP do expert-*lam* FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘This one has been a Lam artist, you must understand.’

A final example comes from a joke-telling. In the joke, a grandpa is helping his grandson read the Lao alphabet. The boy succeeds in reading the first two letters—*kòð3* and *khòð3*—but is stumped on the third. The third letter in the Lao alphabet is *khòð2*, homonymous with the word for ‘neck’. As a hint, the grandfather points to his own neck. The punch line is that instead of saying *khòð2*, the child says *qên3*, which sounds like the name of the English letter N. In order to understand this joke, one needs to already understand what *qên3* means in Lao, and why the child would have said it in this context. The speaker’s next utterance makes this explicit: *qên3* means ‘tendon’ or ‘vein’. The joke is that the child took the old man not to be pointing to his neck, but to the many tendons and veins visible on his neck. In making this explicit, the speaker’s use of *naa3* marks this assertion as something which the recipient of the joke needed to know, or should have known, in order to understand the prior utterance (i.e., the joke’s punch line):

- (54) *phuø-thaw5 hanø man2 thaw5 laø man2 mii2 qên3*
 CT.PERSON-old TPC.DIST 3.B old and 3.B have tendon
juu1 nii4 laaj3 naa3
 be.at DEM much FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘The old man, he was old, and he had many tendons/veins here on his neck (pointing), you must understand.’

³*Lam* is a traditional form of Lao chanting-singing (Compton 1979, Chapman 2001, 2002, 2003).

veej4 – ‘Heck, P is the case!’ (factive, emphatic = FAC.EMPH)

The particle *veej4* (often combined with a perfect marker *laø*, as *laø veej4*) conveys the kind of informality that goes with mild impoliteness or profanity. Crisfield (1974) uses the English interjection *heck* to convey its meaning in English translation. For example, a speaker is talking about the early post-revolutionary years (from 1975), during which many people fled Laos as refugees. He describes his deliberations as to whether it was a good idea, first planning to leave, but then finally deciding not to:

- (55) *maø tat2-sin3-caj3 maj1 vaa1 bəø paj3 laø veej4*
 DIR.ALL decide new COMP NEG go PRF FAC.EMPH
 ‘(I) decided anew, “Heck, (I) won’t go!”.’

In another, similar example, a speaker quotes his own thoughts upon considering whether or not to enroll in a course of study, and eventually deciding to do so:

- (56) *lèw4 maø khùt1 beng1 vaa1 hian2 kaø hian2 laø veej4*
 PRF DIR.ALL think look COMP study T.LNK study PCL
 FAC.EMPH
 ‘Then I thought “Heck, I might as well go ahead and study!”.’

In a final example, a man describes the daily routine at a re-education facility. The speaker explains that at 9 o’clock each evening, the guards would ring a bell, signaling that everyone had to go to sleep. This was mandatory:

- (57) *bəø nòn2 kaø sang1 haj5 nòn2 laø veej4*
 NEG sleep T.LNK order give sleep PCL FAC.EMPH
 ‘(If one) didn’t sleep, heck, they’d order (you) to sleep.’

dee4 – ‘P is the case, y’hear!’ (factive, putting on record that this was said = FAC.ONRCD)

The particle *dee4* is used for conveying the idea that a speaker wants his interlocutor to pay special attention to what he is saying. It may be used with assertions as well as directives. With this particle, one doesn’t just

say the proposition, one puts on record that one has said it (such that later it can't be disputed).

For example, *dee4* is appended to these very common expressions of politeness:

(58) *khòp5-caj3 dee4*
 thank.you FAC.ONRCD
 'Thank you!'

(59) *paj3 kòn1 dee4*
 go before FAC.ONRCD
 'See you later!' (Literally: '(I'm) leaving first.')

Another common situation in which *dee4* occurs is in issuing instructions, to convey the idea that the addressee must listen carefully or pay special attention:

(60) *bòp1 haj5 lùum2 dee4*
 NEG give forget FAC.ONRCD
 'Don't forget, y'hear!'

In the next two examples, a speaker quotes a policeman's instructions to prisoners who are being transported to a re-education camp:

(61) *qee4 seen2 long2 lot1 laø khaw5 paj3 han5 kòn1*
 INTJ invite descend vehicle PRF enter go DEM.DIST before
dee4
 FAC.ONRCD
 'Uh-huh, please get out of the vehicle and go inside there first, y'hear!'

Then, after having entered and signed their names on the register:

(62) *qee5 khùn5 paj3 san4 thii1 sòng3 phun4 dee4*
 INTJ ascend go storey ORD two DEM.FAR FAC.ONRCD
 'Uh-huh, go up to the second storey yonder, y'hear!'

lèq1 – 'That's it, P is indeed the case.' (factive, confirming that something is the case, as has already been intended or alluded to = FAC.PRF)

The particle *lèq1* (presumably derived from the perfect marker *lèw4*) conveys the idea 'That's it, P is indeed the case', asserting and confirming what has been alluded to or earlier intended. For example:

- (63) *khòj3 kaø siø paj3 lèq1*
 1SG.P T.LNK IRR go FAC.PRF
 ‘Indeed I am going.’
- (64) *vaa1 siø khaw5 phun5 lèq1*
 say IRR enter DEM.FAR FAC.PRF
 ‘(Yes) indeed, (we) were intending to go in (to the area) over there.’

4.1.3 Imperative particles

mèè4 – ‘Do it, go ahead, I don’t know why you don’t, nothing’s stopping you’ (imperative, states that addressee is unimpeded = IMP.UNIMP)

The particle *mèè4* is used in utterances which urge an addressee to carry out some action, where the speaker is conveying the idea that the addressee is unimpeded, that there is nothing stopping the addressee doing the action.

For example, a market woman is selling sausages. She tells a potential customer that the sausages are delicious, and that the customer should try them. By adding *mèè4* to this utterance, it is as if she urges her customer not to resist the temptation to try them. *Mèè4* conveys the idea, ‘Go ahead, what are you waiting for?’:

- (65) *caw4 lòng2 qaw3 paj3 hêt1 kin3 beng1 mèè4*
 2SG.P try take go make eat look IMP.UNIMP
 ‘You go ahead and take (them) and try cooking (them) to eat!’

In another example, a mother is sitting with her youngest child, having just finished breast-feeding. An older woman is waiting for her to help with a mat-weaving task. The mother calls out to another of her children, who is asked to come and take care of the infant. The speaker’s use of *mèè4* conveys the idea ‘What are you waiting for?’, but in this context it conveys impatience, in contrast to the encouraging, inviting tone of the previous example:

- (66) *maø qaw3 nòðng4, maa2 mèè4, siø ñèè1 saat5 haj5*
 DIR.ALL take yG come IMP.UNIMP IRR insert mat give
mèø-paa4 niø naa3
 CT.Mo-Pa.eZ TPC FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘Come and take care of younger sibling, come on what are you waiting for? (I) am going to help this aunty do weaving, you must understand.’

Another example is from a narrative tale about supreme beings in a heavenly kingdom and their exploits in the world of men. King Vetsuvan asks after his aide Kumphan, as he hasn’t seen him report for duty. His assistants say they are afraid he has died, since he got into a fight with some humans (despite being urged not to). The King is not satisfied with this report and wants evidence. His command to go and find the body is marked with *mèè4*, which in this context conveys his impatience with his aides for not having already done this:

- (67) *man2 taaj3 juu1 saj3, nam2-haa3 mèè4*
 3.B die be.at INDEF.PLACE follow-seek IMP.UNIMP
 ‘Where has he died? Go and find him, what are you waiting for?!’

In a final example, a group of men are telling stories for the tape recorder. After one speaker has finished, another is asked to contribute a joke or an anecdote. He responds by saying that he doesn’t think he can do it. Another urges him to speak, and by using *mèè4* conveys his disagreement with the man’s claim that he is incapable—specifically, through its meaning ‘there’s nothing stopping you’:

- (68) *vaw4 mèè4*
 speak IMP.UNIMP
 ‘Go ahead and speak, what are you waiting for?!’

saa3 – ‘Do it, it will be good if you do, I know you won’t do it if you don’t want to’ (imperative, suggests course of action to addressee = IMP.SUGG)

The imperative particle *saa3* has a suggesting, non-imposing quality. By using *saa3* in a directive or request, the speaker conveys the idea that it would be good if the addressee carried out the action, but that whether or not they do it is ultimately a matter of the addressee’s own choice. The

speaker can use *saa3* either to acknowledge or bring about a situation in which the addressee is treated as someone with authority over the course of action. *Saa3* provides a way to propose that the addressee do something, without being too imposing. The speaker claims less authority, making it explicit that it is up to the addressee whether they acquiesce.

In an example from a narrative, a head-butting contest is scheduled to take place, but the visiting team becomes terrified of the opposition. They go to their hosts and plead for more time. The use of *saa3* treats the addressee as the authority in making the decision:

- (69) *bòø than2 nanø lèèw4, mùù4 nii4, khòð3 qiik5*
 NEG on.time TPC.NONPROX PRF day DEM request more
cak2 sòðng3 saam3 van2 saa3
 how.many two three day IMP.SUGG
 ‘We’re not ready today, (we) request another two or three days, please?’

In another example, the hero Sinxay and his sidekick Sangthong are delayed on their travels by a giant snake which has transformed itself into a mountain range. They can’t get past. Sangthong says to his master Sinxay:

- (70) *saa4 vêê2laa2, ñing2 man2 saa3, ñing2 thim5 saa3*
 slow time shoot 3.B IMP.SUGG shoot discard IMP.SUGG
 ‘We’re being held up, go ahead and shoot it, shoot it and get rid of it.’

Sinxay is the leader of the expedition, and Sangthong’s phrasing with *saa3* recognizes this by acknowledging that it is ultimately Sinxay’s choice as to what course of action is taken.

A final example is from a fable. A cow encounters a tiger, and asks the tiger to let her go home and feed her calf before allowing the tiger to eat her. The tiger agrees, but when the cow goes to her calf to explain this, the calf wants to let the tiger eat it instead, and spare the mother. The cow and calf end up both standing in front of the tiger, arguing about who should be eaten. Saying ‘Eat me, not my calf’, the cow’s use of *saa3* conveys the idea that she would prefer this course of action, but it also shows respect to the tiger by acknowledging its freedom to decide:

- (71) *phañaa2 sùaa3 qeej4, siø kin3 khòj5 kaø kin3 saa3*
 lord tiger VOC IRR eat 1SG.P T.LNK eat IMP.SUGG
 ‘O tiger lord, (if) you are going to eat me, then please eat me (and not my calf).’

dèè1 – ‘Do it, please, it’s not a big thing’ (imperative, softens or plays down the burden of the request = IMP.SOFT)

The particle *dèè1* (with a variant *nèè1* which appears to have identical function and distribution) provides a polite way of asking someone to do some small favor for the speaker:

- (72) *peet5 patuu3 haj5 dèè1*
 open door give IMP.SOFT
 ‘Please open the door.’
- (73) *qaw3 kùaa3 haj5 khòj5 dèè1*
 take salt give 1SG.P IMP.SOFT
 ‘Please give me the salt.’

In another example, a speaker is telling the tale of a man who is fighting another man who wants to take his wife. At a certain point, both men fall to the ground, and their swords fly off and land at a distance. The husband calls out to his wife to fetch his sword for him:

- (74) *naang2 moo2laa2 qeej4, qaw3 qanaa1 ngaaw4 maø haj5*
 miss M VOC take HES sword DIR.ALL give
qaaj4 dèè1
 eBr IMP.SOFT
 ‘O Miss Mola, take um the sword and give it to me (i.e., older brother), please.’

In another example, a man at the market sees sausages for the first time. He asks the sales lady whether there is a special way to prepare them, to which she replies, ‘Yes indeed’. He responds:

- (75) *cot2 tamlaa3 haj5 khòj5 dèè1*
 write recipe give 1SG.P IMP.SOFT
 ‘Write down the recipe for me please.’

The use of *dèè1* with an imperative is a way of softening the imposition, as if to say, ‘it’s not a big thing’. This meaning is related to other functions of *dèè1*. With assertions, *dèè1* can also attenuate the strength of a proposition, along the lines of ‘a little’, ‘partly’. In this function, it occurs in the postverbal slot, before postverbal aspectual-modals. For example:

- (76) *jaak5 kham1 mùùt4 dèè1 lèèw4*
 tend evening dark a.little PRF
 ‘It was already getting a little dark.’

In another example, a speaker is talking about hippies from Western countries who lived in Vientiane just prior to the fall of the Royal Lao Government in 1975. He describes how these hippies were talking with him about the imminent takeover by a communist government. He remarks that these hippies could speak Lao a bit, conveying this notion of ‘partly’ or ‘a little’ by means of the particle *dèè1*:

- (77) *mii2 khon2 man2 vaw4 khuam2 laaw2 kaø daj4 dèè1*
 there.is person 3.B speak sense Lao T.LNK CAN a.little
 ‘Some people, they could speak Lao a little.’

A complex construction which also relates to the idea of ‘part, small amount’ has the pattern *X dèè1, Y dèè1* (, *Z dèè1*), with the meaning ‘Some X, some Y (, some Z)’. For example, a speaker describes conditions in a crowded holding cell, as detainees wait to be transported to a re-education facility:

- (78) *hòòng4-haj5 dèè1, hiiw3 qahaan3 dèè1*
 call-cry IN.PART hungry food IN.PART
 ‘Some were crying, some were hungry.’

vaj2 – ‘Hurry up and do it!’ (imperative, asks the addressee to hurry = IMP.RUSH)

The particle *vaj2* is typically used with imperatives directed at children. As a verb, *vaj2* means ‘fast’. In its sentence-final particle function, *vaj2* presupposes that the addressee will be compliant. It is therefore appropriate for familiar children, not for strangers. Here is an example:

- (79) *maa2 mian4 phaa2-khaw5 vaj2*
 come put.aside tray.table-rice IMP.RUSH
 ‘Hurry up and come and clear away the dinner tray!’

duu2 – ‘Please do it, for me?’ (IMP.PLEAD)

The particle *duu2* conveys a kind of pleading tone to an imperative, as if the speaker is saying ‘Do it, FOR ME’. Here is an example:

- (80) *qaw3 vii2 haj5 khòj5 duu2*
 take comb give 1SG.P PCL
 ‘Please get the comb, for me?’

4.2 Other phrase-final particles

There are a few particles which attach directly to a noun phrase, rather than a clause or sentence. In some cases the phrase-final particle appears in utterance-final position in an utterance which has no verbal predicate. In other cases the particle attaches to a noun phrase which has been post-posed, in sentence-final Right Position. In each case, the particle usually ends up in utterance-final position anyway.

dêê2 – ‘And what about X?’ (interrogative thematizer = Q.THEME)

A noun phrase followed by the particle *dêê2* is a complete utterance, meaning ‘(And) what about X?’. This type of utterance is elliptical. Its interpretation is strongly dependent on context. For example, a soldier returns from an adventure in which he had hoped to recover the princess and her nephew Sinxay. The soldier reports to the king that the princess has been kidnapped, and in reply the king asks:

- (81) *sinsaj2 dêê2*
 S Q.THEME
 ‘And what about Sinxay?’ (i.e., ‘What news do you have about Sinxay?’)

The response is:

- (82) *sinsaj2 man2 tok2 hêêw3 taaj3 lèèw4*
 S 3.B fall cliff die PRF
 ‘Sinxay, he has fallen down a cliff and died.’

In another example, A has just asked after the health of B’s aging father, and B has given a complete response. Then, A asks:

- (83) *mèèl caw4 dêê2*
 mother 2SG.P Q.THEME
 ‘And what about your mother?’

qeej4 – ‘O X!’ (vocative = VOC)

The vocative particle *qeej4* is used just when calling out to someone, to attract their attention:

- (84) *qiø-phòòl qeej4*
 F.B-F VOC
 ‘Hey, Dad!’

- (85) *sèèng3 qeej4*
 S VOC
 ‘Hey, Seng!’

Vocatives are often used when beseeching or trying to coerce someone. An example comes from a tale about a grandfather who does homework with his grandchild every evening:

- (86) *laaw2 kheej2 bòòk5 laan3 laaw2 tèèl-laø lèèng2*
 3SG.FA EXP tell grandchild 3SG.FA each evening
hanø naa3, laan3 qeej4, mùø-lèèng2 maa2 laø
 TPC.DIST FAC.EXPLIC grandchild VOC this.evening come PRF
qaan1 nangsiù3 dee4
 read writing FAC.ONRCD
 ‘He used to tell his grandchild every evening, you see: “O grandchild, when the evening comes, (we’ll) read (together), y’hear!”.’

Another example describes the panicked reaction of a group of town-folk who have witnessed a frightening incident:

- (87) *hò̀ng4 qò̀k5 siang3 diaw3 kan3, sò̀j1 nè̀l baan4*
 call exit voice single COLL help IMP.SOFT village
mùang2 qeej4, sò̀j1 nè̀l
 town VOC help IMP.SOFT
 ‘(They) called out with a single voice, “Please help!, O (people of the) village and town, please help!”’

In a last example, a speaker quotes the speech of a cow who has just encountered a tiger. The cow is resigned to the fact that she will be eaten, but begs the tiger to first let her go to her calf and give it milk for the last time. Her opening words are:

- (88) *caw4 phaṅaa2 sà3 qeej4*
 lord king tiger VOC
 ‘O Tiger King...’

kadaaj1 – (afterthought marker = AFTH)

The particle *kadaaj1* typically attaches to a nominal which is postposed, in the Right Position slot as an afterthought of some kind. Thus, even though *kadaaj1* is attached to a nominal, it nevertheless happens to occur in sentence-final position.

In an example, a speaker is describing his detainment by local authorities as one of a large group charged with social offences like drug abuse and prostitution. He discusses how the women acted, explaining that many of them were crying, particularly because they hadn’t had a chance to tell their families where they were going:

- (89) *bò̀ dajò bò̀k5 phò̀l bò̀k5 mè̀l baat5-niò naò,*
 NEG ACHV tell father tell mother THZR TPC.PERIPH
phuò-ṅing2 kadaaj1
 CT.F-woman AFTH
 ‘(They) hadn’t told their parents now, the women.’

The use of *kadaaj1* here gives the impression that the speaker is continuing to focus his thoughts on the marked referent, in this case the women. Note that structurally, in example (89) the subject is not overtly expressed at all in the main clause, but is made explicit in the extracausal, *kadaaj1*-marked afterthought phrase.

In another, similar example, a speaker is eating fish soup, and comments on the amount of bones in it:

- (90) *mii2 tɛ̀ɛ1 kaang4, paa3 kadaaj1*
 there.is only fishbone fish AFTH
 ‘There’s only bones, the fish.’

In another example, a speaker has just finished telling a few jokes and announces that he has no more to tell:

- (91) *qaw2, bet2 thò̀̀1 nan4 laø dêj2, khò̀̀j5*
 INTJ finished amount DEM.NONPROX PRF FAC.NEWS 1SG.P
niø kadaaj5
 TPC AFTH
 ‘So, that’s it, concerning me.’

Here is a final example:

- (92) *saduak5-sabaaj3 qiik5, juu1 nii4 kadaaj5*
 convenient-comfortable more be.at here AFTH
 ‘(It’s) comfortable and easy too, living here.’

In each of these examples, *kadaaj1* is attached to a nominal which has been extracted from the main clause and postposed. But such postposing of noun phrases is common, and most of the time *kadaaj1* does not appear. Its use in these examples serves to reiterate the enduring topicality of the noun phrase referent, causing it to persist beyond the main clause.

baat5-niø – (thematizer = THZR)

The particle *baat5-niø* consists of the word *baat5* ‘moment, time’ together with the general topic marker *niø* (related to the general demonstrative *nii4*). As a particle, *baat5-niø* has a kind of thematizing function, similar in meaning (and form) to English *now* in its function as a discourse marker. It may occur sentence-finally, as in (93-95):

- (93) *bakø-looj3 phen1 bðø maa2 baat5-niø*
 M.B-L 3.P NEG come THZR
 ‘Loy, he didn’t come, now.’

- (94) *qooj4 pajø nak2 lot1 khaw3 ñang3 laø baat5-niø*
 INTJ DIR.ABL heavy car 3PL.B INDEF.INAN PRF THZR
 ‘Oy, what’s the point of just weighing down their car, now?’
- (95) *naaj2- phuø maj1 maa2 baat5-niø naø*
 boss MC.HUM new come THZR TPC.PERIPH
 ‘The boss – (when) a new one came...’

It also often occurs sentence-initially, as a kind of linker from what came prior:

- (96) *lèø baat5-niø, hêt1 jaak5 haj5 haw2 laa2 qòòk5 qêêng3*
 and THZR do want give 1.FA depart exit self
 ‘And so- (they) act (like they) want to get us to resign ourselves.’

4.3 On the relationship between particles and tone

Sentence-final and other phrase-final particles appear to have a different relationship to pitch contour than words of other form classes, particularly the open classes of nouns and verbs. The nature of a tone language of the Southeast Asian type is that words in general have randomly assigned, lexically contrastive pitch contour. Thus, there is no significance to the fact that *khaang5* ‘side’ is pronounced with a high falling tone. It is only significant in the arbitrary, negative sense that it contrasts with *khaang2* ‘chin’, which is pronounced with a high rising tone. Pitch contour is hereby occupied with the function of distinguishing between lexical items (e.g., *sua1* ‘mattress’ versus *sua5* ‘shirt’) in the same sense that segments are (e.g., *sua1* ‘mattress’ versus *thua1* ‘occasion’).

Many languages (e.g., English) differ from Lao in that they do not employ pitch contour for lexical contrast. In those languages, pitch contour is free to be exploited for expressing pragmatic meaning at the utterance level (independent of lexical content), such as distinctions of information structure or connotation. For example, consider how the pitch contour of English *What?* (versus *What!!?*) can mark a difference between a simple request for repeat of an unheard utterance (‘Sorry, could you repeat what you just said’) versus an expression of astonished disbelief (‘Oh God, really? I can hardly believe it!’; cf. Selting 1996). There are arguments that pragmatic meaning conveyed by pitch in this way is based on iconic-indexical relations between pitch properties of vocal calls and properties

of the vocal cavity, and hence the individual that produces the signal. Ohala's 'frequency code' (Ohala 1984, Gussenhoven 2004) attempts to explain in these terms why, for example, statements tend to be falling in pitch while questions tend to be rising. It is argued that high or rising pitch conveys weakness or submissiveness by indexing the smaller vocal cavity required in producing it, while low falling pitch indexes assertion, authority or dominance by indexing a larger vocal cavity (and hence a more dominant beast).

Since in tone languages, pitch is occupied with maintaining lexical contrast, it is often thought that tone languages are unable to exploit pitch contour for natural meaning in this way. This is certainly true at the lexical level, where words of large open classes like nouns or verbs have fixed tones, independent of any conceivable non-arbitrary relation between their pitch shape and their meaning. Lao speakers have little room for variation when required to maintain contrasts like *khii3* 'bamboo flower' versus *khii5* 'shit', *muu1* 'friend' versus *muu3* 'pig', or *kaj3* 'far' versus *kaj4* 'near'. But sentence-final particles seem to be different in this respect. They show greater freedom in surface realization of pitch contour. This is especially noticeable because of their syntactic position. Sentence-final particles are relatively exposed, being in a clause-final, syntactically open position, and typically taking full stress. A possible analysis of the sentence-final particles as a special lexical class is that they are under-specified for tone, picking up their pitch contours from the kinds of natural principles of iconic-indexical motivation that determine pragmatically meaningful pitch contours in non-tonal languages. For example, the basic polar question particle *bòò3* is given here as being of Tone 3 (low rising), but in fact it may be given other kinds of tones—high falling, low falling, high rising, level—with accordingly different nuances. A possible conclusion from these kinds of expressive manipulation of the pitch of sentence-final particles is that they differ from other word classes in not being specified for tone at all. Rather, they are perhaps 'blank' with respect to lexically-specified tone, permitting variation of pitch contour along naturally motivated, pragmatically expressive principles.

Part III

Nominals and Reference

Chapter 5

Pronouns

There are two systems of pronouns, definite and indefinite. Definite pronouns are mostly personal pronouns which show distinctions in person (first, second, third), number (singular, plural), and social level (bare, familiar, polite, and formal, among further distinctions). The third person bare pronoun may also be used for definite reference to inanimates. Indefinite pronouns show no distinctions for social level, distinguishing only between persons, non-persons, and places. These also function as interrogative pronouns.

5.1 Definite pronouns

The system of definite, personal pronouns is elaborated on socially deictic lines, comparable to other complex systems found in South and Southeast Asia (Cooke 1968, Howell 1968, Geoghegan 1970, Levinson 1977). Table 10 illustrates the basic system. It is far more elaborate than a typical European system (cf. Brown and Gilman 1960, Ervin-Tripp 1986), with four levels of politeness for all persons in the singular, and two levels in the plural:

Table 10. Lao Personal Pronouns (partial set)

		1st person	2nd person	3rd person
SG	Bare (B)	<i>kuu3</i>	<i>mùng2</i>	<i>man2</i>
	Familiar (FA)	<i>haw2</i>	<i>too3</i>	<i>laaw2</i>
	Polite (P)	<i>khòj5</i>	<i>caw4</i>	<i>phen1</i>
	Formal (FO)	<i>khaa5-phacaw4</i>	<i>thaan1</i>	<i>thaan1</i>
PL	Bare	<i>phuak4-kuu3</i>	<i>suu3</i>	<i>khaw3</i>
	Polite	<i>cu-haw2</i> (incl.)	<i>cu-caw4</i>	<i>khacaw4</i>
		<i>cu-khòj5</i> (excl.)	<i>phuak4-caw4</i>	

Some of the pronouns given in the table as singular are in fact not semantically marked for singular, but may allow plural readings. Third person polite *phen1* and first person familiar *haw2* may be used with plural or singular reference. Accordingly, they are glossed with number un-

specified (as 3.P and 1.FA, respectively). When third person bare *man2* refers to things (rather than people), it does not specify number. (None of the other third person pronouns may refer to things.) Accordingly, *man2* is glossed as 3.B, with number unspecified.

It is important to note that the set given in Table 10, and discussed in this section, is not exhaustive. The system of definite person reference is not a closed one. It is highly flexible, and permeable. There are many strategies of person reference beyond those illustrated in Table 10, including special forms reserved for specific social contexts (e.g., *qatamaa2* ‘self’ as a first person pronoun used by monks in talking to lay people, *phòø-qòðk5* and *mèø-qòðk5* for reference to lay men and women, respectively) or special uses of existing forms (e.g., *too3* for ‘I’ and *phen1* for ‘you’ among familiar friends, typically young women). (Cf. Rehbein 2007.) It is also possible to use certain types of nouns not only for address but for first, second, and third person reference, including kin terms (‘brother’, ‘uncle’, ‘grandchild’), occupation or other role terms (‘teacher’, ‘monk’, ‘lay person’, ‘doctor’, ‘comrade’), and personal names. These are distinct from the pronouns in that their reference doesn’t shift as a function of who utters them.

Different speech levels articulated by different pronouns index the relative status of interlocutors, expressing different degrees of familiarity, sometimes related to facts of biography (e.g., respect forms used for strangers, people of specific age differences), or socially determined relative position (e.g., role and status, usually most marked in religious settings, such as when speaking with monks). Essentially, the use of different pronouns marks differences in social height (cf. Enfield 2005a). When a Lao speaker makes definite pronominal reference to a person, she cannot avoid implying or explicitly encoding some stance toward the social relationship(s) between speaker, addressee, and referent. The attributes implied by these pronouns are not simply observable properties of their referents (e.g., number, sex) but are defined relationally, implicating the speaker herself in the calculation.

Syntactically, personal pronouns differ from nouns in that they cannot be heads of noun phrases with demonstrative determiners, they cannot be heads of possessive constructions, they cannot be direct complements of the copula verb *pèn3*, they cannot enter into numeral classifier constructions, and they cannot take modifiers linked by the relativizer *thii1*.

5.1.1 Bare pronouns

Within the large set of Lao personal pronouns the lowest (i.e., most informal, intimate) forms can be analyzed as bare or semantically unmarked. This is in contrast to other, more polite forms which speakers have the option to use in the same grammatical contexts. The bare forms pick up their ‘low’ meanings by systematic opposition to forms which explicitly mark social relationships (e.g., of politeness). They are semantically simple expressions whose pragmatic richness comes from their being nested at the locus of a set of complex cultural and linguistic/semantic interactions.

Lao bare form pronouns are semantically simpler than their counterparts listed as familiar, polite, and formal in Table 10. While more general in meaning, they remain pragmatically potent, being the most exposing (or, more accurately, least covering) forms for personal reference (cf. Cooke 1968:13, Onishi 1994:362-366, Wierzbicka 1994:447-449). In those cases where the bare forms *kuu3* ‘I’ and *mùng2* ‘you’ would be used by default, they pass without notice. Their use in other situations may be highly inappropriate, bizarre, or insulting. Here are some typical occasions of use of the bare first and second person pronouns *kuu3* and *mùng2*:

- Reciprocally, between children or youths of the same age (give or take a year), and between adults of the same age who have a long-term close relationship going back to childhood (often including adjacent siblings)
- Non-reciprocally, ‘downwards’ in highly unequal relationships (e.g., from grandmother to grandchild, prison officer to prisoner)
- In denigrating, aggressive, insulting, scolding language (e.g., in arguing angrily)
- In (quoted) inner speech, talking to oneself

Here is an example from an exchange between close friends in the same class at school, where no marking of social distance is required:

- (97) *kuu3 jaan4 mùng2*
 1 SG.B afraid 2 SG.B
 ‘I was afraid of you.’

A second example is from the (quoted) speech of a woman who is trying to chase a man (a junior relative) away, and is showing him none of the respect he would usually be given by a stranger or someone lower than him in his kin network:

- (98) *ñak1 maa2 nii4, mùng2 taaj3 dêj2*
 ogre come here 2SG.B die FAC.NEWS
 ‘(If) the ogre comes here, you’ll die you know.’

Next is an example of the bare first person pronoun used in reported inner speech. This is a character’s exclamation (to himself), having arrived home to find that the spectacles he had bought from a Chinese merchant had not enabled him to read (as he had hoped):

- (99) *cêk2 niø, man2 tom4 kuu3 lèw4*
 chinaman TPC 3.B boil 1SG.B PRF
 ‘This Chinaman, he has “boiled” me!’ (i.e., has cheated me)

In another example, a speaker is quoting his own thoughts, when alone:

- (100) *bah2, kuu3 siø thot1-lòng2 khaj3 beng1 bòð3*
 INTJ 1SG.B IRR test-try open see QPLR
 ‘Bah! Should I try opening (this box) to have a look inside?’

The status of *mùng2* ‘you’ as semantically unmarked for respect is illustrated in the following example, in which the speaker is calling out to a dog, who has stolen his sausages. He has no need to linguistically encode social respect of any kind:

- (101) *mùng2 qaw3 paj3 loot4*
 2SG.B take go NO.HES
 ‘You go ahead and take (them)!’

There is a common thread in the use of bare pronoun forms in unguarded, intimate talk, downward-oriented talk, angry talk, and self talk. This common thread is that the speaker chooses not to employ one of the available terms which marks respect, thus indexically conveying a stance of non-respect, giving off the idea ‘I’m not doing a display of respect for

you'.¹ Interpretation of this message differs from context to context, not because there are multiple meanings to these terms, but because different expectations apply in different situations, that is, different ways of speaking are (un)expected in different contexts.

5.1.1.1 *Speaker attitudes to the bare pronouns kuu3/ mùng2*

Non-reciprocal use of the pronouns *kuu3* and *mùng2* varies regionally and socio-economically. For a speaker to use these pronouns in a broader array of contexts may be taken as an index of lower willingness to use higher forms, considered by many to indicate lower education or lack of cultural sophistication. Many speakers (counterfactually) deny using them at all. Extensive dialect variation in usage of these pronouns leads to social and cultural misunderstandings among Lao speakers from different regions of the country. In more rural (less gentrified) situations, there are fewer distinctions of pronominal level. Many rural dwellers would never have occasion to use formal pronouns such as first person *khaa5-phacaw4* and second person *thaaan1*. Urban people recount with utter disdain stories of minority people in Laos who are said to use *kuu3/mùng2* or their equivalent when addressing their own parents.

While bare form pronouns can be pragmatically bad (i.e., rude), they are not intrinsically bad words (i.e., they are not curses or swear words). It can be insulting to use them with reference to certain people in certain contexts, but it is not necessarily considered rude to use them with reference to appropriate others IN THE PRESENCE of a respected other (cf. Cooke 1968:13). In fact, there is a certain warmth indexed by the

¹Cooke's (1968) comprehensive description of the set of pronominal forms in Thai presents a detailed inventory of situations of use. Cooke identifies the Thai equivalents of *kuu3* and *mùng2* as 'nonrestraint' forms, since they 'imply a degree of freedom from the restraints of more proper usage' (Cooke 1968:11), 'suggesting a certain defiance of or nonconformity to underlying standards of more proper usage' and implying 'an intimacy expressive of interpersonal freedom and relaxation which allows the taking of certain liberties' (ibid., p34). Despite Cooke's calling this a 'semantic feature', he brilliantly describes the mechanism by which its effect arises not through semantic coding but through pragmatic contrast: nonrestraint is 'the individual's felt and expressed defiance or disregard of certain standards of proper, polite, or refined usage laid down by society' (ibid., p62). That is, the bare term says what it says by what it DOESN'T say, given what is expected (Grice 1975).

reciprocal usage of *kuu3/mùng2* between close friends, since it defines a long-term and completely unguarded relationship. Similarly, it would not be considered rude to use the bare ‘I’ form *kuu3* when quoting one’s own thoughts or other usage in some context in which the use of the term is pragmatically unmarked.

An intriguing dimension to the bare form terms, and generally to the system of definite pronouns, is the extreme contrast between their complete ordinariness when occurring in the right context, and the deeply visceral responses they elicit when occurring in the wrong contexts, whether this happens by error or by design. Inappropriate use of *kuu3/mùng2* can create serious offence, anger, embarrassment, even paralyzing mirth.²

The third-person singular counterpart of *kuu3* ‘I’ and *mùng2* ‘you’ is *man2* ‘he/she/it’. This form conveys its meaning via the same logic of bare semantics: refraining from explicitly conveying respect can convey either disrespect or intimacy, depending on whether there is a current expectation to show respect by choosing an appropriate respect form. *Man2* is typically used with reference to children and youths (but often not for toddlers; see section 5.1.3, below). It may also be used with reference to adults with whom you would use *kuu3/mùng2* in direct interaction, or to whom you would otherwise have no stake in publicly showing respect (for example, actors on television).

5.1.1.2 *Inclusory construction in bare third person plural*

The third person bare plural pronoun *khaw3* ‘they’ occurs in an inclusory construction which adjoins the pronoun with the name of a person who is included in the set of people denoted by the pronoun:

- (102) *khaw3 qiø-kham2 paj3 saj3*
 3PL.B F.B-K go INDEF.PLACE
 ‘Where did Kham and them go?’
- (103) *kuu3 hên3 khaw3 bakø-phèng2 juu1 talaat5*
 1SG.B see 3PL.B M.B-P be.at market
 ‘I saw Pheng and them at the market.’

²See Howell (1968:556-557) on the crushing emotional consequences of having to maintain linguistic observance of relative age in Korean.

While this construction is common, it is not a productive strategy across the pronominal system. Constructions parallel to (102-103) using pronouns in other persons or social levels are easily imagined, but they do not occur. The third person plural bare pronoun is the only pronoun which enters into the inclusory construction.

5.1.2 Familiar pronouns

The familiar pronouns retain a sense of informality, but encode a moderate degree of respect. They may be used, for example, with reference to people who are well known (e.g., fellow villagers) outside one's immediate family and circle of very close acquaintances. Good friends who are not bosom buddies since childhood might reciprocally use the pronouns *too3/haw2* rather than the overly intimate or exposed *kuu3/mùng2*. Within the family, a son or daughter may soften the formality of the child-parent relationship by using the first person familiar *haw2* for 'I' when speaking to their parents (although they would never correspondingly use second person familiar *too3* for 'you' in referring to a parent). Their parents may use either the familiar *too3* (affectionate) or bare *mùng2* in return.

5.1.3 Polite pronouns

The first and second person polite pronouns are *khòj5* 'I' and *caw4* 'you'. The gist of their meanings can be derived from their etymology: *khòj5* 'slave' lowers the self (humble I); *caw4* 'lord' raises the other (exalted you). These pronouns are all-purpose in urban public life, and are the first forms taught to learners of Lao, giving outsiders the impression that they represent the basic, unadorned meanings 'I' and 'you'. However, this is neither pragmatically nor semantically the case. The pronouns *khòj5* and *caw4* provide the safest ways of saying 'I' and 'you' among people with generically distant relationships (e.g., strangers), since these pronouns convey a broad and versatile sense of respect, one that is outside of the kin network into which familiar references are typically fitted. Those who reciprocally use *khòj5* 'I' and *caw4* 'you' include adult strangers, husband and wife couples, people whose relationship is neither especially formal nor especially informal (e.g., a mother talking to her

child's school teacher). These pronouns are sometimes used between parents and children who are showing respect for some context-specific reason (e.g., due to the presence of certain overhearers). For example, when making third person reference to their son-in-law while he is present, parents-in-law might use polite *phen1* instead of bare form *man2* for 'he'.

The third person polite form *phen1* encodes polite respect as is appropriate for people one doesn't know well, or those in socially higher positions (teachers, officials, etc.). This form is also often used with reference to toddlers, particularly in narrating things they have said or done. The meaning of *phen1* that makes it appropriate to both these types of situation is that the referent is 'someone whose actions are not to be criticized' (cf. Wierzbicka 1992). High status people are immune to criticism for political reasons, while toddlers are not to be criticized for their (often culpable!) actions because toddlers don't know any better.

5.1.4 Formal pronouns

Formal pronouns are reserved for special occasions such as giving public speeches, or interactions with especially highly ranked people such as abbots or government ministers. They also occur in written and in mass media contexts (e.g., radio interviews). Like the polite pronouns, formal pronouns are based on a logic of lowering the self (*khaa5-phacaw4* means 'slave of the Lord') and raising the other (*thaan1* means 'exalted one').

5.2 Indefinite pronouns

5.2.1 Core indefinite pronominal forms

Three indefinite pronominal forms may appear in core argument slots. Two of these are free pronouns which may occur as independent noun phrases. These two pronouns distinguish between the basic ontological categories of things and persons. They are *n̄ang3* 'something, anything, what' (INDEF.INAN) and *phaj3* 'someone, anyone, who' (INDEF.HUM). (There is also a simple indefinite form for place: *saj3* 'somewhere, anywhere, where' (INDEF.PLACE).) A third indefinite form is not a free pronoun but a general indefinite specifier which attaches to any nominal head

to derive an indefinite pronominal expression. This marker is *daj3* ‘some, any, which’ (INDEF). For example, in (104a-c), *daj3* occurs as an indefinite specifier with the three basic modifier classifiers, yielding complex indefinite pronominal forms distinguishing between the categories human, animate and inanimate:

- (104) a. *phu0-daj3*
 MC.HUM-INDEF
 ‘some/any/which person’
 b. *to0-daj3*
 MC.ANIM-INDEF
 ‘some/any/which animate entity’
 c. *qan0-daj3*
 MC.INAN-INDEF
 ‘some/any/which thing’

Or *daj3* may occur with any other nominal head, usually a classifier (see Chapter 7):

- (105) a. *khan2 daj3*
 CLF.VEHICLE INDEF
 ‘some/any/which vehicle’
 b. *huan2 lang3 daj3*
 house CLF.FRAME INDEF
 ‘some/any/which house’
 c. *talaat5 daj3*
 market INDEF
 ‘some/any/which market’

We therefore have three core indefinite pronominal forms which may function generally as core arguments:

- (106) a. *ñang3* ‘something/anything/what’ (INDEF.INAN)
 b. *phaj3* ‘someone/anyone/who’ (INDEF.HUM)
 c. *N-daj3* ‘some N, any N, which N’ (INDEF)

Indefinite pronominal forms serve different referential functions depending both on grammatical context and information structural context.

Beyond their basic, indefinite referential function, they often function as interrogatives ('what?', 'who?', 'which?'). However, it is not necessary to propose distinct interrogative meanings for them (cf. Wierzbicka's 1980 notion of 'ignorative'). If they function as interrogative pronouns, this is attributable to factors in the information structural context. Two main points support this. First, indefinite reference is semantically simpler than interrogative reference, and is always incorporated within the more complex semantics of interrogatives. 'Who?' presupposes 'someone'. It means 'someone, I don't know who' (*mutatis mutandis* for 'what', 'which', 'where', etc., cf. Wierzbicka 1996). By standard implicative mechanisms of pragmatic implicature (Grice 1975, Levinson 1983, 2000, Sperber and Wilson 1995), interrogative utterance-level meaning is yielded straightforwardly from indefinite sentence-level semantics. Whichever interpretation indefinite pronominal expressions are given, they always convey AT LEAST the invariant meaning 'INDEF' (i.e., 'some/any X'). Second, there are almost no structural contexts in which the indefinite pronouns MUST be read as interrogative, while there are multiple structural contexts in which only indefinite readings are possible, and interrogative readings are unavailable.

Where indefinite pronouns may have two interpretations (interrogative 'who?', 'what?', 'which N?' versus indefinite 'someone', 'something', 'some N'), discourse context determines the right interpretation. Consider the following example, in which *n̄ang3* 'INDEF.INAN' in non-subject position in a simple clause can be read either as 'what?' or 'something':

- (107) *phen1 hên3 n̄ang3 juu1 kòng4 tiang3*
 3.P see INDEF.INAN be.at underneath bed
 i. 'What did she see underneath the bed?'
 ii. 'She saw something underneath the bed.'

This ambiguity is contextually resolved. When supplied out of context, speakers prefer the interrogative reading as in (107i). But in the right context, the non-specific reading (107ii) is pragmatically unmarked. The difference is a function of information structure properties of discourse. The two readings of (107) are associated with different scope of pragmatic focus. If the referent of the indefinite pronoun is the narrow focus of the sentence, the pronoun is likely to be interpreted as interrogative. So, if it has already been established in the discourse of (107) that she

has seen something under the bed, then *ñang3* ‘INDEF.INAN’ will be in narrow focus (everything else in the proposition is presupposed), and will then most likely be taken in the interrogative reading. If, on the other hand, all the information in (107) were new to the discourse, then there would be no narrow focus on the referent of *ñang3* ‘INDEF.INAN’, and the sentence would serve to introduce the referent rather than question its identity, giving the (107ii) reading.

Another way of biasing the interpretation through manipulation of information structure is to vary the person of the subject. If a subject is first person, normally the speaker will be taken to have primary access to the propositional content of what is being said, and an interrogative interpretation is less likely:

- (108) *khòj5 hèn3 ñang3 juu1 kòng4 tiang3*
 1SG.P see INDEF.INAN be.at underneath bed
 i. ‘What did I see underneath the bed?’ (less likely interpretation)
 ii. ‘I saw something underneath the bed.’ (strongly preferred interpretation out of context)

In contrast to (108), if a subject is second person, the speaker LACKS primary access to the propositional content of what is being said, and an interrogative interpretation is more likely, as in example (109):

- (109) *caw4 hèn3 ñang3 juu1 kòng4 tiang3*
 2SG.P see INDEF.INAN be.at underneath bed
 i. ‘What did you see underneath the bed?’ (strongly preferred interpretation out of context)
 ii. ‘You saw something underneath the bed.’ (less likely interpretation)

There are contexts in which interrogative readings of the indefinite pronouns are unavailable. These are situations in which interrogative illocutionary force is blocked, for example, by factive complement-taking verbs such as *huu4* ‘know’ in (110) or factive sentence-final particles such as the news-giving particle *dêj2* in (111):

- (110) *khòj5 huu4 vaa1 phen1 hên3 ñang3 juu1 kòng4*
 1SG.P know COMP 3.P see INDEF.INAN be.at underneath
tiang3
 bed

‘I know that she saw something underneath the bed.’

(Or: ‘I know what she saw underneath the bed.’)

(NOT: ‘I know what did she see underneath the bed?’)

- (111) *phen1 hên3 ñang3 juu1 kòng4 tiang3 dêj2*
 3.P see INDEF.INAN be.at underneath bed FAC.NEWS

‘She saw something underneath the bed, you know.’

(NOT: ‘What did she see underneath the bed, you know?’)

Having established these basic properties of indefinite pronouns, we now further explore their syntactic treatment in different argument slots, using *phaj3* ‘INDEF.HUM’ as an example. (The basic facts hold, *mutatis mutandis*, for other indefinite pronouns.)

As outlined above, a bare indefinite pronoun in non-subject function has two readings, indefinite and interrogative:

- (112) *caw4 hên3 phaj3 juu1 talaat5*
 2SG.P see INDEF.HUM be.at market
 i. ‘Who did you see at the market?’
 ii. ‘You saw someone at the market.’

In subject function, the same two readings are available, where the indefinite reading is non-referential ‘anybody’:

- (113) *phaj3 hên3 caw4 juu1 talaat5*
 INDEF.HUM see 2SG.P be.at market
 i. ‘Who saw you at the market?’
 ii. ‘Anybody/everybody saw you at the market.’

With negation, the indefinite reading of *phaj3* in subject function is translated as ‘nobody’:

- (114) *phaj3 bòø hên3 caw4 juu1 talaat5*
 INDEF.HUM NEG see 2SG.P be.at market
 i. ‘Nobody saw you at the market.’
 ii. ‘Who didn’t see you at the market?’

- (115) *phaj3 bə̀ɔ̃ kaa4 phaən1-khaam5 bak2-siang2 dajɔ̃*
 INDEF.HUM NEG dare pass-cross M.B-S ACHV
thò̀d̩1 ñaj2
 extent web
 i. ‘Nobody dared to cross Siang even the width of a spider web.’
 (intended interpretation in original context)
 ii. ‘Who didn’t dare to cross Siang even the width of a spider
 web?’ (possible interpretation)

The indefinite interpretation is forced by use of the topic linker *kaɔ̃* (cf. examples (113, 115)):

- (116) *phaj3 kaɔ̃ hən3 caw4 juu1 talaat5*
 INDEF.HUM T.LNK see 2SG.P be.at market
 ‘Anybody/everybody saw you at the market.’
 (NOT: ‘Who saw you at the market?’)
- (117) *phaj3 kaɔ̃ bə̀ɔ̃ kaa4 phaən1-khaam5 bak2-siang2*
 INDEF.HUM T.LNK NEG dare pass-cross M.B-S
dajɔ̃ thò̀d̩1 ñaj2
 ACHV extent web
 ‘Nobody dared to cross Siang even the width of a spider web.’
 (NOT: ‘Who didn’t dare to cross Siang even the width of a spider
 web?’)

The interrogative reading is also unavailable when an indefinite pronoun appears in an extracausal slot, such as Left Position, as in the following example:

- (118) *phaj3 nam2 qaw3 nò̀ng4 maɔ̃ haj5, siɔ̃ mò̀p4*
 INDEF.HUM retrieve take yG DIR.ALL give IRR hand.over
mùang2 haj5 loot4
 kingdom give NO.HES
 ‘Whoever retrieves my little sister and brings her to (me), (I’ll)
 hand over my kingdom to (them) right away.’

Although indefinite pronouns can occur in sentence-initial position, as these examples show, it is more common for an indefinite pronoun in subject function to be introduced by the presentational verb *mii2* ‘there is’, as shown here:

- (119) *mii2 phaj3 hên3 caw4 juu1 talaat5*
 there.is INDEF.HUM see 2SG.P be.at market
 i. ‘Who saw you at the market?’
 ii. ‘There is someone who saw you at the market.’

An effect of introducing the indefinite subject with the presentational verb *mii2* in (119) is that the indefinite reading is referential (as opposed to the non-referential, open reading in (113ii), above). This is expected, given that sentence-initial *mii2* has a general function of introducing new referents in discourse (see Chapter 8).

A similar construction to that shown in (119) uses the copula *mèn1* instead of the presentational *mii2*:

- (120) *mèn1 phaj3 hên3 caw4 juu1 talaat5*
 COP INDEF.HUM see 2SG.P be.at market
 ‘Who is it that saw you at the market?’

Example (120) does not allow an indefinite reading. This is one of the only cases in which the indefinite pronoun must be read as interrogative. By introducing the indefinite subject with the copula *mèn1*, (120) conveys the idea that there is presumed to be a specific someone who saw you at the market. By contrast, using the more general presentational verb *mii2*, example (119i) asks who saw you, but allows for the possibility that in fact nobody saw you.

A way of narrowing in on the referential indefinite interpretation which accompanies a referent’s first mention in discourse is to replace the simpler pronoun with a complex expression combining the general indefinite specifier *daj3* ‘INDEF’ with the specifier *nùng1* ‘one’ (cf. (112), above):

- (121) *man2 hên3 phuø-daj3 phuø-nùng1 juu1 talaat5*
 3.B see MC.HUM-INDEF MC.HUM-one be.at market
 ‘She saw someone at the market.’
 (NOT: ‘Who did she see at the market?’)

This complex indefinite expression may also appear in subject function, but in that case it is obligatorily introduced by the presentational verb *mii2* ‘there is’ (unlike the free pronoun *phaj3* ‘INDEF.HUM’; cf. (113) and (119), above):

- (122) *mii2 phuø-daj3 phuø-nùng1 hên3 caw4 juu1 talaat5*
 there.is MC.HUM-INDEF MC.HUM-one see 2SG.P be.at market
 ‘Someone saw you at the market.’

5.2.2 Other indefinites and question words

There are further indefinite expressions, beyond those listed in (106), above. Most of these involve the general indefinite specifier:

- (123) a. *saj3*
 INDEF.PLACE
 ‘somewhere, anywhere, where’
 b. *bòðn1-daj3*
 place-INDEF
 ‘some place, any place, which place’
 c. *tòðn1-daj3*
 time.period-INDEF
 ‘some time, any time, which time’
 d. *mùù4-daj3*
 day-INDEF
 ‘some day, any day, which day’
 e. *nèèw2-daj3*
 kind-INDEF
 ‘some kind, any kind, which kind’
 f. *cang1-daj3*
 manner-INDEF
 ‘somehow, anyhow, how’

‘Why?’ can be expressed in two ways. The expression *pên3-ñang3* ‘why?’ is a combination of the copula *pên3* and the indefinite inanimate pronoun *ñang3*. In this way, ‘Why?’ is literally expressed as ‘What is it?’. *Pên3-ñang3* ‘why?’ occurs sentence-initially:

- (124) *pên3-ñang3 caw4 bòø dajø thaam3 man2*
 WHY 2SG.P NEG ACHV ask 3.B
 ‘Why didn’t you ask him?’

- (125) *pên3-ñang3 khaw3 ñaang1 mùa2*
WHY 3PL.B walk return
'Why are they walking back?'

A second way to ask 'why?' is to use the verb *khùù2*—otherwise meaning 'to be like'—in a pre-negation position:

- (126) *caw4 khùù2 bòø dajø thaam3 man2*
2SG.P WHY NEG ACHV ask 3.B
'Why didn't you ask him?'
- (127) *khaw3 khùù2 ñaang1 mùa2*
3PL.B WHY walk return
'Why are they walking back?'

Chapter 6

Nominal modification

Nominal modifiers generally follow their heads:

- (128) *khon2 suung3*
person tall
'tall person'
- (129) *din3 laaw2*
soil Lao/Laos
'Lao soil'
- (130) *khaw5 niaw3*
rice sticky
'sticky rice'

There are apparent exceptions to the usual head-modifier order. This may be illustrated with reference to body part terms. Among non-simple body part terms, a majority of noun-noun (N1-N2) compounds follow the usual head-modifier order, featuring the 'larger whole' as modifier (N2), where the other component (whose referent is part of or connected to or located at or otherwise associated with the whole) is head, i.e., N1. The following examples involve *dang3* 'nose' in N2 position, as modifier:

- (131) a. *kêng3 dang3* 'area between nose and upper lip' (adjacent to the nose, below it)
b. *piik5 dang3* 'nose wing' (part of the nose)
c. *khii5 dang3* 'nose shit' (inside the nose)

Some of the complex body part terms are exceptional in that the order of elements shown in (131) is reversed. In these exceptional cases, the whole entity of which the referent is associated is denoted by N1, not N2. This is inconsistent with the usual status of N1 as phrasal head (cf. English *forearm*, which is not an arm, but part of an arm):

- (132) a. *naa5 phaak5* 'forehead' (lit. 'forehead face')
b. *khèen3 sòdk5* 'elbow' (lit. 'elbow arm')

- c. *khaa3 tooj4* ‘thigh’ (lit. ‘thigh leg’)
- d. *khaa3 phap1* ‘back of knee’ (lit. ‘fold(ing) leg’)
- e. *kon4 khii5* ‘anus’ (lit. ‘shit(ing) arse’)
- f. *taa3 dam3* ‘pupil’ (lit. ‘black eye’)
- g. *thòòng4 nòj4* ‘lower belly’ (lit. ‘small belly’)

This pattern is also attested in other areas of the nominal lexicon. For example: *khaj1 dèng3* ‘yolk’ (lit. ‘red egg’); *khaj1 khaaw3* ‘egg white’ (lit. ‘white egg’); *tom4 paa3* ‘boiled fish’ (lit. ‘fish boil’); *piing4 siin4* ‘grilled meat’ (lit. ‘meat grill’). (Cf. Enfield 2006d.)

6.1 Possession

Possession is marked either by simply adjoining the possessor and possessee (with possessee first), or by connecting the two explicitly using the word *khòòng3*, which elsewhere means ‘things, stuff’. While there is no fixed formal distinction between alienable and inalienable possession, the inalienable type is less likely to be overtly marked. This accords with principles of natural ‘iconicity’ or motivation (Haiman 1985).

- (133) *taa3 (khòòng3) khòj5*
 eye of 1SG.P
 ‘my eye(s)’
- (134) *mèè1 (khòòng3) caw4*
 mother of 2SG.P
 ‘your mother’
- (135) *miit4 (khòòng3) mòj3 nan4*
 knife of bloke DEM.NONPROX
 ‘that bloke’s knife’

6.1.1 External possession

Certain grammatical constructions involving reference to a person and some part of that person’s body express a relationship of possession external to the noun phrase (Chappell and McGregor 1996). In these cases,

the possessor and possessee do not appear within a single noun phrase, and there is no morphological expression of the possessive relationship. One type of construction is formally like a transitive sentence. This is of the form NP1 V NP2, where the verb predicates either an action or an experience involving a part of the body, NP1 is a person, and NP2 is the relevant body part (cf. Clark 1996). More specific instantiations are:

NP1_{AGENT} (PERSON) V NP2_{THEME} (BODY PART)

- (136) *phen1 mùùn2 taa3*
 3.P open.eye eye
 ‘He opened (his) eyes.’
- (137) *kuu3 ñik1 khiw4*
 1SG.B raise.eyebrow eyebrow
 ‘I raised (my) eyebrows.’

NP1_{EXPERIENCER} (PERSON) V NP2_{LOCUS} (BODY PART)

- (138) *phen1 khan2 khaa3*
 3.P itch leg
 ‘He itches (in the) legs.’
- (139) *kuu3 cêp2 lang3*
 1SG.B sore back
 ‘I (have a) sore back.’

The construction entails a relation of possession of the body part by the grammatical subject. It is not possible to be sore in someone else’s back. It is not possible to use the verb *mùùn2* ‘open (the eyes)’ to describe someone opening someone else’s eyes.

The experience-denoting construction exemplified in (138) and (139) is not a regular transitive construction. A verb phrase such as *khan2 khaa3* ‘itch leg’ (in which *khaa3* ‘leg’ is not an undergoer but a locus of experience) can itself take an additional nominal complement describing the stimulus of the experience. This structure incorporates a body part into a multi-participant predication, with roles corresponding to experiencer, locus of experience, and stimulus, in that order.

- (140) *phen1 khan2 khaa3 phaø-hom1 maj1*
 3.P itch leg CT.CLOTH-blanket new
 ‘He itches (in the) legs (from his) new blanket.’

A second type of construction takes the following form:

NP1_{THEME (HUMAN)} **NP2**_{BODY PART} **V**_{ADJECTIVE}

This has the shape of a topic-comment construction (Li and Thompson 1976), in which a noun phrase in initial position is followed by what looks like a full clause with its own nominal subject and adjectival predicate. In an example, *kuu3* ‘I’ is in initial position as the extraclassical topic or setting for the assertion *phom3 dam3* ‘(the) hair (is) black’:

- (141) *kuu3 phom3 dam3*
 1SG.B hair black
 ‘I am black-haired.’ (lit. ‘I, hair black’.)

Here is another example:

- (142) *luuk4 caw4 khaa3 ñaaw2*
 child 2SG.P leg long
 ‘Your child is long-legged.’ (lit. ‘Your child, legs long.’)

This differs from a typical topic-comment construction in that the sequence ‘NP_{BODY PART} V’ functions as a verbal predicate in itself, where verbal aspectual-modal marking may appear directly on the noun phrase:

- (143) *luuk4 caw4 bòø khaa3 ñaaw2*
 child 2SG.P NEG leg long
 ‘Your child isn’t long-legged.’

Superficially similar constructions cannot do this, instead requiring aspectual-modal marking to appear directly on the verb, as shown in (144c; cf. 142-143):

- (144) a. *ton4 sak2 baj3 ñaj1*
 tree teak leaf big
 ‘The teak tree (has) big leaves.’
 b. **ton4 sak2 bòø baj3 nòj4*
 tree teak NEG leaf small
 (The teak tree (does) not (have) small leaves.)
 c. *ton4 sak2 baj3 bòø nòj4*
 tree teak leaf NEG small
 ‘The teak tree (does) not (have) small leaves.’

6.2 Determiners

Determiners are expressed as part of the nominal phrase, usually involving classifier constructions. They attach to the head nominal, which will be the classifier, if one is present (see Chapter 7). The patterns for determiners are NOUN-DETERMINER or NOUN CLASSIFIER-DETERMINER.

Nii4 is the semantically unmarked member of a set of demonstratives, including one other demonstrative modifier *nan4* (nonproximal), along with three spatially deictic adverbials *phii4* ‘here’, *han5* ‘there’, and *phun4* ‘yonder’. By being in pragmatic opposition to the nonproximal demonstrative *nan4*, *nii4* may adopt a proximal meaning (see below).

The term *diaw3-kan3* ‘the same’ (morphemically analyzable as a combination of *diaw3* ‘single, alone’ and the collaborative marker *kan3*) is a modifier of nominals, in the frame ‘the same person/thing/place/time’. Here are two examples:

- (145) *laaw2-theng2 hanø juu1 tòdn3 diaw3-kan3, qaa3naa2cak2*
 Lao-above TPC.DIST be.at place single-COLL kingdom
diaw3-kan3, kaø bðø khùù2-kan3 dêj2
 single-COLL T.LNK NEG like-COLL FAC.NEWS
 ‘The Lao Theung live in the same place (as us), the same kingdom (as us), (but we are) not alike, you know.’
- (146) *lèq1 saa3maat4 pèè3 pên3 sap2 vithañasaat5 qùùn1*
 and ABLE translate COP words science other
kaø daj4 dêj2, kham2-sap2 diaw3-kan3 naø
 T.LNK CAN FAC.NEWS words single-COLL TPC.PERIPH
 ‘And it’s possible to translate (them) as terms from other sciences, you know—the same words.’

This does not correspond to the English expression *the same* in the frames ‘X is *the same* as Y’ and ‘X and Y are *the same*’ (cf. Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002). English *the same* in this adverbial frame refers not to identity but to close likeness in some respect. This cannot be expressed in Lao using *diaw3-kan3*. It is expressed instead using *khùù2* ‘like’:

- (147) *mùng2 khùù2 kuu3*
 2SG.B like 1SG.B
 ‘You are like me.’ (cf. English: *You are the same as me.*)

- (148) *mùng2 kap2 kuu3 khùù2 kan3*
 2SG.B with 1SG.B like COLL
 ‘You and I are alike.’ (cf. English: *You and I are the same.*)

6.2.1 Syntactic dependence of determiners

Determiners in Lao do not appear as substantive heads. They are dependent on some nominal head. Most commonly, or by default, the nominal head to which determiners attach is the maximally general inanimate modifier classifier *qanø*. For example, the demonstrative *nii4* ‘this’ cannot appear alone if it is to refer to a thing. It appears as *qanø-nii4* (literally ‘this one’ or ‘this thing’).

- (149) *qanø-nii4 dii3*
 MC.INAN-DEM good
 ‘This (thing) is good.’
- (150) **nii4 dii3*
 DEM good
 (This is good.)
- (151) *man2 vaw4 qanø-nii4*
 3.B say MC.INAN-DEM
 ‘She said this (thing).’
- (152) **man2 vaw4 nii4*
 3.B say DEM
 (She said this.)

While *nii4* never appears alone meaning ‘this’, it may appear alone with other meanings. For example, as a complement of *juul* ‘be at’ or *maa2* ‘come’, *nii4* may mean ‘here’:

- (153) *maa2 nii4*
 come DEM
 ‘Come here!’
- (154) *laaw2 bòø dajø hêt1 juul nii4*
 3SG.FA NEG ACHV do be.at DEM
 ‘She didn’t do (it) here.’

Nii4 sometimes appears in preverbal position, usually with strong prosodic marking (stressed, often followed by a marked pause). Such usage picks out a salient referent, usually present in the physical context. In the following examples, the sentence-initial *nii4* has an attention-drawing function, referring to something physically present:

- (155) *nii4 laø, phuø-nii4 siø daj4*
 DEM PRF MC.HUM-DEM IRR CAN
 ‘Here, this person will be able (to do it).’
- (156) *nii4 mèn1 namø-jaa3 qoo3lalit1*
 DEM COP CT.LIQUID-medicine O
 ‘This here is Oralite medicine.’

Example (156) is spoken by a puppeteer holding up sachets of ‘Oralite’ brand rehydration salts in front of an audience of school children, and introducing a demonstration of how they are used.

Similarly, *diaw3-kan3* ‘the same’ may not appear without being attached to a nominal head. One cannot say ‘I did the same’, but instead must say ‘I did the same thing’:

- (157) *kuu3 hêt1 qanø diaw3-kan3*
 1SG.B do MC.INAN single-COLL
 ‘I did the same (thing).’
- (158) **kuu3 hêt1 diaw3-kan3*
 1SG.B do single-COLL
 (I did the same.)

In ‘the same’ expressions of this kind, a second argument is marked with the addition of the relational particle *kap2* ‘with’:

- (159) *kuu3 hêt1 qanø diaw3-kan3 kap2 mùng2*
 1SG.B do MC.INAN single-COLL with 2SG.B
 ‘I did the same (thing) as you.’

6.2.2 Demonstratives

None of the five demonstrative elements may appear independently as agent or undergoer noun phrases (as for *nii4*, above). Only two—*nii4*

and *nan4*— are genuine demonstrative determiners, since only these two can generally be used as nominal modifiers in simple noun phrases like ‘this book’. This puts *nii4* and *nan4* in paradigmatic opposition, with consequences for their semantic analysis (see Enfield 2003a).

Table 11. Demonstrative determiners

Form	Function	Gloss
<i>nii4</i>	general (‘this’)	DEM
<i>nan4</i>	nonproximal (‘that’)	DEM.NONPROX

Table 12. Demonstrative adverbs

Form	Function	Gloss
<i>phii4</i>	proximal (‘here’)	DEM.PROX
<i>han5</i>	distal (‘there’)	DEM.DIST
<i>phun4</i>	far distal (‘yonder’)	DEM.FAR

Since *nii4* is semantically more general, it may be used in a wider number of contexts. That is, *nii4* is used for things which are both near and far (or, both ‘here’ and ‘not here’), while the marked terms are more restricted. *Nii4* is semantically general than the other terms (see Enfield 2003a for evidence and further references). *Nan4* specifies that the referent is something ‘not here’. *Phun4* specifies that the referent is not only ‘not here’, but ‘far away’ in addition. Note that these are not literally distinctions of distance. What matters is where a referent stands in relation to conceived spatial perimeters. These conceived perimeters emerge from factors of the interaction, including active areas of conversational or practical engagement, physical features of the interactional space, and assumptions about addressees’ access to relevant information for inference (Enfield 2003a).

6.2.3 Topic markers

A set of enclitic topic markers attach to noun phrases, marking current topicality. Noun phrases that are marked in this way will often also be placed in an extracausal (Left or Right) position. Accordingly, they cannot mark referents which are in focus (e.g., new or in contrast).

Table 13. Topic markers

Form	Function	Gloss	Related demonstrative
<i>ni</i> ∅	general	TPC	<i>nii4</i> ‘general/proximal demonstrative’
<i>nan</i> ∅	nonproximal	TPC.NONPROX	<i>nan4</i> ‘nonproximal demonstrative’
<i>han</i> ∅	distal	TPC.DIST	<i>han5</i> ‘distal demonstrative’; ‘there’
<i>phun</i> ∅	far	TPC.FAR	<i>phun4</i> ‘far distal demonstrative’; ‘yonder’
<i>na</i> ∅	peripheral	TPC.PERIPH	(possibly <i>nan4</i> ‘nonproximal’)

While the topic markers are transparently related to demonstratives, they are distinct. This is demonstrated by the possibility of co-occurrence of demonstrative and topic marker in a single noun phrase (in the order NOUN–DEMONSTRATIVE–TOPIC-MARKER), as shown here:

- (160) *qacaan3 khon2 nii4 ni*∅
 teacher CLF.HUM DEM TPC
 ‘this teacher (that we are talking about)’
- (161) *khuu2-baa3 qong3 nan4 han*∅
 monk CLF.HOLY DEM.NONPROX TPC.DIST
 ‘that monk (that we are talking about)’

While a nominal marked by a demonstrative such as *nii4* may be new to the discourse or may be in contrastive focus (‘THIS one, not that one’), a nominal marked by a topic marker such as *ni*∅ must be already given, or otherwise presupposed in the discourse.

- (162) *khon2 suung3 nii4*
 person tall DEM
 ‘this tall person’ (this one here; or this tall person, as opposed to that tall person)
- (163) *khon2 suung3 ni*∅
 person tall TPC
 i. ‘the tall person’ (who we have already been talking about)
 ii. ‘tall people’

The (163ii) reading can be regarded as ‘given’ in that it is exhaustive of a reference set which is accessible independent of the discourse (cf. Givón 1984). The following examples show these noun phrases (square-bracketed) in core argument functions:

- (164) [khon2 suung3 nii4] salaat5
 person tall DEM clever
 ‘These tall people are clever.’ (e.g., when contrastive or pointing out in context)
- (165) [khon2 suung3 niø] salaat5
 person tall TPC clever
 i. ‘Tall people are clever.’
 ii. ‘The tall people are clever.’

In an example of the general topic marker *niø*, the speaker is telling a joke about a man who never learned how to read. The man receives a letter, but can’t read what it says. He has noticed that every time his neighbor reads a letter, he puts on spectacles in order to do so. So, the man goes to the market to buy a pair of spectacles, thinking that when he puts them on, he will be able to read. He arrives home with his new spectacles, only to find that he still can’t read the letter, and goes back to the shop to complain:

- (166) [vèen1-taa3 caw4 niø] qaan1 nangsiù3 bòø daj4
 glass-eye 2SG.P TPC read writing NEG CAN
 ‘(With) the spectacles (of) yours, (I’m) unable to read.’

In this example, the noun phrase *vèen1-taa3 caw4* ‘your spectacles’ is marked by the general topic marker *niø*, marking the referent as topical in the discourse and relatively proximate in discourse activation.

In another example, a speaker describes a traffic accident involving a motorcycle and a bicycle. The speaker has already introduced the two vehicles and their riders. In remarking that nobody was seriously hurt, his references to both individuals take the general topic marker *niø*:

- (167) *bòø cêp2 nak2, tề1 vaa1 [phuø sòðn4*
 NEG hurt heavy but COMP MC.HUM passenger
lotø-cak2 niø] fong4 paj3, tề1 vaa1 laaw2
 CT.VEHICLE-motorcycle TPC spill go but COMP 3SG.FA
bòø cêp2 nak2,
 NEG hurt heavy
[phuø lotø-thiip5 niø] kaø lom4 paj3
 MC.HUM CT.VEHICLE-bicycle TPC T.LNK fall.over go
sùø-sùù1
 NOT.MORE
 ‘(They) weren’t seriously injured, but [the one who was the passenger on the back of the motorcycle] spilled over, but (she) wasn’t seriously injured. [The one on the bicycle] just fell over.’

The following example features the nonproximal topic marker *nanø*. The speaker describes a kingdom ruled by the king Kutsalat and an adjacent worlds of ogres and gods. A powerful ogre named Kumphan is as yet unmarried. When Kumphan’s soldiers visit the earthly kingdom, they learn that the king’s gorgeous youngest sister is also as yet unmarried:

- (168) *sêê3naa2 khòðng3 ñak1 kum3phan2 maø hên3, mùa1*
 soldiers of ogre K DIR.ABL see when
pajø vaw4 suu1 [ñak1 kum3phan2 nanø] fang2,
 DIR.ALL speak to ogre K TPC.NONPROX listen
ñak1 kum3phan2 thaam3 haa3 sùù1
 ogre K ask seek name
 ‘The soldiers of the ogre Kumphan came and saw (her). When (they) went and told [the ogre Kumphan] (about her), the ogre Kumphan asked after (her) name.’

While the ogre Kumphan is explicitly mentioned in the first line of (168), he is embedded in a noun phrase modifier (as possessor) and is not an argument of that clause. When he is introduced in the next clause as a core argument (non-subject), marking is with the nonproximal *nanø*.

Next is an example with the distal topic marker *hanø*. The speaker describes the occasion of sighting a bargain at the market. He begins, ‘After I came out of the market, right, I saw a turkey, a really big one. And there was a hen too.’ He has now introduced two turkeys into the discourse, a male and a female. His interest is the large, male turkey. He

adds, taking the focus off the two turkeys: ‘I then consulted with my wife, “Should we buy (it)?”, I said.’ At this point, the speaker is now going to make reference to the male turkey. Not only is this referent slightly distant from the current interaction (thanks to the intervening change of focus), there are now two turkeys in the current discourse record. This makes the male turkey relatively distal as a discourse referent. Accordingly, this reference is marked with the distal topic marker *hanø*:

- (169) [kaj1-*nguang1 hanø*], [toø-*phuu5 hanø*] *vaa1*
 chicken-turkey TPC.DIST MC.ANIM-male TPC.DIST COMP
sip2-haa5-phan2
 ten-five-thousand
 ‘That turkey, that male one, (the price) was 15,000.’

Finally, the topic marker *naø* is termed ‘peripheral’ not because of its meaning, but because of its special syntactic position. It may co-occur with the other topic markers, in a distinct slot, further from the head (cf. examples (160-161), above):

- (170) *qacaan3 khon2 nii4 niø naø*
 teacher CLF.HUM DEM TPC TPC.PERIPH
 ‘this teacher (that we are talking about)’
- (171) *khuu2-baa3 qong3 nan4 hanø naø*
 monk CLF.HOLY DEM.NONPROX TPC.DIST TPC.PERIPH
 ‘that monk (that we are talking about)’

Like the other topic markers, *naø* not only marks noun phrases, but may also mark topicalized phrases of other kinds (e.g., left-positioned phrasal topics, clausal afterthought phrases; see example (174), below, among many other examples throughout this book).

6.3 Quantifiers

6.3.1 *Baang3* ‘some’, *nùng1* ‘one’, *sòdng3* ‘two’

The quantifiers *baang3* ‘some’, *nùng1* ‘one’, and *sòdng3* ‘two’, (as well as *laaj3* ‘much/many’ and *met2* ‘all’; see below) combine with substantive heads. *Baang3* ‘some’, *sòdng3* ‘two’, and *laaj3* ‘much/many’ pre-

cede the nominal, while *nùng1* ‘one’ may precede or follow (*met2* ‘all’ is an adverbial with distinct grammar; see below):

- (172) *baang3 qan3* [some CLF.INAN] ‘some things’
nùng1 khon2 [one CLF.HUM] ‘one person’
khon2 nùng1 [CLF.HUM one] ‘one person’
sòòng3 suan1 [two part] ‘two parts’
laaj3 qan3 [many CLF.INAN] ‘many things’

The first two examples below show *baang3* ‘some’ preceding the nominal it quantifies:

- (173) *baang3 khon2, khaw3 kaø nii3 paj3 mùang2-thaj2,*
 some people 3PL.B T.LNK flee go country-Thai
baang3 khon2 kaø paj3 falang1,
 some people T.LNK go France
baang3 khon2 kaø paj3 qaa3mêê2likaa3
 some people T.LNK go America
 ‘Some people, they fled to Thailand, some people went to France,
 some people went to America.’
- (174) *baang3 bòn1, khacaw4 bòø kin3 pèèng4-nua2 naø*
 some place 3PL.P NEG eat MSG TPC.PERIPH
 ‘(In) some places they don’t eat MSG.’

The next two examples show *nùng1* ‘one’ in the more common pattern of appearing after the nominal it modifies (in contrast to the other quantifiers):

- (175) *pasaa2son2 kheej2 hêt1 pii3 nùng1 khang4 diaw3*
 citizens EXP do year one occasion single
 ‘The people are accustomed to doing (the rice harvest) a single time in one year.’
- (176) *sik2 lèèw4 bòø mii2 ñang3, mii2 tèè1 song5*
 exit.monkhood PRF NEG have INDEF.INAN have only pants
tø-nùng1, qee5, sà5 tø-nùng1, qee5
 MC.ANIM-one INTJ shirt MC.ANIM-one INTJ
 ‘Having left the monkhood, (I) didn’t have anything, (I) only had one pair of pants, uh-huh, and one shirt, uh-huh.’

Here are examples of *sò̀ng3* ‘two’ as a quantifier, appearing before the nominal it quantifies (the first example showing that the attached nominal is the classifier, if one is present):

(177) *qaw3 huup4 sò̀ng3 baj3 kap2 ngen2*
 take picture two CLF.LEAF with money
 ‘(I) take (along) two photographs, and money (to arrange a visa).’

(178) *maw2 hènng2, laaw2 laø nòn2 sò̀ng3 mùù4, bøø tùn1*
 drunk strong 3SG.FA PRF sleep two day NEG awaken
leej2
 NO.ADO
 ‘(He) was really drunk, and so he slept for two days, without waking up at all.’

Like *nii4* ‘this’, and *diaw3-kan3* ‘the same’, discussed above, neither *nùng1* ‘one’ nor *sò̀ng3* ‘two’ can be used as nominal heads in themselves. Expressions like *mii2 sò̀ng3* ‘There are two’ are possible, but must have a definite or otherwise contextually retrievable referent for the thing being counted (i.e., the noun phrase head is understood as ellipsed due to definiteness).

Selective expressions like ‘two of these people’ or ‘one of these things’ utilize the extraclausal Left Position in a kind of topic-comment construction (Li and Thompson 1976, 1981). A common use of the topic-comment construction involves a possessive relation, with the possessor in left position, and the possessed being the subject of the verb in the comment clause:

(179) *phò̀d1 khò̀j5 khaa3 hak2*
 father 1SG.P leg break
 ‘My father’s leg is broken.’ (lit. ‘(Of) my father, leg is broken.’)

The same structure forms a selective construction, where the full set (from where the subset will be selected) appears in Left Position, and the subset is specified immediately after, in preverbal subject position:

(180) *khon2 (law1) nii4, sò̀ng3 khon2 jaak5 paj3*
 person (group) DEM two people want go
 ‘Two of these people want to go.’
 (lit: ‘(Of) these people, two people want to go.’)

The quantifiers *nùng1* ‘one’ and *sòdng3* ‘two’ (as well as the determiner *qùùn1* ‘other’) can be easily combined with *nii4* ‘this’, with a maximal expansion NUM-N-OTHER-DEM:

- (181) *khon2 qùùn1 nii4*
 person other DEM
 ‘these other people’
- (182) *phuø-qùùn1 nii4*
 MC.HUM-other DEM
 ‘this other person’
- (183) *sòdng3 qanø-nii4*
 two MC.INAN-DEM
 ‘these two things’
- (184) *sòdng3 khon2 qùùn1 nii4*
 two person other DEM
 ‘these two other people’

6.3.2 *thuk1* ‘every’ and *tèè1-laø* ‘each’

The quantifiers *thuk1* ‘every’ and *tèè1-laø* ‘each’ both occur with a relevant numeral classifier (cf. Chapter 7):

- (185) *lot1 thùük1 kak2 thuk1 khan2*
 vehicle suffer confiscate every CLF.VEHICLE
 ‘Every one of the vehicles got confiscated.’
- (186) *lot1 thùük1 kak2 tèè1-laø khan2*
 vehicle suffer confiscate each CLF.VEHICLE
 ‘Each one of the vehicles got confiscated.’

While example (185) conveys the idea that all the vehicles were confiscated, example (186) highlights the process happening ‘one-by-one’. The expression *tèè1-laø* is a combination of *tèè1* ‘only’ and *laø* ‘each, per’. The term *laø* ‘each, per’ connects a classifier and some measure (cf. English *ten dollars per person*), as in the following example:

- (187) *khacaw4 thùùk1 maj3, khon2 laø sèèn3*
 3PL.FA suffer fine CLF.HUM per hundred.thousand
 ‘They got fined, one hundred thousand per person.’

In a further construction for expressing similar meaning, *suu1* marks both the subject and the predicate (cf. Chapter 13, section 13.2.1 for discussion):

- (188) *suu1 khon2 suu1 maw2*
 each person each drunk
 ‘Each (one) of them was drunk.’

6.3.3 *Laaj3* ‘much/many’

A term which functions as both a quantifier and an adjectival modifier is *laaj3* ‘much/many’. It commonly functions as a regular quantifier, appearing before the nominal (usually the classifier) it quantifies, as in (189). It also may function as a regular stative verb ‘to be much/many’, as in (190).

- (189) *kaj1 laaj3 too3 juu1 khòðk4 nòjø-nòj4*
 chicken many CLF.ANIM be.at pen RDP.A-small
 ‘Many chickens are in a small-ish pen.’
- (190) *juu1 nii4 khon2 laaj3*
 be.at DEM person many
 ‘There are a lot of people here.’
 (lit. ‘Here, the people are many.’)

Also, *laaj3* ‘much/many’ may appear separated from the nominal it refers to, with an adverbial function, as follows:

- (191) *man2 mii2 qèn3 juu1 nii4 laaj3 naø*
 3.B there.is tendon be.at DEM much TPC.PERIPH
 ‘There were lots of tendons here.’ (i.e., on an old man’s neck.)

Since *laaj3* ‘much/many’ can have the properties of a verb, it may appear in noun phrases after the noun quantified, in a kind of modifier adjectival function. For example, ‘many people’ may be expressed as either

laaj3 khon2 ‘many people’ or *khon2 laaj3* ‘people (which are) many’. (The latter could be a complete sentence meaning ‘There are many people’.) Consider the contrast between *laaj3* ‘many’ as an independent adverbial complement (192a) and as a nominal modifier (192b, NP bracketed):

- (192) a. *khon2 nii4 vaw4 laaj3*
 person DEM say much
 ‘This person spoke a lot.’
 b. *khon2 nii4 vaw4 [laaj3 lùang1]*
 person DEM say many matter
 ‘This person said many things.’

There is no identifiable semantic distinction between *laaj3* as ‘much’ and *laaj3* as ‘many’. The difference in English translation seems to depend on the nature or construal of the nominal being quantified. A mass noun combination such as *khaw5 laaj3* [rice much/many] is translated as ‘much rice’ (or ‘a lot of rice’), while a count noun combination such as *lot1 laaj3* [vehicle much/many] is translated as ‘many vehicles’. Nominals which are open to both mass and count interpretations may allow either. For example, *kaj1 laaj3* [chicken much/many] could be either ‘many chickens’ or ‘much chicken’ (‘a lot of chicken’).

One grammatical constraint which emerges from the inherent lexical class distinction between mass and count nouns involves the use of *laaj3* ‘much/many’ in pre-nominal position, where it may only mean ‘many (of a countable thing)’. Thus, the countable nominal *lot1* ‘vehicle’ may take *laaj3* ‘much/many’ either pre- or post-nominally (but note that (193b) is less idiomatic than *lot1 laaj3 khan2* [vehicle many CLF] ‘many vehicles’):

- (193) a. *lot1 laaj3*
 vehicle much/many
 ‘a lot of vehicles’
 b. *laaj3 lot1*
 much/many vehicle
 ‘many vehicles’

However, to express the idea of a large quantity of some non-countable mass, such as *khaw5* ‘rice’, *laaj3* ‘much/many’ may only be used post-nominally. If *laaj3* ‘much/many’ were to appear pre-nominally with such

a mass noun, the only possible reading would involve construal of the mass noun as something countable (cf. English *many rices*, i.e., ‘many (kinds of) rice’):

- (194) a. *khaw5 laaj3*
 rice much/many
 ‘a lot of rice’
 b. *laaj3 khaw5*
 much/many rice
 ‘many (kinds of) rice’ (NOT: ‘a lot of rice’)

This behavior does not demonstrate that *laaj3* itself has multiple meanings, but rather appears to be due to properties of different types of nominals (i.e., mass versus count).

6.3.4 *Met2* ‘all’

The term *met2* as an independent verb means ‘run out, finished, exhausted, complete’ as in (195). With the meaning ‘all’, *met2* may have an adverbial function, appearing after the verb phrase it has scope over, as in (196) and (197).

- (195) *khaw5 met2 lèw4*
 rice exhausted PRF
 ‘(The) rice is all finished.’
 (196) *bòk5 nèq1-nam2 met2*
 tell advise all
 ‘(He) gave (them) all instructions.’
 (197) *muu1 taaj3 met2*
 peer die all
 ‘All (his) peers died.’

To express notions like ‘everything’ and ‘everyone’, *met2* ‘all’ occurs with indefinite pronouns *ñang3* ‘INDEF.INAN’ and *phaj3* ‘INDEF.HUM’, but cannot be used as a specifier with the modifier-classifier heads *phuø-* ‘MC.HUM’ and *qanø-* ‘MC.INAN’:

- (198) a. *kuu3 hên3 ñang3 met2*
 1SG.B see INDEF.INAN all
 ‘I saw everything.’
 b. **kuu3 hên3 qanø-met2*
 1SG.B see MC.INAN-all
 (I saw everything.)
- (199) a. *phaj3 met2 huu4 qanø-nii4*
 INDEF.HUM all know MC.INAN-DEM
 ‘Everyone knows this.’
 b. **phuø-met2 huu4 qanø-nii4*
 MC.HUM-all know MC.INAN-DEM
 (Everyone knows this.)

Negation may be added to such a construction to give ‘nobody’ (i.e., not anybody). Note that this cannot be read as ‘Not everyone knows this’.

- (200) *phaj3 met2 bðø huu4 qanø-nii4*
 INDEF.HUM all NEG know MC.INAN-DEM
 ‘No-one knows this.’ (i.e., ‘Anyone doesn’t know this.’)

With negation, and an indefinite pronoun like *phaj3* ‘someone’, it is common to also use the topic linker *kaø*, which rules out an interrogative reading of the pronoun and gives a reading ‘nobody’, as in (201). With neither *met2* ‘all’ nor the topic linker *kaø*, the combination of negation and the indefinite pronoun *phaj3* ‘INDEF.HUM’ remains ambiguous, as in (202).

- (201) *phaj3 kaø bðø huu4 qanø-nii4*
 INDEF.HUM T.LNK NEG know MC.INAN-DEM
 ‘No-one knows this.’
- (202) *phaj3 bðø huu4 qanø-nii4*
 INDEF.HUM NEG know MC.INAN-DEM
 i. ‘No-one knows this.’
 ii. ‘Who doesn’t know this?’

See Chapter 5 for more discussion of this point.

6.4 Relativization

Nouns can be modified by relative clauses. To illustrate the structure of relativization, we may begin with a full clause. Take, for example, a transitive clause with a verb and two core arguments:

- (203) *qaaj4 khòòj5 khaa5 kaj1*
 eBr 1SG.P kill chicken
 ‘My brother killed a chicken.’

To relativize upon the object argument of (203), use that argument as a noun phrase head (in noun phrase initial position), and use what remains of the original clause as a modifier. The relative clause modifier (RC) and the full noun phrase (NP) are square-bracketed:

- (204) [*kaj1 [qaaj4 khòòj5 khaa5]*]_{RC}]_{NP}
 chicken eBr 1SG.P kill
 ‘the chicken my brother killed’

The (204) structure may then be used as an ordinary noun phrase argument, for example:

- (205) *khaw3 siø sùù4 [kaj1 [qaaj4 khòòj5 khaa5]*]_{RC}]_O
 3PL.B IRR buy chicken eBr 1SG.P kill
 ‘They’re going to buy the chicken my brother killed.’
- (206) [*kaj1 [qaaj4 khòòj5 khaa5]*]_{RC}]_A *tòòt5 muu1 laaj3 phoot4*
 chicken eBr 1SG.P kill peck others much excessive
 ‘The chicken my brother killed pecked the others too much.’

Here are two further examples of noun phrases with relative clause modifiers:

- (207) *qeen4 [thaw5 [khon3 fùùn2]*]_{RC}]_O *nanø maø*
 call bloke transport firewood TPC.NONPROX DIR.ALL
kin3 nam2 mèè4
 eat with IMP.UNIMP
 ‘Call that bloke (who was) transporting firewood to come and eat with (us)!’

- (208) *mii2 tɛ̀ɛ̀1 [lot1 [falang1 thiaw1]_{RC}]_S*
 there.is only vehicle French tour
 ‘There were only cars (that) Frenchmen toured (in).’

A relativized-upon nominal head may also be referred to with the appropriate classifier (usually a modifier classifier *phu*ϕ- ‘MC.HUM’, *to*ϕ- ‘MC.ANIM’, or *qan*ϕ- ‘MC.INAN’), as in the following examples, derived from (203):

- (209) [*to*ϕ [qaaɟ4 khòðj5 khaa5]_{RC}]_{NP}
 MC.INAN eBr 1 SG.P kill
 ‘the one my brother killed’
- (210) [*phu*ϕ [khaa5 kaj1]_{RC}]_{NP}
 MC.HUM kill chicken
 ‘the one (who) killed a chicken’

In the above examples, the relative clause is adjoined directly after the noun phrase head which it modifies. It is also possible (but never obligatory) for it to be joined to the head by an explicit relativizer, *thii1*. This is historically a locative meaning ‘place’. (*Thii1* is also used as an ordinal numerator, as in *hùan2 thii1 sòðng3* [house ORD two] ‘the second house’.) The following shows example (204) with the relativizer included:

- (211) [*kaj1 thii1* [qaaɟ4 khòðj5 khaa5]_{RC}]_{NP}
 chicken REL eBr 1 SG.P kill
 ‘the chicken which my brother killed’

Note that there is another relativizer—*sùng1*—which is less common than *thii1*, and which is pragmatically marked as being more formal or learned.

It is also possible for any classifier which relates appropriately to the head or referent to explicitly mark the relation between head and modifying relative clause. For example, in (212), the head of the noun phrase in O function is *mak*ϕ-*muang1* ‘mango’. Accordingly, it is linked by *nuaj1*, a numeral classifier for fruits (among other typically round assemblages), to the relative clause which acts as its modifier:

- (212) *khòðj5 siø kin3 [makø-muang1 nuaj1 [suk2 kòðn1*
 1SG.P IRR eat CT.FRUIT-mango CLF.UNIT ripe before
*muu1]*_{RC}_O
 others
 ‘I will eat the mango that is riper than the others.’

In another example, the head of the noun phrase in S function is *pùm4* ‘book’. Accordingly, it is linked by *hua3* ‘head’, a numeral classifier for books (among other things such as bulbs and tubers), to the relative clause which acts as its modifier:

- (213) [*pùm4 hua3 [khòðj5 sùù4 juu1 talaat5]*_{RC}]_S *phèng2*
 book CLF.HEAD 1SG.P buy be.at market expensive
laaj3
 very
 ‘The book that I bought at the market was very expensive.’

In these examples, the relevant numeral classifiers (*nuaj1* and *hua3*) could felicitously be replaced with *thii1*, but unlike these classifiers, *thii1* would show no semantic agreement with the head.

It is possible to relativize upon core arguments S, A, and O (as shown in (214a, b, c), respectively), as well as non-core arguments (as shown in (214d)). In these examples, the complex noun phrase (presented here as an S argument of *paj3* ‘go’ in the main clause) consists of a head noun, followed by an optional relativizer *thii1*, followed by the relative clause as modifier. A zero shows where the head would have been in the source clause:

- (214) a. [*khon2_i (thii1) [Ø_i lèèn1]*_{RC}]_S *siø bðø paj3*
 person REL run IRR NEG go
 ‘The person (who) was running will not be going.’
 b. [*khon2_i (thii1) [Ø_i hèn3 caw4]*_{RC}]_S *siø bðø paj3*
 person REL see 2SG.P IRR NEG go
 ‘The person (who) saw you will not be going.’
 c. [*khon2_i (thii1) [caw4 hèn3 Ø_i]*_{RC}]_S *siø bðø paj3*
 person REL 2SG.P see IRR NEG go
 ‘The person (who) you saw will not be going.’

- d. [khon2_i (thii1) [caw4 qaw3 huup4 haj5 Ø_i beng1]_{RC}]_S siϕ
 person REL 2SG.P take picture give look IRR
 bðϕ paj3
 NEG go
 ‘The person (who) you showed a picture to will not be going.’

There is no relativization on a possessor along the lines of *the man whose car you stole*, but this is straightforwardly done by means of a resumptive pronoun in the slot where the original noun phrase is from:

- (215) [khon2_i (thii1) [caw4 lak1 lot1 laaw2_i]_{RC}]_S siϕ bðϕ paj3
 person REL 2SG.P steal car 3SG.FA IRR NEG go
 ‘The person (who) you stole his car will not be going.’

Note that such a resumptive pronoun would be fine in the ‘Ø’ slot of any of the examples (214 a-d), above (cf. non-prescriptive but occurring English examples like *the person who he saw you*, *the person who you saw him*, *the person who you showed a picture to him*):

- (216) [khon2_i (thii1) [laaw2_i lèn1]_{RC}]_S siϕ bðϕ paj3
 person REL 3SG.FA run IRR NEG go
 ‘The person_i (who) he_i ran will not be going.’
- (217) [khon2_i (thii1) [laaw2_i hèn3 caw4]_{RC}]_S siϕ bðϕ paj3
 person REL 3SG.FA see 2SG.P IRR NEG go
 ‘The person_i (who) he_i saw you will not be going.’
- (218) [khon2_i (thii1) [caw4 hèn3 laaw2_i]_{RC}]_S siϕ bðϕ paj3
 person REL 2SG.P see 3SG.FA IRR NEG go
 ‘The person_i (who) you saw him_i will not be going.’
- (219) [khon2_i (thii1) [caw4 qaw3 huup4 haj5 laaw2_i beng1]_{RC}]_S siϕ
 person REL 2SG.P take picture give 3SG.FA look IRR
 bðϕ paj3
 NEG go
 ‘The person_i (who) you showed a picture to him_i will not be going.’

Here is a text example:

- (220) [phuak4_i thii1 [khacaw4_i toon3 paj3]_{RC} nanø]_{NP}
 group REL 3PL.FA escape go TPC.NONPROX
 ‘those_i who they_i fled’

A relativized-upon argument must be phonologically realized somewhere in the noun phrase structure (i.e., no headless relative clauses allowed). The relativizer itself cannot be the head of a noun phrase with a relative clause modifier (see also Chapter 14, section 14.3.2):

- (221) * *(thii1) [Ø_i lè:n1]_{RC} siø bðø paj3*
 REL run IRR NEG go
 ((Who) ran will not be going.)
- (222) * *(thii1) [Ø_i hèn3 caw4]_{RC} siø bðø paj3*
 REL see 2SG.P IRR NEG go
 (Who) saw you will not be going.)
- (223) * *(thii1) [caw4 hèn3 Ø_i]_{RC} siø bðø paj3*
 REL 2SG.FA see IRR NEG go
 ((Who) you saw will not be going.)
- (224) * *(thii1) [caw4 qaw3 huup4 haj5 Ø_i beng1]_{RC} siø bðø paj3*
 REL 2SG.FA take picture give look IRR NEG go
 ((Who) you showed a picture to will not be going.)

While the option of ellipsis is widespread in Lao, this is a case in which it is not allowed.¹

One regular function of relativization may be termed a light verb construction. A relativized-upon argument becomes main clause subject of the copula verb *pèn3*. This copula verb then takes as its nominal complement a complex noun phrase with a relative clause modifier. For example, ‘My brother killed a chicken’ ((203), above) becomes ‘My brother is (the) one (who) killed a chicken’:

- (225) *qaaj4 khò:j5 pèn3 [phuø [khaa5 kaj1]_{RC}]_{NP}*
 eBr 1SG.P COP MC.HUM kill chicken
 ‘My brother is (the) one (who) killed a chicken.’

In (225), the subject of the relative clause is also the main sentential subject. The effect of this kind of raising is to express contrastive focus

¹In other kinds of cases, ellipsis is mandatory. For example, same-subject control complement constructions (Chapter 19) stipulate that the lower complement subject (coreferential with the matrix subject) cannot be overtly expressed.

(as if it has been suggested that someone else killed the chicken), or selection from among a set (as if someone has asked who from among a group of people my brother is).

In cases where the relativized-upon argument is not a subject, the light verb construction brings it into main subject position:

- (226) *qaaj4 khòj5 pên3 [khon2 (thii1) [caw4 hên3 Ø_i]_{RC}]_{NP}*
 eBr 1SG.P COP person REL 2SG.P see
 ‘My brother_i is the person_i (who) you saw Ø_i.’
- (227) *qaaj4 khòj5 pên3 [khon2 (thii1) [caw4 qaw3 huup4 haj5 Ø_i beng1]_{RC}]_{NP}*
 eBr 1SG.P COP person REL 2SG.P take picture
 give look
 ‘My brother is the person_i (who) you showed a picture to Ø_i.’

Here are some text examples of the light verb construction:

- (228) *haw2 pên3 [phuø [maa1 khaw5]_{RC}]_{NP} [phuø [nùng5 khaw5]_{RC}]_{NP} qiik5 dêj2*
 1.B COP MC.HUM soak rice MC.HUM steam
 rice more FAC.NEWS
 ‘I was the one who soaked the rice, the one who steamed the rice in addition, you know.’
- (229) *sumun2thaa2 pên3 [khon2 thii1 [ngaam2 ñing1]_{RC}]_{NP}*
 S COP person REL beautiful extremely
 ‘Sumunthaa was a person who was extremely beautiful.’
- (230) *caw4 thùù3 vaa1 pên3 [khon2 thii1 [deen3-thaang2 phit2 kot2-maa3]_{RC}]_{NP}*
 2SG.P hold COMP COP person REL march-way against
 law
 ‘You would be regarded as someone who is traveling against the law.’

Another example illustrates the possibility of omitting the copula *pên3*. The complex noun phrase is a verbless clause complement (cf. Chapter 10, section 10.1.1):

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- (231) *phuø-daj3 kaø [phuø [siø qaw3 sivit1 maø*
MC.HUM-INDEF T.LNK MC.HUM IRR take life DIR.ALL
lèèk4-pian1]RC]NP
exchange
'Each of them (were) someone who would exchange their life (for
the other).'

Chapter 7

Nominal classification

Lao features four systems of nominal classification: numeral classifiers, modifier classifiers, class terms, and kin prefixes. Numeral classifiers form a large set (up to 100 members), and include repeaters, thus constituting an open class. The Lao numeral classifier system is a typologically prototypical one, with dozens of classifiers making fine semantic distinctions in the context of enumeration. A modifier classifier system involves the use of classifiers in nominal modification of all kinds, including demonstratives (in situational or discourse deixis and anaphora), attributive modifiers (such as adjectives and relative clauses), and a unitizing construction resembling noun classifier constructions found in other languages. While many numeral classifiers may be used in this function, many of the usual numeral classifier distinctions are not observed, and in most cases just two classifiers are used (procliticized modifier classifiers derived from *too3* ‘body’ and *qan3* ‘small thing’). The assignment to nouns of these two classifiers in numeral classifier constructions is constrained by shape/form specific semantics, but when they are used as modifier classifiers, their semantics are more abstract. Class terms form a smallish set (twenty or so members). The class term system is lexically derivational, with hundreds of nouns incorporating a prefixed term expressing taxonomic essence (e.g., whether the noun denotes a tree, insect, some kind of liquid, and so on). Kin prefixes are a limited set of kinship terms which combine with personal names to derive person reference forms and terms of address. We discuss these sub-systems in turn.

Nominal classification is more a matter of syntactic construction than of form class membership. Nouns in general may become classifiers by appearing in certain constructional slots, as described in following sections. Those nouns which function most often as classifiers are relatively general in meaning. Their syntactic properties divide them into separate sub-classes and sub-functions.

7.1 Numeral classifiers

Lao numeral classifiers show properties of typologically prototypical numeral classifier systems (cf. Aikhenvald 2000:98ff, Grinevald 2000:63-64). That is, they ‘appear contiguous to numerals in numeral noun phrases and expressions of quantity’ and ‘do not have to appear on any constituent outside the numeral NP’ (Aikhenvald 2000:98). Numeral classifiers are a well-noted areal feature of mainland Southeast Asia, and the Lao system is a typical one.

7.1.1 The basic numeral classifier construction

The following example illustrates the standard pattern for enumerating countable entities, in which a noun phrase consists of the main noun (which names the thing being counted)¹ followed by the numeral and an appropriate numeral classifier:

- (232) *kuu3 sùù4 paa3 sòòng3 too3*
 1SG.B buy fish two CLF.ANIM
 ‘I bought two fish.’

The classifier used here is *too3*, which is also used as a numeral classifier for animals of all kinds (but not humans), and which as a main noun means ‘body’ (and in that usage can refer to the body of a person as well as an animal). The numeral and classifier form a unit distinct from the main noun in the noun phrase, as shown by the possibility of inserting an adjunct between the main noun and the numeral-plus-classifier combination:

- (233) *kuu3 sùù4 paa3 juu1 talaat5 sòòng3 too3*
 1SG.B buy fish be.at market two CLF.ANIM
 ‘I bought fish at the market, two (of them).’ (= ‘I bought two fish at the market.’)

¹I use the term ‘main noun’ to refer to the semantically specific nominal which names the referent. The term ‘head’ is problematic. Grammatically, the head of the noun phrase is probably the classifier element (since it is obligatory, and is the element which hosts most if not all nominal marking such as specifiers, determiners, modifiers, etc.; cf. Sackmann 2000 on Mandarin Chinese). Semantically, head is a more appropriate term for the main noun, with its more specific meaning.

In this case, the phrase *sòdng3 too3* ‘two CLF.ANIM’ is separated from the noun it is semantically associated with, and is placed into Right Position. This is a perfectly normal way of saying ‘I bought two fish at the market’, and has nothing of the pragmatically marked quality shown by the first English free translation given in (233). Further demonstration of the independence of the main noun from the numeral-plus-classifier combination is that the main noun can be (and very often is) ellipsed, when the referent is contextually retrievable:

- (234) *kuu3 sùù4 sòdng3 too3*
 1SG.B buy two CLF.ANIM
 ‘I bought two (e.g., fish).’

Note that when the numeral is *nùng1* ‘one’, two orders are possible for numeral and classifier.

- (235) *kuu3 sùù4 paa3 nùng1 too3*
 1SG.B buy fish one CLF.ANIM
 ‘I bought one fish.’

- (236) *kuu3 sùù4 paa3 toϕ nùng1*
 1SG.B buy fish MC.ANIM one
 ‘I bought a fish.’

No other numeral allows the classifier-numeral ordering given in example (236).² As the English translations of examples (235) and (236) suggest, when the numeral *nùng1* ‘one’ appears after the classifier, it functions as a determiner (i.e., a non-specific marker of a singular entity), appearing in the same slot as demonstratives. Thus, in (236), the classifier is functioning as a modifier classifier (see section 7.2, below), and, accordingly, it is de-stressed in that position.

While numeral classifiers are virtually obligatory when counting things, speakers may very occasionally omit the classifier:³

- (237) *kuu3 sùù4 paa3 sòdng3*
 1SG.B buy fish two
 ‘I bought two fish.’

²Almost all nominal modifying elements follow the noun, unlike numerals greater than one. Rare exceptions include quantifiers such as *baang3* ‘some’ (as in *baang3 khon2* [some person/people] ‘some people’). See Chapter 6.

³It is unclear why speakers omit the classifier in these cases.

However, in the context of asking ‘how many’—using *cak2* ‘how many’ in the pre-classifier numeral position—a classifier is obligatory:

(238) *mùng2 sùù4 (paa3) cak2 too3*
 2SG.B buy fish how.many CLF.ANIM
 ‘How many (fish) did you buy?’

(239) * *mùng2 sùù4 (paa3) cak2*
 2SG.B buy fish how.many
 (How many did you buy?)

Note also that a number of other quantifiers, such as *baang3* ‘some’, *thuk1* ‘every’, *tèè1-laø* ‘each and every’ also require numeral classifiers, appearing in the same constructional pattern as numeral classifier expressions:

(240) *kuu3 sùù4 (paa3) baang3 too3*
 1SG.B buy fish some CLF.ANIM
 ‘I bought some (of the fish).’

(241) *kuu3 sùù4 (paa3) thuk1 too3*
 1SG.B buy fish every CLF.ANIM
 ‘I bought every one (of the fish).’

(242) *kuu3 sùù4 (paa3) tèè1-laø too3*
 1SG.B buy fish each.and.every CLF.ANIM
 ‘I bought every one (of the fish).’

7.1.2 Repeaters

Hundreds of nouns, especially those referring to familiar or common objects, are conventionally assigned a particular numeral classifier. But there are also many cases in which no numeral classifier is conventionally assigned to a given noun. In such cases, a noun may be used to ‘classify itself’, i.e., to appear as both the main noun and the numeral classifier. In the following example, *hang2* ‘nest’ is used, in this way, as a repeater classifier:

(243) *kuu3 siø hêt1 hang2 sip2 hang2*
 1SG.B IRR make nest ten nest
 ‘I’m going to make ten nests (for the chickens).’

A repeater structure often occurs when the main noun is also a numeral classifier itself (i.e., a semantically general term conventionally used as a numeral classifier for some set of nouns). In an example, the main noun is *khon2* ‘person/people’, which also serves as the classifier used for any nominal referring to a person:

- (244) *kuu3 hên3 khon2 sòng3 khon2*
 1 SG.B see person two CLF.HUM
 ‘I saw two people.’

Note, however, that speakers would often omit the redundant first instance of *khon2* ‘person/people’ in this example. Compare example (244) (in which *khon2* is used as both main noun and numeral classifier) with the following example, in which the main noun is *khuu2* ‘teacher’, and *khon2* is simply used as a numeral classifier for this human noun:

- (245) *kuu3 hên3 khuu2 sòng3 khon2*
 1 SG.B see teacher two CLF.HUM
 ‘I saw two teachers.’

The repeater strategy is the closest thing to a ‘residual’ option in the numeral classifier system. While Lao has two numeral classifiers with very general semantics (*qan3* ‘small thing’ and *too3* ‘body’), these are not genuinely residual options, since despite their semantic generality and wide applicability they do have specified shape/form semantics, and thus are restricted in the range of nouns they can occur with. They cannot be used, for example, in counting things which have no shape, such as *samnuan2* ‘expression’. In this case, only a repeater strategy may be used:⁴

- (246) *kuu3 huu4-cak2 samnuan2 sòng3*
 1 SG.B know expression two
*samnuan2/*qan3/*too3*
 expression/CLF.SMALL.THING/CLF.ANIM
 ‘I know two expressions.’

The classifiers *too3* ‘body’ and *qan3* ‘small thing’ have much broader semantic applicability when used as modifier classifiers, and in those

⁴Indeed, it is likely that the speaker would omit the first ‘main noun’ use, giving *kuu3 huu4-cak2 sòng3 samnuan2* [1 SG.B know two expression] ‘I know two expressions’.

functions could both be used with reference to *samnuan2* ‘expression’ (and virtually any other noun; cf. section 7.2, below).

Thus, it seems preferable to regard the repeater strategy as a genuinely residual option in numeral classification, since it can be used with any nominal whenever it is not obvious what the appropriate numeral classifier is. Note, however, that if a given noun normally takes a particular numeral classifier, then that classifier will be the one used, and a repeater construction would be odd or unacceptable. The next example shows that to use *lot1* ‘vehicle’ as a repeater for the noun *lot1* ‘vehicle’ is not possible, since it is pre-empted by the classifier *khan2*, which is the conventional and only numeral classifier used for vehicles:

- (247) *kuu3 lak1 lot1 sòng3 khan2/*lot1*
 1SG.B steal vehicle two CLF.VEHICLE/vehicle
 ‘I stole two cars.’

7.1.3 The set of numeral classifiers

The class of words which may function as numeral classifiers is large. Kerr (1972) lists over 80 dedicated classifiers, and this is certainly not exhaustive. The numeral classifiers are semantically heterogeneous, expressing distinctions of shape, size, material, texture, measure, and social value. Table 14 is a representative list of some common numeral classifiers.

While the classifiers in Table 14 can each be used in expressions of enumeration of a large number of nouns, there are also many numeral classifiers with restricted application—i.e., assigned to just one noun or to a very narrow semantic range. A few of these are listed in Table 15.

As the discussion so far suggests, it is not clear that a well-delimited set of numeral classifiers can be defined. First, most of the words which are regarded as numeral classifiers—by virtue of the fact that they can appear in the numeral classifier ‘slot’—also function as independent nouns in other grammatical contexts. One may ask whether words like *khan2* ‘person’ are polysemous (i.e., in one sense a regular noun meaning ‘person’, and in a second, more grammatical sense, a numeral classifier for humans), or whether they represent a single lexical entry which adopts a classifier function by virtue of its appearance in a certain kind of construction.

Table 14. Some common numeral classifiers

Classifier	Meaning as noun	Semantics and example referents
<i>kòn4</i>	'lump'	lumps of mass which naturally occur (e.g., pieces of ice, rocks)
<i>sên5</i>	'line'	ribbon/strip/cord-shaped things (e.g., roads, cables)
<i>khon2</i>	'person'	people, excluding monks (e.g., teachers, children, men)
<i>too3</i>	'body'	non-human entities with 'bodies' (e.g., dogs, snakes, shirts)
<i>ton4</i>	'plant'	living plants (e.g., bushes, shrubs, trees)
<i>tòn1</i>	'piece/hunk'	lumps of soft mass which are cut (e.g., pieces of meat)
<i>nuaj1</i>	'unit'	round things, assembled things (e.g., apples, chairs, mountains)
<i>phùìn3</i>	'soft sheet'	cloths and similar objects (e.g., tablecloths, skirts, tarpaulins)
<i>phèèn1</i>	'stiff sheet'	stiff/hard flat things (e.g., sheets of dried noodle, LP records)
<i>khan2</i>	'handle'	things with handles, operated by hand (e.g., vehicles, umbrellas)
<i>mêt1</i>	'grain'	very small grains (e.g., seeds, specks)
<i>lam2</i>	—	very large cylindrical things (e.g., tree-trunks, boats, airplanes)
<i>lang3</i>	'back'	houses, certain fish traps
<i>hua3</i>	'head'	books, non-fruit bulbous vegetables
<i>qan3</i>	—	small things which can be held in hand

Table 15. Some numeral classifiers of restricted semantics

Classifier	Meaning as noun	Example referents
<i>daang3</i>	square fish net for dipping	any net with evenly spaced holes (fish nets, mosquito nets)
<i>lêm5</i>	—	teeth
<i>qong3</i>	—	monks
<i>taa3</i>	eye	rice seedling-beds
<i>maan2</i>	ear of grain	corn cobs, rice 'ears'

Second, while many nouns are conventionally associated with just one numeral classifier (e.g., the numeral classifier for vehicles is always *khan2*, for fruits always *nuaj1*), there are many cases of inter- and intra-speaker variation in choice of numeral classifier for certain nouns, depending on a range of factors.

One source of variation is the interaction of numeral classifiers with speech level phenomena. For example, Kerr (1972:xxiii) lists two different numeral classifiers which may be used for counting monks: *huup4* (elsewhere meaning ‘image’) and *qong3* (with no independent meaning). The most common numeral classifier used for monks is *qong3*, with *huup4* having a considerably more formal air. Further, speakers occasionally use *khan2*, the regular numeral classifier for people, although this is invariably recognized, upon reflection, as incorrect.

A second source of variation in selection of numeral classifier arises from the fact that many nouns (especially new words for culturally non-traditional objects) have no dedicated or conventionalized classifier, resulting in different classifiers being equally applicable on the basis of semantic appropriateness. For example, a stapler might be counted using *nuaj1* (elsewhere used for things which are assembled as ‘units’) or *qan3* (elsewhere used for any kind of small thing which can be held in the hand). A pair of trousers may be counted using *too3* (elsewhere a noun ‘body’ and a classifier for all non-human animates) or *phùùn3* ‘soft sheet’ (a classifier for any piece of cloth).

A third source of variation is perhaps harder to pin down, but it seems to depend on what aspect of the entity being counted is focussed on by the speaker. For example, the noun *lêp1 mùù2* [nail/claw hand] ‘fingernail’ may be counted using (at least) three different elements in the numeral classifier slot:

- (248) *lêp1 mùù2 khòj5 qòk5 sòng3*
 nail/claw hand 1SG.P exit two
lêp1/qan3/diw4
 nail/CLF.SMALL.THING/CLF.FINGER
 ‘Two (of) my fingernails have come off.’

The first choice is a repeater, while the second categorizes the fingernails as ‘small things’. The third choice given here—*diw4* ‘finger’—is not a classifier in semantic terms. Semantically, *diw4* ‘finger’ does not categorize fingernail in terms of, say, shape. Rather, the fingernail is part

of the finger (or, perhaps, the finger is the location of the fingernail). The use of a location term in a classifier slot can also be observed in the conventional use of *bùang4* ‘side’ to count symmetrically paired body parts such as arms or eyes:

- (249) *thuk1 khon2 mii2 khèèn3 sòòng3 bùang4*
 each person have arm two side
 ‘Everyone has two arms.’
- (250) *thuk1 khon2 mii2 taa3 sòòng3 nuaj1/bùang4*
 each person have eye two CLF.UNIT/side
 ‘Everyone has two eyes.’

In the case of *taa3* ‘eyes’, shown in example (250), there is a choice between using the classifier *nuaj1* (used for round things, fruits, and assembled units) or the locational term *bùang4* ‘side’. In the case of ‘arms’, ‘legs’, and ‘ears’, only *bùang4* ‘side’ (or a synonym *khaang5*) may be used in the numeral classifier slot. Note also that a repeater could be used in the case of (249), since there is no conventional numeral classifier for arms. Here is a text example, in which the second instance of *khèèn3* ‘arm’ is a classifier for the first:

- (251) *mii2 khon2 maø tat2 qaw3 khèèn3 paj3 khèèn3 nùng1*
 there.is person DIR.ALL cut take arm go arm one
 ‘Someone came and cut one of his arms off.’

While there is a great deal of variation in selection of numeral classifier for many nouns, there are also many nouns denoting familiar or traditional objects (such as teeth, fishing nets, or corn cobs), with respect to which speakers do not vary at all in their selection of numeral classifier.

7.1.4 Semantics of numeral classifiers

A significant subset of numeral classifiers refer to distinctions in physical form, including shape and configuration, as illustrated in Table 16 (cf. Seifart 2005).

Other numeral classifiers do not make semantic distinctions in shape or form. Some refer to ‘taxonomic essence’, such as *maak5* ‘fruit’, a numeral classifier which can be used for counting fruits. More commonly,

Table 16. Some shape/configuration distinctions in numeral classifiers

Shape/form semantics	Examples
Zero-dimensional	<i>mêt1</i> 'grain, speck'
One-dimensional	<i>sên5</i> 'long thin thing' <i>saaj3</i> 'strip, ribbon' <i>lam2</i> 'huge tubular thing'
Two-dimensional	<i>baj3</i> 'leaf' <i>phùùn3</i> 'cloth' <i>phèèn1</i> 'stiff sheet'
Round two-dimensional	<i>duang3</i> 'disk' <i>vong2</i> 'ring'
Three-dimensional	<i>nuaj1</i> 'unit, fruit'
Shape and origin	<i>tòn1</i> 'hewn chunk' <i>kòn4</i> 'formed chunk' <i>piang1</i> 'cut chunk or slice'
Configuration	<i>kòð3</i> 'clump' <i>kòðng3</i> 'heap' <i>kòð4</i> 'coil'
Handleability	<i>qan3</i> 'small thing'

however, fruits are counted using *nuaj1* 'unit', the general numeral classifier for round things. Some classifiers refer to interactional or functional features of objects, such as *khan2* 'handle' for vehicles and umbrellas, all of which are 'operated by hand'. Note, however, that not all hand-operated items are counted using *khan2*. Knives, for example, are not. Honorific meaning is expressed by at least one numeral classifier, namely *qong3*, used for counting monks. Finally, note that many numeral classifiers have conventional applications which are not predicted by their basic productive semantics. For example, *duang3*, a classifier used for flat disc-like things (such as the moon) is often used for counting knives. A common shape-based alternative is *qan3*.

7.1.5 Mensural terms

A common use of the numeral classifier construction is to delineate countable amounts of a mass referent by specifying a unit of measure in the numeral classifier slot. Table 17 lists some of these mensural classifiers.

Table 17. Some mensural classifiers

Classifier	Meaning as noun (or verb)	Example referents
<i>mat1</i>	‘tie’ (n./v.)	anything that can be bunched by tying
<i>kam3</i>	‘handful’ (n./v.)	anything that can be measured in handfuls
<i>kòd4</i>	‘coil’ (n./v.)	anything that can be coiled
<i>khuu1</i>	‘pair’	candles, shoes, couples
<i>toon3</i>	‘ton’	any weighable mass
<i>loo2</i>	‘kilogram’	any weighable mass

The following example shows three different mensural classifiers used with reference to a single noun, *vaaj3* ‘rattan’:

- (252) *khòj5 sùu4 vaaj3 sòdng3 kòd4/mat1/toon3*
 1SG.P buy rattan two coil/tie/ton
 ‘I bought two coils/ties/tons of rattan.’

The choice of mensural classifier in (252) reflects differences in the gauge and amount of rattan purchased.

Mensural classifiers do not classify in the sense of categorizing the main noun primarily in terms of inherent properties of shape or form. Nevertheless, they do convey information about the physical nature of the referent. Clearly, something that can be counted in ‘ties’ must have physical properties and dimensions which make it ‘tie-able’. Mensural classifiers generally display grammatical properties of numeral classifiers.

7.1.6 Shape and form semantics

There is a special adverbial construction in which the copula verb *pên3* takes a nominal complement which describes the shape or form of a core argument of the clause (see Chapter 17, section 17.1.3). The following examples show the nouns *mòd3* ‘doctor’ and *kaj1* ‘chicken’ in optional adjuncts hosted by the copula verb *pên3*, predicating the role and physical manifestation, respectively, of the subject of the main clause:

- (253) *phen1 hêt1 viak4 (pên3 mòd3)*
 3.P do work COP doctor
 ‘She works (as a doctor).’

- (254) *phen1 nimit1-too3 (pên3 kaj1)*
 3.P transform-body COP chicken
 ‘He transformed himself (into chickens/a chicken).’

Note that neither of the complements of the copula *pên3* in these two examples—*mòò3* ‘doctor’ nor *kaj1* ‘chicken’—are classifiers.

Since numeral classifiers often have meanings which denote general shape or form of a thing, they may often appear as the complement of *pên3* in this construction. Compare the following two examples involving *sali2* ‘corn’, where one example involves a numeral classifier denoting shape or form, while the second involves a mensural term denoting units of weight:

- (255) *khaw3 khaaj3 salii2 pên3 maan2*
 3PL.B sell corn COP CLF.GRAIN.EAR
 ‘They sell corn by the cob.’
- (256) *khaw3 khaaj3 salii2 pên3 loo2*
 3PL.B sell corn COP kilogram
 ‘They sell corn by the kilogram.’

If the nominal complement of *pên3* is a numeral classifier, the ‘*pên3* CLF’ adjunct often has a depictive meaning ‘whole’ (see Chapter 17). An example from a mythical tale illustrates with *nuaj1*, the numeral classifier for mountains (among other things):

- (257) *man2 hòòp5 phuu2 pên3 nuaj1*
 3.B carry.in.both.arms mountain COP CLF.UNIT
 ‘He carried the mountain whole.’

Repeater classifiers cannot be used in this construction, nor can classifiers restricted to modifier classifier environments (e.g., *phuø* ‘MC.HUM’).

The copula verb *pên3* can also take a nominal complement in simple statements about the shape or form of something. In the following examples, the first shows a regular noun denoting substance (*maj4* ‘wood’) as the nominal complement of *pên3*, while in the second and third examples the complement of *pên3* is a numeral classifier referring to shape or form:

- (258) *man2 pên3 maj4*
 3.B COP wood
 ‘It’s (made of) wood.’

(259) *man2 pên3 phèn1*
 3.B COP CLF.STIFF.SHEET
 ‘It’s (a) stiff sheet-shaped (thing).’

(260) *man2 ñang2 pên3 ton4 juu1*
 3.B still COP CLF.PLANT CONT
 ‘It’s still in the form of a plant (e.g., it hasn’t been shredded).’

Other nominal complements of *pên3* do not express shape or form or physical substance, but rather role or identity (cf. also examples (253) and (254), above, and Chapter 17):

(261) *phen1 pên3 khuu2/thahaan3/khon2-latsia2*
 3.P COP teacher/soldier/CT.PERSON-Russia
 ‘She is a teacher/soldier/Russian.’

7.1.7 Bare numeral classifier with the meaning ‘one’

In a construction meaning ‘one more (NP)’, a numeral classifier alone can stand for ‘one’ (i.e., no numeral need be explicitly expressed).

The word *qiik5* ‘more’ can appear with an adverbial meaning after a verb phrase, as in the following example

(262) *kuu3 siø kin3 paa3 qiik5*
 1SG.B IRR eat fish more
 ‘I’m going to eat more fish.’

It may also take as a complement a numeral classifier construction which enumerates the object argument:

(263) *kuu3 siø kin3 paa3 qiik5 sòdng3 too3*
 1SG.B IRR eat fish more two CLF.ANIM
 ‘I’m going to eat another two fish.’

If the numeral to be expressed is ‘one’, it is possible to use *nùng1* ‘one’ as it normally would be used in a numeral classifier construction (either immediately before or immediately after the numeral classifier). But it is also possible, and indeed common, to omit the numeral altogether. In this case the combination of *qiik5* ‘more’ with the bare numeral

classifier expresses the notion ‘one more’, yet where the numeral ‘one’ is not explicitly expressed:

- (264) *kuu3 siø kin3 paa3 qiik5 too3*
 1SG.B IRR eat fish more CLF.ANIM
 ‘I’m going to eat another fish.’
 (NOT: ‘I’m going to eat more fish.’)

It is possible to use repeaters, part/whole type or mensural classifiers in this construction, as the following examples demonstrate:

- (265) *lêp1 mùù2 khòòj5 qòòk5 qiik5*
 nail/claw hand 1SG.P exit more
lêp1/qan3/diw4
 nail/CLF.SMALL.THING/CLF.FINGER
 ‘Another one of my fingernails has come off.’
- (266) *kuu3 siø kin3 paa3 qiik5 loo2*
 1SG.B IRR eat fish more CLF.KG
 ‘I’m going to eat another kilo of fish.’

7.1.8 Speaker awareness of numeral classifiers

Nominal classifiers enjoy a high level of conscious speaker awareness, being an occasional topic for explicit discussion among speakers, and being the focus of both official and unofficial normative conventions (cf. Juntanamalaga 1988 on Thai). Speakers freely discuss which classifier is considered correct for counting which noun. It is not surprising that speakers are apt to reflect consciously on these morphosyntactic items, given their salience both in the phonology (appearing in phrase-final position, stressed), and in the discourse (being typically used in association with definite referents whose quantification and shape or function properties are in focus). Their cultural importance stems not only from their association with material artefacts, but also with the social significance of knowing the right classifier for a given noun. However, informal observations reveal that while speakers’ intuitions about the meaning and distribution of classifiers in numeral classifier contexts are more or less sound, the differences between their choices of classifier with given nouns in

numeral classifier and modifier classifier contexts (see section 7.2) seem beyond the level of untrained awareness. That is, while a speaker may identify a classifier as the right one to be used with a certain noun, they will be unaware that in modifier classifier contexts (in which there is less discourse focus on the function of the classifier, as well as a much weaker phonological realization), they do not use that classifier, but switch to something semantically more general.

7.1.9 Numerals

Counting is done using a decimal system with basic terms *nùng1* ‘one’, *sòng3* ‘two’, *saam3* ‘three’, *sii1* ‘four’, *haa5* ‘five’, *hok2* ‘six’, *cêt2* ‘seven’, *pèèt5* ‘eight’, *kaw4* ‘nine’, *sip2* ‘ten’, *saaw2* ‘twenty’, *hòj4* or *lòj4* ‘hundred’, *phan2* ‘thousand’, *mùn1* ‘ten thousand’,⁵ *sèn3* ‘hundred thousand’, *laan4* ‘million’, and *tù4* ‘billion’. Many of these are originally borrowed from varieties of Chinese. Note the special syntactic properties of ‘one’, already discussed in section 7.1.1 (cf. examples 235-236) and Chapter 6, section 6.3, namely that it may appear either before or after the nominal it enumerates. Note also that in numerals, *nùng1* ‘one’ is supplanted by *qêt1* when given as a final unit in a complex number expression such as ‘fifty one’, or ‘one hundred and one’. This is functionally advantageous, as it circumvents an ambiguity which arises due to the word order properties of *nùng1* ‘one’, which do not apply to *qêt2*. Recall, ‘one’ as a quantifier can occur AFTER the nominal head, while all other numbers occur BEFORE it. Both orders are fine for ‘one’, as in *nùng1 khon2* and *khon2 nùng1* for ‘one person’, while for other numbers the only order is with numeral before the nominal, as in *sòng3 khon2* ‘two people’. Thus, ‘one hundred’ may take either order:

- (267) a. *nùng1 lòj4*
 one hundred

⁵The term *mùn1* is defective in that the option of expressing these figures as tens-of-thousands is also available, and is indeed much more common. This is a difference with Thai, whose speakers never talk in terms of ‘tens-of-thousands’, but use the term *mùn1* for ‘10,000’ or multiples thereof. Accordingly, when Lao speakers talk of money amounts, an amount of, say, 30,000 will be expressed as *saam3 mùn1* if it is in Thai Baht, but *saam3 sip2 phan2* if it is in Lao Kip. Also note that *mùn1* is a measure term for large quantities of husked rice, referring to a unit amount of about 12 kilograms.

- b. *lòj4 nùng1*
 hundred one
 ‘one hundred’

But ‘one hundred and one’ has *qêt2* in place of *nùng1* for ‘one’, and has only one possible ordering:

- (268) *lòj4 qêt1*
 hundred one
 ‘(one) hundred and one’
- (269) **qêt1 lòj4*
 one hundred
 ((one) hundred and one)

There is no such ambiguity for numbers other than one, as the following examples show:

- (270) *sòng3 lòj4*
 two hundred
 ‘two hundred’
- (271) *lòj4 sòng3*
 hundred two
 ‘(one) hundred and two’

Note, however, that it is common with larger numbers to ellipsis the term for ‘hundred’, allowing context to distinguish:

- (272) *sòng3 phan2 cêt2*
 two thousand seven
 i. ‘two thousand seven hundred’
 ii. ‘two thousand and seven’

The (272i) reading ‘2700’ is more likely if we are discussing, say, the price of goods, since ‘2007’ would be an unusual price figure. If we are talking about which year it is currently, the (272ii) reading ‘2007’ is fine.

Note that if *nùng1* ‘one’ is postposed, as in (267b), above, there should be no further material following it in the numeral expression:

- (273) a. *nùng1 lờj4 saaw2*
 one hundred twenty
 ‘one hundred and twenty’
 b. * *lờj4 nùng1 saaw2*
 hundred one twenty
 (one hundred and twenty)

To express complex figures, units are numerated from largest to smallest, analytically. For instance, if the number is 56, it is expressed as ‘five-ten’ for ‘50’ and then ‘six’ for ‘6’:

- (274) *haa5 sip2 hok2*
 five ten six
 ‘fifty six’

Or if the number is 4572, it is expressed as ‘four-thousand’ for ‘4000’, ‘five-hundred’ for ‘500’, ‘seven-ten’ for ‘70’, and ‘two’ for ‘2’:

- (275) *sii1 phan2 haa5 lờj4 cết2 sip2 sòng3*
 four thousand five hundred seven ten two
 ‘four thousand five hundred (and) seventy two’

If the number includes a figure in the teens or the twenties, the number of units of tens is not specified. For numbers 10-19, the amount ‘one’ is not specified for units of tens:

- (276) a. *sip2 sòng2*
 ten two
 ‘twelve’
 b. * *nùng1 sip2 sòng2*
 one ten two
 (twelve)

For numbers 20-29, there is a dedicated word for ‘20’, *saaw2*:

- (277) a. *saaw2 sòng2*
 twenty two
 ‘twenty two’

- b. * *sò̀ng3 sip2 sò̀ng2*
 two ten two
 (twenty two)

Ordinal numbers are expressed using *thii1*, elsewhere a relativizer:

- (278) *van2 thii1 saaw2 qê1*
 day ORD twenty one
 ‘(date of) the twenty first’
- (279) *hùan2 lang3 thii2 sò̀ng3*
 house CLF.FRAME ORD two
 ‘the second house’

Basic math terms include *buak5* ‘add’, *lop2* ‘subtract’, *khuun2* ‘multiply’, *haan3* ‘divide’, and *daj4* ‘acquire’ for ‘equals’:

- (280) *saaw2 haan3 sii4 daj4 haa5*
 twenty divide.by four acquire five
 ‘Twenty divided by four is five.’

7.1.9.1 *Telling the time*

The Lao equivalent of ‘o’clock’ is *moong2*, which is also the word for ‘clock’ or ‘watch’, and which is incorporated into the word for ‘hour’ (*sua1 moong2* ‘hour’, literally ‘period (of the) clock’). To ask the time, one says:

- (281) *cak2 moong2 lè̀w4*
 how.many o’clock PRF
 ‘What time is it (now/already)?’

To state the time on the hour, one states the number with *moong2* ‘o’clock’:

- (282) *saam3 moong2 lè̀w4*
 three o’clock PRF
 ‘Three o’clock (now/already).’

Half past the hour is expressed using *kheng1* ‘half’ after the relevant hour:

- (283) *saam3 moong2 kheng1*
 three o'clock half
 ‘Half past three.’

Any other departure from the hour is expressed using either *paaj3* (literally, ‘extend, end, tip’) to express ‘past the hour’, or *ñang2* ‘(not) yet’ to express ‘before the hour’. Lao speakers will often leave the precise time vague, implying a window of up to half an hour:

- (284) *saam3 moong2 ñang2*
 three o'clock remain
 ‘Before three.’
- (285) *saam3 moong2 paaj3*
 three o'clock extend
 ‘Past three.’

To be more specific, add the number of minutes:

- (286) *saam3 moong2 ñang2 sip2 sòdng3 nathii2*
 three o'clock remain ten two minute
 ‘Twelve to three.’
- (287) *saam3 moong2 paaj3 sip2 haa5 nathii2*
 three o'clock extend ten five minute
 ‘Quarter past three.’

7.2 Modifier classifiers

Modifier classifiers are used with various nominal modifiers, including demonstrative determiners *nii4* (general demonstrative) and *nan4* (non-proximal demonstrative), the quantifier *nùng1* ‘one’, relative clauses, and adjectives. There does not seem to be any restriction on their use with any semantic sub-types of adjective. In principle, any numeral classifier (including repeaters and mensural classifiers) can appear in a modifier classifier function, but in practice many distinctions are neutralized, with

only a small number of numeral classifiers being used in these contexts. Importantly, the grammatical position of the classifier in these uses is different from that of the numeral classifiers, and it results in a significant phonological distinction between the two classifier functions. The most common classifiers used—*too3* ‘body’ and *qan3* ‘small thing’—have different meanings in the modifier classifier contexts and the numeral classifier contexts. In modifier classifier contexts, they can be used for almost any noun, whereas their applicability is significantly restricted in the numeral classifier context (including the constructions discussed in sections 7.1.2, 7.1.6, and 7.1.7, above). Further, there is at least one classifier (*phuø* ‘MC.HUM’) which is used exclusively in the modifier classifier context, and cannot be used as a numeral classifier.

Numeral classifier constructions discussed in the previous section are unusual in the context of the typological structure of Lao in that the order of classifier and modifying element—with the numeral preceding the classifier—is the opposite of the almost exclusively head-initial pattern of Lao noun phrases. The following examples show that the combination of noun or classifier with numeral (example (288)) is opposite in constituent order to the combination of noun or classifier with attributive modification (e.g., adjectives, demonstratives, and relative clauses; examples (289-291)). The head of the noun phrase in each case is *khon2* ‘person/people’:

- (288) *sòng3 khon2*
two person
‘two people’
- (289) *khon2 suung3*
person tall
‘tall person’
- (290) *khon2 nii4/qùn1*
person DEM/other
‘this/another person’
- (291) *khon2 thii1 caw4 hèn3*
person REL 2SG.P see
‘the person who you saw’

An important consequence of this difference in head-modifier ordering for numeral classifier versus modifier classifier contexts concerns the

stress patterns of Lao words. Non-monosyllabic Lao words and phrases are stress-final, resulting in pre-final elements becoming reduced. Many monomorphemic lexical items are non-monosyllabic, where a major syllable (i.e., with full stress and with expression of the full range of contrasts in vowel length and lexical tone) is preceded by a reduced minor syllable (with highly restricted phonotactic possibilities, and no contrast in vowel length or tone; cf. Chapter 3). For example, the word *kabùang4* ‘ceramic tile’ features a pre-syllable *ka-* (unstressed, without contrastive tone or vowel length) and a primary syllable *-bùang4* (stressed, with long complex vowel and contrastive lexical tone). (This word contrasts with, for example, *bùang4* ‘side’ and *kabong4* ‘caterpillar’.) This pattern also applies to polymorphemic words or phrases, and this stress-final structure affects the phonological realization of morphemes taking different roles as grammatical components in phrasal combinations.

An example is the classifier for non-human animates, which surfaces as *too3* in a numeral classifier position (with the modifier coming before it, as in example (292)), but as unstressed *toø* when in a modifier classifier position (with the modifier coming after it, as in examples (293) and (294)). Note the different patterns of stress in these examples (primary and secondary stress are marked by ‘**’** and ‘**’**, respectively; the classifier is given in boldface):

- (292) "kuu3 siø 'kin3 "paa3 'sòdng3 "**too3**
 1SG.B IRR eat fish two CLF.ANIM
 ‘I’m going to eat two fish.’
- (293) "kuu3 siø 'kin3 "paa3 **toø** "ñaaaw2
 1SG.B IRR eat fish MC.ANIM long
 ‘I’m going to eat the long fish.’
- (294) "kuu3 siø 'kin3 "paa3 **toø** "nii4
 1SG.B IRR eat fish MC.ANIM DEM
 ‘I’m going to eat this fish.’

Demonstrative determiners such as *nii4* ‘this’ in (294) cannot appear as independent noun phrases (see Chapter 6):

- (295) *kuu3 siø kin3 nii4
 1SG.B IRR eat DEM
 (I’m going to eat this.)

However, the main noun in (294) may be ellipsed, as follows:

- (296) *kuu3 si∅ kin3 to∅ nii4*
 1 SG.B IRR eat MC.ANIM DEM
 ‘I’m going to eat this one.’

If both a numeral and a modifier such as a demonstrative or adjective are to be used in the same phrase, the modifier classifier pattern is used:

- (297) *kuu3 si∅ kin3 paa3 sòng3 to∅ nii4*
 1 SG.B IRR eat fish two MC.ANIM DEM
 ‘I’m going to eat these two fish.’

De-stressing of the modifier classifier in pre-nominal position is most noticeable in the cases of the two classifiers of most general meaning, *too3* ‘body’ and *qan3* ‘small thing’. Phonological reduction of a number of other classifiers in this environment is significantly less noticeable due to their greater phonological weight. An example is *phùun3* (a classifier for cloths and similar objects):

- (298) *"khòj5 'sùu4 "sin5 'sòng3 "phùun3*
 1 SG.P buy Lao.skirt two CLF.CLOTH
 ‘I bought two skirts.’
- (299) *"khòj5 'mak1 "sin5 'phùun3 "nii4*
 1 SG.P like Lao.skirt CLF.CLOTH DEM
 ‘I like this skirt.’

Modifier classifiers cannot be modified by phonologically dependent enclitic markers such as the demonstrative-derived topic markers described in Chapter 6, section 6.2.3. Compare the following with example (299):

- (300) * *khòj5 mak1 sin5 phùun3 ni∅*
 1 SG.P like Lao.skirt CLF.CLOTH TPC
 (I like this/the skirt.)

Or compare the following two examples:

- (301) *khuu2-baa3 qông3 nii4*
 monk CLF.HOLY DEM
 ‘this monk’

- (302) * *khuu2-baa3 qông3 niø*
 monk CLF.HOLY TPC
 (this/the monk)

The modifier classifier context is one in which the very large number of semantic distinctions among numeral classifiers are often neutralized. It is often the case that a conventionally assigned numeral classifier is replaced in this context with either of the two more general classifiers *too3* ‘body’ or *qan3* ‘small thing’, phonologically reduced accordingly. The following are idiomatic alternatives for (299):

- (303) *khòðj5 mak1 sin5 toø nii4*
 1SG.P like Lao.skirt MC.ANIM DEM
 ‘I like this skirt.’
- (304) *khòðj5 mak1 sin5 qanø nii4*
 1SG.P like Lao.skirt MC.INAN DEM
 ‘I like this skirt.’

Numeral classifiers of greater semantic specificity tend not to be used as modifier classifiers. This is related to the type of function served by modifier classifiers. In example (303), where the classifier is structurally hosting a demonstrative, specific information concerning shape or form is unnecessary for the basic task of picking up reference to something already active in the discourse or present in the speech situation. Indeed, this makes selection of a more semantically specific classifier in a modifier classifier context pragmatically marked (compare examples (299) and (303)). The classifiers *too3* ‘body’ and *qan3* ‘small thing’, which in numeral classifier contexts are restricted in their application by semantic specificity, clearly have more generalized meanings in modifier contexts, being used with a greater range of nouns than is possible in numeral classifier contexts (cf. Carpenter 1986 for the same phenomenon in Thai). This shows that these two classifiers in their numeral classifier and modifier classifier roles are distinct lexical items, with distinct meanings and functions.

7.2.1 A modifier classifier for people

The distinction between numeral classifiers (in NUMERAL-CLF order) and modifier classifiers (in CLF-MODIFIER order) is reflected in the existence of a special modifier classifier for people, lexically distinct from the numeral classifier used for people. The modifier classifier for humans—*phuø*, related to *phuu5* in *toø-phuu5* ‘male (of a species)’—never occurs as an independent noun, and can only occur in a prenominal modifier classifier slot, and thus never takes primary stress (cf. examples 289-291, above):

- (305) (*mòð3*) *phuø* *nii4*
 doctor MC.HUM DEM
 ‘this one (/doctor)’
- (306) (*mòð3*) *phuø* *suung3*
 doctor MC.HUM tall
 ‘the tall one (/doctor)’
- (307) (*mòð3*) *phuø* *caw4 hên3*
 doctor MC.HUM 2SG.P see
 ‘the one (/doctor) you saw’

In a numeral classifier construction where the numeral classifier comes after the specifier, only *khon2*, and not *phuø*, can be used:

- (308) *mòð3 sòðng3 khon2*
 doctor two CLF.HUM
 ‘two doctors’
- (309) * *mòð3 sòðng3 phuø*
 doctor two MC.HUM
 (two doctors)

There is no lexical distinction in the domain of non-human referents analogous to that of *khon2* versus *phuø* which explicitly reflects a differentiation between numeral classifiers and modifier classifiers.

7.2.2 Nominal modification

As already noted, modifier classifiers can be used with any kind of nominal modification. With some kinds of modifiers, such as demonstrative determiners, they are obligatory (see example (295), above). In expressions involving modification of a noun by an adjective or relative clause, classifiers may be used, but are not obligatory. The next example shows *toø* ‘MC.ANIM’ hosting a relative clause modifying *paa3* ‘fish’ (see also examples (289-291) and (306-307), above):

- (310) *khòj5 kin3 paa3 toø caw4 sùù4*
 1SG.P eat fish MC.ANIM 2SG.P buy
 ‘I ate the fish (the one which) you bought.’

It is also possible to use the dedicated relativizer *thii1*, or no marker at all:

- (311) *khòj5 kin3 paa3 (thii1) caw4 sùù4*
 1SG.P eat fish REL 2SG.P buy
 ‘I ate the fish (which) you bought.’

Hundius and Kölver (1983:172) hypothesize that in Thai, the choice as to whether or not to omit the classifier in examples such as (310) has consequences on interpretation. Specifically, if the classifier is included, the reading will almost always be understood as singular (whereas it is non-determinate in number if no classifier is supplied). Furthermore, say Hundius and Kölver (1983:173), ‘it implies either definite reference, or else a contrastive referential value of the adjective’. The same is the case in Lao. (See section 7.2.3, below, for further discussion of this unitizing function.)

There are further cases in which more than one classifier phrase features in a complex noun phrase, stacked up, modifying a single noun. Consider the following example:

- (312) *phen1 kin3 paa3 toø ñaaw2 toø caw4 sùù4*
 3.P eat fish MC.ANIM long MC.ANIM 2SG.P buy
 ‘She ate the fish, the long one, the one you bought.’ (cf. ‘She ate the long fish you bought.’)

This may be analyzed as a series of distinct nominal phrases in apposition, each headed by a classifier, and each elaborating semantically on the main noun, which is a distinct noun phrase (as reflected in the first English translation given). In favor of this analysis, it is possible to insert an adjunct or sentence-final particle between the main noun and a classifier-plus-modifier phrase, showing that the modifier is an independent constituent (cf. example (233), above).

Here is another example in which the main noun *luuk4* ‘child’ takes three modifiers (a demonstrative and two adjective/relative clauses), each hosted by a separate instance of the modifier classifier *phuø* ‘MC.HUM’):

- (313) *phòð1-mèè1 kaø bòø ñòðm2 paj3 nam2 luuk4 phuø*
 father-mother T.LNK NEG yield go with child MC.HUM
nan4 phuø hang1 phuø mi2 hanø
 DEM.NONPROX MC.HUM rich MC.HUM have TPC.DIST
 ‘The parents won’t go with that rich, wealthy child.’ (i.e., ‘The parents won’t go with child, that one, the rich one, the wealthy one.’)

7.2.3 A unitizing function

Two cases described above—a construction ‘more CLF’ having the meaning ‘one more’ (section 7.1.7), and the use of classifiers in nominal modification implying singularity or definiteness of the referent (section 7.2.2)—suggest a unitizing function of classifiers. Here is another case, a subtle use of modifier classifiers in which the classifier appears by itself in combination with a main noun, where no modifier of the main noun is involved (cf. noun classifiers in Australian and Mayan languages; Aikhenvald 2000: Chapter 3, Grinevald 2000:64-5). Compare the following two sentences:

- (314) *kuu3 hèn3 paø-duk2 juu1 naj2 kakhuq2*
 1 SG.B see CT.FISH-sp. be.at inside bucket
 ‘I saw (a) catfish in the bucket.’
- (315) *kuu3 hèn3 too3 paø-duk2 juu1 naj2 kakhuq2*
 1 SG.B see CLF.ANIM CT.FISH-sp. be.at inside bucket
 ‘I saw (a/the) catfish in the bucket.’

In the second example, the nominal *paø-duk2* ‘catfish’ is preceded by *too3* ‘body’, the numeral classifier used for fish. The meaning difference between the two examples is subtle. The presence of the classifier in (315) suggests unitization, implying (but not entailing) that there is just one fish being referred to. The absence of the classifier in (314) gives rise to no particular expectation regarding the number of fish referred to. Further, as suggested for Thai by Hundius and Kölver (1983) regarding the presence of a classifier in noun-modifying phrases, there is a greater likelihood that the referent in (315) is definite.

The next two examples show the same pattern of alternation, with optional use of the classifier *nuaj1* ‘(assembled) unit’ appearing immediately before the main noun *toq2* ‘table’:

(316) *kuu3 hên3 toq2 juu1 naj2 hòng5*
 1 SG.B see table be.at inside room
 ‘I saw (a) table(s) in the room.’

(317) *kuu3 hên3 nuaj1 toq2 juu1 naj2 hòng5*
 1 SG.B see CLF.UNIT table be.at inside room
 ‘I saw (a/the) table(s) in the room.’

Again, the second example, with the classifier alone forming a phrase with the main noun, suggests that there is just one table, while the first implies nothing about number. Also, a definite reading is more likely in the second example.

The following examples show that this function cannot be performed by classifiers which do not pick out their referents in terms of shape or form specification (either because the shape or form specifications of the referent do not match those of its conventional classifier—as in *hua3* ‘head’ for books—or the classifier simply has no shape or form information—as in *khan2* for vehicles):

(318) *kuu3 hên3 (*hua3) pùm4 juu1 naj2 hòng5*
 1 SG.B see CLF.HEAD book be.at inside room
 ‘I saw (a) book(s) in the room.’

(319) *kuu3 hên3 (*khan2) lotø-cak2 juu1 naj2*
 1 SG.B see CLF.VEHICLE CT.VEHICLE-motorcycle be.at inside
hòng5
 room
 ‘I saw (a) motorcycle in the room.’

It is possible to use *phuø* ‘person’ (but not the corresponding numeral classifier *khon2* ‘person’) in this context, with the connotation that the referent person is a familiar or recognizable individual:

- (320) *kuu3 hên3 phuø qaaj4 man2 juu1 talaat5*
 1SG.B see MC.HUM eBr 3.B be.at market
 ‘I saw his brother at the market.’

As in other modifier classifier functions, the classifier is the head of the phrase in these unitizing functions. The difference here is that the element dependent on the classifier is the main noun itself.

7.3 Class terms

There are dozens of morphemes which may occur as independent nouns and which also may appear as the initial and more semantically general component of many polymorphemic nouns denoting objects and people. In this role, they do not categorize the element to which they attach, but rather the whole compound of which they are a part. They are phonologically dependent and lexically specified (thus obligatory). I refer to them as class terms (Grinevald 2000:59). The set of class terms is not the same as the set of numeral classifiers, but there is partial overlap.

An illustrative example is the use of the general word for ‘fish’—*paa3*—as the initial component in names of individual fish species (Kerr 1972:771ff lists over a hundred). In this initial position, *paa3* ‘fish’ is reduced to unstressed *paø*, where the (usually monosyllabic) element denoting the species of fish takes lexical stress (according to the phonological structure of words as stress-final, as described above):

- (321) *paø-duk2*
 CT.FISH-sp.
 ‘catfish’
- (322) *paø-thuu2*
 CT.FISH-sp.
 ‘mackerel’

Sometimes the modifier is semantically transparent, as part of a (sometimes figurative or metonymic) description of the fish:

- (323) *paø-mùk1*
 CT.FISH-ink
 ‘ink fish, squid’
- (324) *paø-kham2*
 CT.FISH-gold
 ‘goldfish’

Grinevald (2000:59) regards class terms as ‘classifying morphemes’ rather than classifiers. These are distinct from what she identifies as noun classifiers, which are ‘free morphemes’ not involved with derivation in the lexicon (Grinevald 2000:64). By contrast, Aikhenvald’s (2000: Chapter 3) definition of noun classifier would encompass the Lao class terms described in this section.

We now examine some categories of class terms, based on semantic properties.

7.3.1 Class terms denoting taxonomic essence

The most common and extensive uses of class terms denote taxonomic or biological essence of the marked noun. By essence I mean the fundamental nature of a thing, usually in terms of higher-level taxonomic kind such as ‘fish’, ‘tree’, or ‘fruit’. Table 18 shows some examples.

Table 18. Some examples of class terms denoting biological essence

Class term	Meaning as a noun	Referents
<i>paø-</i>	<i>paa3</i> ‘fish’	kinds of fish
<i>mèngø-</i>	<i>mèng2</i> ‘insect’	kinds of insect
<i>makø-</i>	<i>maak5</i> ‘fruit’	kinds of fruit
<i>namø-</i>	<i>nam4</i> ‘water’	liquids
<i>majø-</i>	<i>maj4</i> ‘wood’	kinds of tree, kinds of wood
<i>khawø-</i>	<i>khaw5</i> ‘rice’	kinds of rice or cereal
<i>manø-</i>	<i>man2</i> ‘root vegetable’	kinds of root vegetable

One class term which does not denote essence in a biological sense, but refers more to fundamental physical essence, is *sii3* ‘color’, which appears in compound terms referring to different colors. There are two classes of color terms, based on grammatical properties (see Chapter 10,

section 10.2.10). One group consists of basic terms, including *dèng3* ‘red’, *làng3* ‘yellow’, and *khiaw3* ‘green/blue’. These are grammatically more versatile than a second group, consisting of non-basic terms, including *faa4* ‘blue, sky’ and *bua3* ‘pink/purple, lotus’), which are subject to certain grammatical constraints (see Chapter 10). One grammatical difference between the two categories, illustrated in the following examples, is that the class term *sii3* ‘color’ is obligatory only with the second, non-basic category:

(325) *lot1 (sii3)-dèng3*
vehicle color-red
‘red (colored) car’

(326) *lot1 *(sii3)-faa4*
vehicle color-blue
‘blue *(colored) car’

7.3.2 Class terms denoting occupation or role

The kinship terms *mèè1* ‘mother’ and *phòò1* ‘father’ are used derivationally as class terms, denoting male and female occupations, respectively. Table 19 lists a few examples of female occupations involving *mèè1* ‘mother’ as a prefixed and phonologically reduced class term.

Table 19. Some female occupation terms headed by ‘mother’ as a class term

Expression	Meaning of modifier
<i>mèè-khua2</i> ‘cook’ (f.)	<i>khua2</i> ‘prepare food for cooking’
<i>mèè-caang4</i> ‘prostitute’	<i>caang4</i> ‘hire someone’s services’
<i>mèè-khaaw3</i> ‘nun’	<i>khaaw3</i> ‘white’

Another word used as a class term in certain occupation terms is *naaj2* ‘boss, lord’, as listed in Table 20 (Kerr 1972:702-3 gives many examples).

In some cases, *najø-* is optionally added to a noun of occupation or role to express respect: e.g., *mòò3* ‘doctor’ versus *najø-mòò3* ‘(respected or boss) doctor’, *khuu2* ‘teacher’ versus *najø-khuu2* ‘(respected or boss) teacher’.

A final example differs from the class terms discussed so far in that it has no independent use as a noun. A ‘professional’ class term prefix

Table 20. Some role terms headed by 'lord/boss' as class term

Expression	Meaning of modifier
<i>najø-phaa2saa3</i> 'interpreter'	<i>phaa2saa3</i> 'language'
<i>najø-daan1</i> 'border official'	<i>daan1</i> 'border'
<i>najø-baan4</i> 'village chief'	<i>baan4</i> 'village'
<i>najø-thahaan3</i> 'military officer'	<i>thahaan3</i> 'soldier'

nakø- (Kerr 1972:694) is a borrowing from Khmer (cf. modern Khmer *nêak* 'person'). Some examples are given in Table 21.

Table 21. Some role terms headed by 'professional' prefix *nakø-*

Expression	Meaning of modifier
<i>nakø-kilaa2</i> 'sportsman'	<i>kilaa2</i> 'sport'
<i>nakø-bin3</i> 'pilot'	<i>bin3</i> 'fly'
<i>nakø-khian3</i> 'writer'	<i>khian3</i> 'write'
<i>nakø-qawakaat5</i> 'astronaut'	<i>qawakaat5</i> 'outer space'

7.3.3 Class terms denoting function

Some class terms categorize the compound in terms of function. One productive example involves the word *lot1*, a general term for any terrestrial vehicle, as listed in Table 22.

Table 22. Some 'vehicle' nouns headed by *lot1* 'vehicle' as class term

Expression	Meaning of modifier
<i>lotø-thiip5</i> 'bicycle'	<i>thiip5</i> 'push away with foot'
<i>lotø-cak2</i> 'motorcycle'	<i>cak2</i> 'machine'
<i>lotø-kêng3</i> 'sedan'	<i>kêng3</i> (no independent meaning)
<i>lotø-kuat5</i> 'grader'	<i>kuat5</i> 'sweep'
<i>lotø-cok2</i> 'digger'	<i>cok2</i> 'scoop'
<i>lotø-ñaj1</i> 'truck'	<i>ñaj1</i> 'big'

The lexically derivational role of the class terms should be clear from the examples.

7.3.4 A productive class term prefix: *khi*ϕ- ‘shit’

A large set of nouns begin with *khi*ϕ-, a reduced form of *khi*5 ‘shit’ (cf. Chapter 10, section 10.3.3, below). Unlike other class terms, this word has verb as well as noun uses in other contexts. One class of derived nouns refers to things or substances regarded as by-product, waste or pollutant:

- (327) a. *khi*ϕ-*dang*3 ‘snot’ (*dang*3 = ‘nose’)
 b. *khi*ϕ-*lùaj*1 ‘sawdust’ (*lùaj*1 = ‘saw’)
 c. *khi*ϕ-*miang*5 ‘rust’ (*miang*5 has no independent meaning)

Another category of noun denotes different kinds of people with negative character traits:

- (328) a. *khi*ϕ-*lak*1 ‘thief’ (*lak*1 = ‘to steal’)
 b. *khi*ϕ-*tuaq*2 ‘liar’ (*tuaq*2 = ‘to lie’)
 c. *khi*ϕ-*koong*3 ‘cheat’ (*koong*3 = ‘to cheat’)

Also unlike other class terms, this prefix is also used to derive verbs (again with meanings referring to negative characteristics):

- (329) a. *khi*ϕ-*thii*1 ‘stingy’ (*thii*1 = ‘spaced closely together’)
 b. *khi*ϕ-*khuj*2 ‘snobby’ (*khuj*2 = ‘chat’)
 c. *khi*ϕ-*khaan*4 ‘lazy’ (*khaan*4 has no independent meaning)

7.3.5 An ‘opaque prefix’ class term *ka*-

Hundreds of nouns feature a half-syllable ‘opaque prefix’ *ka*- (Kerr 1972:1 calls it ‘a common untranslatable prefix’). It is a prefix in that it is paradigmatically related, at least to some extent, to the procliticized class terms described so far in this section. It is opaque in that it has no recognizable independent meaning. Even so, there are some semantic themes in common among groups of nouns with the *ka*- prefix. Many of these terms refer to small creatures (e.g., *kataaj*1 ‘rabbit’, *kabong*4 ‘caterpillar’) or small common domestic artifacts (e.g., *kadum*3 ‘button’, *kataa*1 ‘basket’).

Four formal categories of noun can be defined with reference to the pre-syllable *ka*-:

- (330) i. Words in which *ka-* is obligatory, e.g:
kadaan3 ‘board’ (*daan3* is not a word)
kahòòk4 ‘squirrel’ (*hòòk4* is not a word)
- ii. Words in which *ka-* is optional, with no difference in meaning, e.g:
kakhuq1 ‘bucket’ (= *khuq1* ‘bucket’)
kapiing3 ‘leech’ (= *piing3* ‘leech’)
- iii. Words in which *ka-* is optional, with a (related but) different meaning, e.g:
kapaw3 ‘bag, case’ (≠ *paw3* ‘sack’)
kaloong1 ‘chest’ (≠ *loong1* ‘coffin’)
- iv. Words which are semantically appropriate (e.g., referring to small creatures and small common artifacts) yet in which *ka-* cannot occur, e.g:
tang1 ‘chair’ (*katang1* is not a word)
kop2 ‘frog sp.’ (*kakop2* is not a word)

While there is no productive or uniquely identifiable role for *ka-* in synchrony, its presence has historical explanations. The *ka-* prefix in modern words comes from a range of different historical sources, including possibly Proto-Tai, early semantic classes in Proto-Southwestern Tai (possibly due to an Austroasiatic substratum), and borrowing from Mon-Khmer languages (Anthony Diller, personal communication; cf. Photchanani 1993).⁶ In some cases, the prefix *ka-* may have been applied to native monosyllabic words (having been first abstracted as a ‘prefix’ from borrowed words).⁷

7.4 Kin prefixes

One type of classificatory prefix differs from the types of nominal classification discussed so far in being neither obligatory nor lexically deriva-

⁶See Sagart (2001:133-134) for a description of the ‘not uncommon’ phenomenon in modern Sinitic languages of ‘nouns prefixed with *kV-*’. These are ‘always, or almost always, concrete nouns (as opposed to abstract nouns) and count nouns (as opposed to mass nouns)’.

⁷Speakers recognize that *ka-* is an independent element (as one would expect given that it is optional in some cases), but they cannot readily characterize its meaning. When pressed, a number of bilingual speakers compare it to the definite article *the* in English.

tional. These are kinship terms such as *paa4* ‘elder aunty (Pa.eZ)’ or *qùaj4* ‘older sister (eZ)’, which are prefixed to personal names (and are phonologically dependent in these contexts, being de-stressed accordingly), expressing relational meanings of (classificatory) kinship between the speaker and the referent. Table 23 supplies some examples.

Table 23. Kinship terms used as classifying prefixes in terms of address

Prefix	Meaning elsewhere	Example referents
<i>paø-</i>	<i>paa4</i> ‘elder aunty (Pa.eZ)’	<i>paø-sèèng3</i> ‘Aunty Seng’
<i>tuø-</i>	<i>tuu4</i> ‘grandparent (Pa.Pa)’	<i>tuø-sèèng3</i> ‘Grandma Seng’
<i>qajø-</i>	<i>qaaj4</i> ‘elder brother (eBr)’	<i>qajø-sèèng3</i> ‘Seng (respected older male of same generation as oneself)’
<i>qùaj4-</i>	<i>qùaj4</i> ‘elder sister (eZ)’	<i>qùajø-sèèng3</i> ‘Seng (respected older female of same generation as oneself)’

These can be used as modifier classifiers (331), but rarely as numeral classifiers (332):

- (331) *kuu3 hèn3 qajø-nan4*
 1SG.B see eBr-DEM.NONPROX
 ‘I saw him [=that older respected male of same generation].’
- (332) ? *kuu3 hèn3 sòdng3 qaaj4*
 1SG.B see two eBr
 (I saw two [=older respected males of same generation].)

Only a subset of kinship terms can be used in this way, namely those that refer to kin above (i.e., older than) oneself. Reference to anyone in one’s kinship or social network who is lower than oneself is done using two ‘non-respect’⁸ forms: *qiø* ‘non-respected female’ and *bakø* ‘non-

⁸Respect and politeness are complex and difficult to characterize, especially due to the interaction between semantics and pragmatics in this domain. Non-respect does not entail disrespect. There are extensive social rules for showing respect linguistically, and linguistic semantics provides rich means for doing so. To use someone’s name alone is to semantically say nothing about the level of respect being given, but this may have pragmatic import in the context of what could have been said (Levinson 2000:35-36). The use of *qiø-* and *bakø-* as prefixes to personal names in address or third person reference explicitly states that you are not showing any of the possible available respect expressions. But this does not entail disrespect. It may imply it if a respect form is pragmatically called for in that context. Otherwise, the use is intimate or familiar. See Chapter 5, above (also Enfield 2007d).

respected male’. (These are not kinship terms themselves.) Thus, while a girl (named *sèng3*) will refer to her grandmother (named *sii3*) as *tuø-sii3* ‘Grandma Sii’, the girl will be referred to in return as *qiø-sèng3* ‘the non-respected female Seng’, and not as, say **laan3-sèng3* (where *laan3* means ‘grandchild’). Like the kinship terms just discussed (see Table 23), these terms are used as heads in modifier expressions (involving demonstratives, adjectives, or relative clauses), but are not used as numeral classifiers.

The gender-specific non-respect forms *qiø* ‘non-respected female’ and *bakø* ‘non-respected male’ are also sometimes used as prefixes to non-human nouns whose referents are not inherently of one or the other sex (such as certain kinds of animals, insects, and artefacts). They appear (sometimes optionally) as prefixes to a restricted set of lexical items, including animals such as *qiø-khèè5* ‘crocodile’, *qiø-bong4* ‘caterpillar’, *qiø-piing3* ‘leech’, and games such as *qiø-jaang3* ‘skip-rope’ (where the ‘rope’ is made of rubber bands—*jaang3* means ‘rubber’) and *naj2 qiø-khaam3* ‘tamarind-seed checkers’ (where *naj2* means ‘seed’ and *khaam3* means ‘tamarind’). In the latter case, the playing pieces are anaphorically referred to using the female non-respect term *qiø* in modifier classifier function. Finally, note that the ‘female’ prefix *qiø* is used as a prefix for two terms referring to male human referents: namely, *qiø-phòð1* ‘daddy’ (*phòð1* means ‘father’) and *qiø-taa3* ‘old fellow’ (*taa3* means ‘maternal grandfather’).

In all cases of extension of the gender-specific non-respect forms beyond human referents (the feminine *qiø* being more productive than the masculine term *bakø* in this respect), the presence of the prefix has the effect of portraying the referent as something familiar (specifically, in some sense associated with taking a child’s viewpoint—i.e., as children might speak with each other, or as an adult might speak to a child).

7.5 Relations between forms of nominal classification

Aikhenvald (2000) suggests two ways in which a language can have more than one system of nominal classification. First, in a ‘multiple classifier language’, ‘[t]he same, or almost the same, set of morphemes can be used in more than one classifier environment’ (Aikhenvald 2000:204). Otherwise, there will be ‘several distinct classifier types’ coexisting in the

language (Aikhenvald 2000:184). Available sources on nominal classification in Thai might suggest that Thai is a ‘multiple classifier language’, using ‘one set of morphemes in four environments’ (i.e., with numerals, with demonstratives, with other modifiers, and as class terms; Aikhenvald 2000:213). The distribution of nominal classification devices in Lao is not essentially different to that in Thai. However, it should be clear from the discussion above, that the three major systems numeral classifiers, modifier classifiers, and class terms do not draw upon exactly the same set of morphemes.⁹ Descriptions of Thai have tended to treat classifiers as a unitary system, but have concentrated on numeral classifier contexts, often without noting the phonological, syntactic, and semantic differences between classifiers in numeral classifier and modifier classifier contexts. (Carpenter 1986 is an important exception.) As for the class terms (cf. section 7.3, above), there is significant disjunction between these and other classifiers such as numeral classifiers.

It was established in sections 7.1 and 7.2, above, that speakers make different choices of classifiers in the numeral classifier and modifier classifier contexts. While most numeral classifiers can theoretically be used in either context, in practice the use of particular classifiers with particular nouns is quite different in the two systems. The most common modifier classifiers, *toø* ‘MC.ANIM’ and *qanø* ‘MC.INAN’, have much more general meanings in modifier classifier functions than in numeral classifier functions (as *too3* ‘body’ and *qan3* ‘small thing’), and, accordingly, can be used with a much greater range of nouns in the former function. In addition, there is at least one classifier (*phuø* ‘person’) that is restricted to the modifier classifier function only.

The class term system includes many elements which cannot be used as numeral classifiers at all. The following example shows that while all fish names include a class term which is a bound and reduced form of *paa3* ‘fish’, this term cannot be used as a numeral classifier for fish:

- (333) **paø-duk2* *sòðng3 paa3*
 CT.FISH-sp. two fish
 (two catfish)

Instead, the classifier for non-human animates—*too3* ‘body’—must be used:

⁹Kin prefixes form a distinct system and are not discussed in this section.

- (334) *paø-duk2 sòðng3 too3*
 CT.FISH-sp. two CLF.ANIM
 ‘two catfish’

This is not surprising, given that class terms and numeral classifiers have different semantics appropriate to their different functions. Class terms refer to taxonomic essence, while numeral classifiers generally refer to shape or form, or functional properties (or are assigned by convention).

This being said, one can find examples in which the class term and numeral classifier are the same morpheme (though with a stress or intonational difference associated with the fact that the class term is phonologically dependent on a following stressed element):

- (335) *mii2 pòngø-qiam4 cak2 pòðng1*
 there.is CT.OPENING-window how.many CLF.OPENING
 ‘How many windows are there?’

- (336) *taø-kaa4 cak2*
 CT.RICE.SEEDLING.BED-rice.seedling.bed how.many
taa3
 CLF.RICE.SEEDLING.BED
 ‘How many rice seedling beds (are there)?’

The set of classifiers used in the numeral classifier and class term systems show only partial overlap.

So, Lao (like Thai) presents an example of what Aikhenvald (2000:184) calls ‘different classifier types in one language’.

7.6 Summary on nominal classification

Table 24 summarizes the types of nominal classification system described in this chapter.

Table 24: Summary of systems of nominal classification

	Numeral classifiers		Modifier classifiers		Class terms	Kin prefixes
	<i>a. unitizing</i>	<i>b. demonstrative</i>	<i>c. modified</i>			
Functional context	counting	unitizing	situational or discourse deixis, anaphora	unitizing, hosting modification	lexically derivational	social deixis for personal reference
Grammatical context	NUM __	__ NOM	__ DEM	__ ADJ/REL.CLS	__ MOD	__ NAME
Phonological status	stressed	u n s t r e s s e d ,	d e p e n d e n t			
Semantic properties	fine semantic contrast, encoding shape/form, function; variable assignment; object of speaker awareness	only refer to shape/form of unit	semantic specificity these functions; neutralized (using just <i>too3</i> 'body' and <i>qan3</i> 'small thing'), and use of more specific terms in these contexts is pragmatically marked	unnecessary in distinctions often	refer to taxonomic essence	refer to higher kinship relation, mark expression of respect
Approximate size of set	100+	20+	2-100+	60+	10+	

Chapter 8

Reference management

Reference management concerns the introduction and tracking of referents in multi-clause stretches of discourse (cf. e.g. Halliday and Hasan 1976, Chafe 1980). Across languages, this typically involves the use of nominal devices of various sorts, including noun phrase types varying in density and complexity (e.g., complex expressions versus pronouns versus ellipsis), or various forms of nominal modification (e.g., articles, demonstratives, quantifiers, relative clauses). Reference management may also involve special clausal constructions, for instance presentational structures whose function is to introduce referents for the first time in a discourse.

The discussion centers on grammatical position rather than on details of word selection or other matters of formulation of noun phrases with new reference. For some discussion in the domain of reference to persons, see Enfield (2007d).

8.1 First mention in *mii2* presentational construction

Introducing a referent for the first time in a discourse typically involves a presentational construction headed by the verb *mii2* ‘there is’. As a two-place verb, *mii2* means ‘to have’:

(337) *qùaj4 khòj5 mii2 hùan2 sòng3 lang3*
eZ 1SG.P have house two CLF.FRAME
‘My elder sister has two houses.’

(338) *khòj5 mii2 qaaj4 sòng3 khon2*
1SG.P have eBr two CLF.HUM
‘I have two older brothers.’

(339) *phen1 mii2 taa3 ñaj1*
3SG.P have eye big
‘She has big eyes.’

- (340) *haan1 khòðj5, man2 mii2 luuk4, man2 mii2 kaw4 too3*
 geese 1SG.P 3.B have child 3.B have nine CLF.ANIM
phunø dèj2
 TPC.FAR FAC.NEWS

‘My goose, it has goslings, it has nine, you know.’

- (341) *mii2 ñang3 kaø lèèk4-pian1 kan3,*
 have INDEF.INAN T.LNK exchange COLL
phuø-nan4 mii2 phak2 bòð3, phuø-nii4
 MC.HUM-DEM.NONPROX have greens QPLR MC.HUM-DEM
mii2 ngua2-khuaj2...
 have cattle-buffalo...

‘Whatever (they) had, (they’d) exchange with each other, that person might have greens, this person has cattle and buffaloes...’

As a one-place verb, *mii2* means ‘wealthy’ (i.e., ‘to have’):

- (342) *phuø-nii4 mii2*
 MC.HUM-DEM have
 ‘This person is wealthy.’

When an animate subject is replaced with a location subject, a ‘have’ reading is readily construed as a ‘there is’ reading:

- (343) *pên3-ñang3 cang1 vaa1 dòn3 liing2, phòq1 vaa1 man2*
 WHY so say island monkey because COMP 3.B
mii2 tèè1 liing2
 there.is/have only monkey
 ‘Why (did they) call (it) “Monkey Island”? Because it had only monkeys.’ (or: ‘...there were only monkeys.’)

A standard way to introduce a new referential argument into discourse is with a presentational construction featuring *mii2* in initial position. While subjects normally precede verbs, in this construction there is no argument in the preverbal position:

- (344) *mii2 cot2-maaj3 naj2 hùan2 khòng3 laaw2*
 there.is letter in house of 3SG.FA
 ‘There was a letter in his house.’

- (345) *mii2 khon2 baan4-nòòk4 phuø-nùng1*
 there.is person village-outside MC.HUM-one
 ‘There was (once) a country fellow.’
- (346) *mii2 caw4-saaj2 qong3 nùng1*
 there.is lord-male CLF.HOLY one
 ‘There was a/one prince.’

Note that the numeration shown in (346) is not necessary to the introduction of the referent into the discourse. The numeral classifier phrase *qong3 nùng1* ‘one holy being’ specifies that the number of princes was one, but it is not a critical part of the function of introducing the referent into the discourse for the first time (as, say, the English indefinite article *a* might be). If the numerative phrase were removed, the clause would still serve to introduce a referent, but it would be unspecified as to number:

- (347) *mii2 caw4-saaj2*
 there.is lord-male
 i. ‘There was a prince.’
 ii. ‘There were some princes.’

Here is an example in which number is left unspecified upon first mention. It appears when a referent corresponding to the word *kaj1* ‘chicken’ is first introduced (as an oblique complement). This happens at a point in the narrative when a divine being changes bodily form. At this point it is not possible to know whether the referent is singular or plural:

- (348) *man2 nimit1 too3 pên3 kaj1*
 3.B transform body COP chicken
 ‘It transformed itself into chickens/a chicken.’

Example (348) is the first mention in the discourse of the idea of ‘chickens’ or ‘a chicken’, a mention which establishes a trackable discourse referent. The number of the referent remains unspecified in the following clause, and becomes more specific only two clauses later:

- (349) *pên3 kaj1-paal niø, pên3 sèèn3 too3 phunø*
 COP chicken-forest TPC COP 100,000 CLF.ANIM TPC.FAR
 ‘Into wild chickens/a wild chicken, into 100,000 of them.’

Only upon hearing the second clause of (349) does a hearer know that the occurrences of *kajl* ‘chicken’ in the previous two clauses referred to a huge flock of individual chickens, rather than, say, to an individual chicken. Note that the default, decontextualized reading of (348) would be singular, i.e., ‘a chicken’.

Here is an example from a similar context to (348), but where number is specified upon first mention (as is the case in (346), above):

- (350) *phen1 kaø leej2 kap2-phêêt4 pêñ3 qanaa1 kaa3*
 3.P T.LNK NO.ADO return-gender COP HES crow
toø-nùng1 khaap4 paa3 maa2
 MC.ANIM-one carry.in.mouth fish come
 ‘And so without ado he transformed into um a crow bringing a fish in its mouth.’

Also note with respect to the issue of numeration exemplified in (346), above, it is also not necessary for the nominal specification to be contiguous with the nominal head (cf. Chapter 7, example (233) and section 7.1.1 *passim*). In the next example, the numerative phrase *qanø-nùng1* [MC.INAN-one] is separated from the nominal it quantifies (i.e., *khòòng3-khuan3* ‘gift’):

- (351) *laø phen1 dajø qaw3 khòòng3-khuan3 haj5 qanø-nùng1*
 and 3.P ACHV take gift give MC.INAN-one
 ‘...and he did give a gift (to the prince).’

Sentence-initial *mii2* as a marker of non-given preverbal noun phrases combines naturally with indefinite pronouns (cf. Chapter 5, above). By contrast, inherently definite noun phrases such as personal names cannot take sentence-initial *mii2*:

- (352) **mii2 bakø-dam3 khaa5 kajl sòòng3 too3*
 there.is M.B-D kill chicken two CLF.ANIM
 (Dam killed two chickens.)
- (353) *bakø-dam3 khaa5 kajl sòòng3 too3*
 M.B-D kill chicken two CLF.ANIM
 ‘Dam killed two chickens.’

In the following examples, *mii2* ‘there is’ predicates mere existence (or non-existence, under negation):

- (354) *bòø mii2 bòn1 nang1*
 NEG there.is place sit
 ‘There was no place to sit.’
- (355) *samaj3 kòn1 bòø mii2 khàng1-cak2 khàng1-ñon2*
 era before NEG there.is machine-engine machine-plane
dòøk5
 FAC.RESIST
 ‘In the old days, there weren’t engines or aeroplanes, despite what you might think.’
- (356) *mii2 cia3 juu1 laaw2*
 there.is bat be.at Laos
 ‘There are bats in Laos.’

In general, the use of *mii2* ‘there is’ in the presentational construction corresponds to indefinite marking and the *There is* construction in English, while its absence corresponds to definite marking in English. Compare the following, with and without *mii2*:

- (357) *mii2 kacèè3 juu1 naj2 lin4-sak2*
 there.is key be.at inside drawer
 ‘There’s a key in the drawer.’
- (358) *kacèè3 juu1 naj2 lin4-sak2*
 key be.at inside drawer
 ‘The key is in the drawer.’

8.2 Other types of first mention

8.2.1 First mention in extracausal Left Position

Discourse-initial reference may be made by a noun phrase in extracausal Left Position. This is then immediately followed by another nominal corresponding to the same referent, in the form of a pronoun in the clausal subject slot. Structurally, a single referent is expressed both as extracausal topic and clausal subject, i.e., in two slots which are linearly adjacent but which bear structurally different relations to the clause. Here is an example:

- (359) *lot1, man2 lè̀n1 kiaw4 paj3 haa3 tò-̀nii4*
 vehicle 3.B run encircle go seek MC.INAN-DEM
 ‘(The/a) car, it runs around going toward this thing.’

This is possible if the referent’s initial mention is not completely unexpected, but is in some way already contextually available or semi-activated. In the case of example (359), the referent ‘car’ was already in the common attentional field just prior to the utterance. (359) is a description of a video clip the speaker has just watched. By virtue of being already visually and attentionally available, the car in question has effectively been introduced into the discourse world.

In another example, a speaker is telling the story of a country man who is on a visit to the town, and is walking through the market. By invoking a market scene, the speaker makes accessible all the standard features of such a scene, including the ‘aunties’ who sell their wares. This licenses a first mention of such an aunty in extracausal Left Position, at a point just after the speaker has said ‘He turned and saw some sausages for sale’:

- (360) *mè̀-̀paa4 nanø, laaw2 kaø nang1 khaaj3*
 CT.Mo-Pa.eZ TPC.NONPROX 3SG.FA T.LNK sit sell
saj5-kò̀k5 juu1 lè̀kaø hò̀ng4 sù̀4 suaj1 dè̀1
 sausage CONT C.LNK call buy help IMP.SOFT
phò̀-̀luung2
 CT.Fa-Pa.eB
 ‘That aunty, she sat selling sausages, and (she) called out “Buy some please, Uncle!”.’

8.2.2 First mention as non-subject argument

New referents may be introduced in the clausal core as either an O or oblique argument. This is like the presentational construction using *mii2* in that the new referent is coded as a lower complement in the predicate, not a subject. The kinds of verbs which serve to introduce new referents in this way often express some sense of encountering. In an example, a new referent *coon3* ‘bandit’ is introduced as a complement of the verb *cuap5* ‘meet’:

- (361) *deen3 maa2 hòt4 lañaq1 nùng1 maø cuap5 coon3*
 march come reach period one DIR.ALL meet bandit
 ‘(They) walked, coming, for a while, and met (a) bandit.’

In another two examples, new referents are introduced as subjects of clausal complements of the verb *hên3* ‘see’:

- (362) *hên3 ñing2-saaw3 pakot2 tua3 juu1 han5*
 see woman-girl appear body be.at DEM.DIST
 ‘(He) saw (a) girl appear there.’
- (363) *mòt1 hòt4 talaat5 dong3-paa1-laan2 hanø, khòj5*
 near reach market D-P-L TPC.DIST 1SG.P
leej2 hên3 qaa1 lotø-cak2 khan2
 NO.ADO see HES CT.VEHICLE-motorcycle CLF.VEHICLE
nùng1 lèn1- lèn1 kòn1 khòj5
 one run- run before 1SG.P
 ‘Near to reaching the Dongpalane Market, I then saw um a motorcycle running- running ahead of me.’

In another example, a new referent *phaq1-lùt2sii3* ‘holy hermit’ is introduced in a peripheral slot, as complement of the comitative *nam2* ‘with’ (note that the first line of this example was supplied above as example (346)):

- (364) *mii2 caw4-saaj2 qong3 nùng1 pajø hian2 visaa2*
 there.is lord-male CLF.HOLY one DIR.ABL study subject
qaa3khom2 nam2 phaq1-lùt2sii3
 incantation with CT.HOLY.BEING-hermit
 ‘There was one prince, (he) went to study the discipline of magic incantations with a holy hermit.’

8.2.3 First mention in extraclausal Right Position

This strategy is a mirror image of the ‘Left Position noun phrase plus resumptive pronoun in clausal core’ strategy described in section 8.2.1, above. Here, a first explicit mention is made in the post-clausal Right Position or afterthought slot. The main clause is structured as if the new argument were already given, that is, the new referent will correspond

either to a pronoun or a zero in the main clause. With this construction, a listener will first hear a full clause which is phrased as if the reference of its arguments were known, and this is immediately followed up by an explicit formulation of the new referent.

An example is from a conversation between two women who haven't seen each other for a while. They live in different villages. The speaker is on a visit to the addressee's village to check up on progress in a construction project at the village temple. The speaker had visited a few weeks earlier and had left money for the addressee to buy fertilizer.

- (365) \emptyset_i *sùù4* \emptyset_j *maa2 vaa3,* *puj3_j*
 buy come QPLR.INFER fertilizer
 'Did (you)_i buy (it)_j, (the) fertilizer_j?'

Example (365) constitutes a first mention of fertilizer in this interaction. But the earlier interaction and its current relevance (they are discussing a range of matters concerning the project's progress) mean that the fertilizer is to some extent already mutually activated. Accordingly, the main clause in (365) treats it as activated. The zero reference presumes its addressee will know what is being referred to. But this is immediately followed up by a full nominal reference which makes explicit the reference of the zero in the main clause (as *puj3* 'fertilizer'). Note that its placement in the afterthought Right Position means this full nominal reference is phonologically weakened, lower in volume. The effect of the construction is to ostensibly treat the referential information as given (signaled by the referential structure of the main clause, in the case of (365) involving only zeroes), but by also ensuring that reference is safely made (after all, it is a first mention) by making reference fully explicit (albeit in a peripheral structure).

8.2.4 First mention as clausal subject

Subject position is reserved for topical referents, i.e., referents which are already given in the discourse. When a first mention appears in subject position, it typically occurs where the reference is already effectively given by virtue of the context or situation. For instance:

- (366) *phuø-ñing2 khon2 nii4 cap2 caan3 faat5 saj1*
 MC.HUM-woman CLF.PERSON DEM grab plate whack put
toq2
 table

‘This woman takes (a) plate (and) whacks (it) against (a) table.’

This is a description of a video clip the speaker has just watched. While the noun phrase meaning ‘this woman’ is technically a first-mention in terms of the linguistic discourse record, the referent has already been introduced into the perceptual and attentional common ground. Accordingly, by using the subject position, the speaker treats the woman’s referential identity as already given.

Another situation in which referents may be treated as already given upon first mention in this way is when they have been covertly introduced by some kind of contextual frame. In an example, a hotel manager is asked if she ever encounters problems in the management of her hotel. In her response, she mentions *khèèk5* ‘guest(s)’ for the first time in the discourse:

- (367) *baang3-thua1 khèèk5 vaa1 khàng1 khèèk5 sia3*
 sometimes guest say stuff guest lost
 ‘Sometimes guests say that their stuff is missing.’

Once the topic of conversation had turned to the operating of a hotel, the notion of ‘guests’ was naturally activated. (Note that (367) may be read as a non-specific reference, while (366) may not.)

8.3 Subsequent reference-tracking

The basic pattern of reference tracking is for initial references to be done with full noun phrases, and (locally) subsequent references to be made by reduced, indexical nominal forms such as pronouns or so-called zero anaphors (cf. Chafe 1980, Fox 1987). Zero anaphora means complete ellipsis of nominal material in a referentially open slot (i.e., a slot whose reference is not syntactically controlled), leaving no phonological material in the expected argument slot. The gap which remains is like a pronoun in English in the sense that its reference is not syntactically controlled.

- (368) *laaw2 qaw3 caan3 faat5 sajl khòp5 tangl tèk5*
 3SG.FA take plate whack put edge chair break
 ‘She_i took the plate_j and whacked (it) against the edge of the chair_k and Ø_{i/j/k/l} broke.’
- (369) *phen1 cap2 namø-kòdn4 vaangl sajl phùùn4 lèkaø pùajl*
 3.P grab CT.LIQUID-chunk place put floor C.LNK melt
 ‘S/he_i grabbed some ice_j and placed it on the ground_k and Ø_{i/j/k/l} melted.’

The kind of cross-clausal gap which results from ellipsis in these examples constitutes a syntactically controlled pivot in a number of languages including English (cf. Foley and Van Valin 1984, Dixon 1994). But in Lao there is no syntactic control over the reference of this kind of gap (cf. Chapter 11 for further discussion). Referents of the understood subjects of *tèk5* ‘break’ and *pùajl* ‘melt’ in (368-369) could be anything at all which makes sense. This openness of reference is hardly as problematic as it might first seem, thanks to the ample constraints on interpretation which context provides. Without such concrete contextual information, listeners’ interpretations will appeal to common expectations, both from argument structure (constraints on possible theme arguments of ‘melt’) and cultural logic. We are highly likely to read the ‘zero’ subject of *pùajl* ‘melt’ as referring to the ice mentioned in the previous clause.

Zero anaphora in Lao is functionally equivalent to any system of referentially open (i.e., non syntactically controlled) indexical elements, such as pronouns in English. Languages like Lao have zero anaphora in addition to pronominal anaphora, and so a full account of reference tracking in Lao will have to deal not only with the contrast between reference using full nouns versus pronouns, but also with the contrast between using pronouns versus zero anaphora.

The following example is a textbook case of standard introduction and step-by-step reduction of reference formulation. The discourse-initial reference in (370a) is made with a full, descriptive noun phrase complement of the presentational verb *mii2*; the subsequent reference is reduced in the following clause (370b) to a pronoun (3rd singular familiar *laaw2*), and in subsequent clauses to zero (370c, d):

- (370) a. *mii2 [mèø-paa4 phuø-nùng1]_i*
 there.is CT.Mo-Pa.eZ MC.HUM-one
- b. *[laaw2]_i faaw4 paj3 ñang3 buq2 lèkaø*
 3SG.FA hurry go INDEF.INAN Q.UNKN C.LNK
- c. *[Ø]_i qat2 lotø-mêê2 daj4 lèkaø*
 capture CT.VEHICLE-bus CAN C.LNK
- d. *[Ø]_i khùn5 maa2 loot4*
 ascend come NO.HES
- ‘There was one aunty_i, she_i was hurrying somewhere, and then Ø_i was able to stop the bus and then Ø_i got on without hesitation.’

In another example, two referents are activated. This immediately follows example (364), above, where both a prince and a holy hermit are introduced. The subject of the next verb in the sequence is the prince, and this is realized as zero (371a). The reference of the following subject argument (371b) switches to the hermit. This is a full noun phrase. The object of the same clause is the prince, a zero. In the following clause (371c), again hermit is subject, now a pronoun, and prince is object, still zero.

- (371) a. *lang3 caak5 Ø_i hian2 cop2 visaa2 qaa3khom2 lèw4*
 back from study finish discipline incantation PRF
- b. *phaq1-lùù2sii3_j kaø caø haj5 Ø_i kap2 maa2 baan4*
 holy.being-hermit T.LNK IRR give return come village
maa2 mùang2 laø
 come town and
- c. *phen1_j dajø qaw3 khòng3-khuan3 haj5 Ø_i qanø-nùng1*
 3.P ACHV take gift give MC.INAN-one
- ‘After [Ø]_i graduated from studying magic incantations, [the hermit]_j was going to let [Ø]_i go home, and [he]_j did give a gift to [Ø]_i.’

While zero subjects in sequence will typically be coreferential, there is no structural constraint that makes it so (cf. examples (368-369), above).

A further gradation of reference in a discourse sequence makes use of topic markers (see Chapter 6). In the first clause of the following example (372a)), *lot1 tam3 kan3* ‘vehicle(s) (which) collide together’ introduces

unspecified vehicles which were involved in a traffic accident that the speaker is going to describe. In the second clause (372b), the speaker specifies what the vehicles were. In subject position, he repeats the referential expression which he had used in the prior clause, now adding the general topic marker *niø*. In the predicate of this clause, he specifies and thereby introduces the two vehicle types, a truck and a motorcycle. Then again, in turn, he wants to comment on the motorcycle in particular. In the subsequent clause (372c), the motorcycle appears in Left Position, with a topic marker added (this time the distal topic marker *hanø*), functioning as an extraclassical topic for the predication which follows ('All I saw was three dead people lying there on the road'):

- (372) a. *lèw4 pajø hèn3 [lot1 tam3 kan3]_i nòq1*
 PRF DIR.ABL see vehicle collide COLL QPLR.AGREE
- b. *[lot1 tam3 kan3 niø]_i mèn1 [lotø-ñaj1]_j kap2*
 vehicle collide COLL TPC COP CT.VEHICLE-big with
[lotø-cak2]_k nòq1
 CT.VEHICLE-motor QPLR.AGREE
- c. *lèw4 [lotø-cak2 hanø]_k khòj5 hèn3 tè1*
 PRF CT.VEHICLE-motor TPC.DIST 1SG.P see only
khon2 taaj3 nòn2 juu1 thaang2 saam3 sop2
 person die lie be.at road three corpse
 'Then (I) saw vehicles collide, right? These vehicles were a truck and a motorcycle, right? Then, (as for) the motorcycle, all I saw was three dead people lying there on the road.'

8.4 Remark

Chains of subsequent referential forms often switch between pronoun and zero, or occasionally back to some sort of full noun phrase. Principles by which speakers decide whether to formulate subsequent reference using full noun phrases (with or without one or another topic marker), definite pronouns (with or without one or another topic marker), or zeroes, no doubt make reference to many features of the current state of the discourse record. These features include number of referents being tracked at a given moment, their relative prominence on hierarchies of animacy

and topicality, discourse-interactive motivations for foregrounding or backgrounding certain (features of) referents, and the discourse-internal sub-structure of boundaries between events, episodes, and the like.

Part IV

Verbs and Predication

Chapter 9

Aspectual-modal marking

This chapter describes grammatical markers of aspectual and modal meaning around the Lao verb phrase.

9.1 Aspectual-modal markers

The Lao clausal core features an array of aspectual-modal markers. They can be depicted as slots, mostly coming between the subject (if one appears) and the verb phrase:

S/A	2ND POS	PRE-NEG ASP-MOD	IRR	NEG	POST-NEG ASP-MOD	ACHV	DIR	V(O)	POST-V ASP-MOD COMPLEX	SFPs
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Figure 9.1. Slots for aspectual-modal operators in the Lao clause

For each slot in Figure 9.1, there is a paradigm of aspectual-modal markers which may occur in that slot. For some slots, the aspectual-modal markers which may appear number just one or two, while other slots are open to larger sets. Table 25 lists the possibilities.

Table 25. Aspectual-modal markers, grouped by slot (see Figure 9.1)

2nd position	<i>kaø</i>	‘topic linker’ (T.LNK)
particles	<i>phatø</i>	‘contrast linker’ (CONTR)
Pre-neg.	<i>haa3-kòð1</i>	‘just now’ (recent past; PST.RCNT)
aspectual-	<i>kùap5</i>	‘almost’ (ALMOST)
modals	<i>ñang2</i>	‘still/yet’ (STILL)
	<i>kamlang2</i>	‘progressive’ (PROG)
	<i>khùù2 siø</i>	‘probably’ (assumptive epistemic; PROB)
	<i>qaat5 caø</i>	‘might’ (speculative epistemic; SPEC)
Irrealis	<i>caø/siø</i>	(IRR)
Negation	<i>bòø</i>	(NEG)
Post-neg.	<i>kheej2</i>	‘have ever’ (experiential perfect; EXP)
aspectual-	<i>than2</i>	‘yet, on time’ (ON.TIME)
modals	<i>naan2</i>	‘take.long’ (TAKE.LONG)
	<i>mak1 (caø)</i>	‘tend to’ (TEND)
	<i>tòðng4</i>	‘must’ (general necessity, obligative; OBLIG)
	<i>campên3</i>	‘have to’ (strong obligative; OBLIG.STR)
	<i>khuan2 (caø)</i>	‘should’ (weak obligative; OBLIG.WEAK)
	<i>naa5 caø</i>	‘should’ (counterfactual weak oblig; OBLIG.CF)
	<i>saa3maat4</i>	‘able’ (abilitive; ABLE)
Achievement	<i>dajø</i>	(ACHV)
Directional	<i>pajø</i>	‘ablative directional’ (DIR.ABL)
	<i>maø</i>	‘allative directional’ (DIR.ALL)
Postverbal	<i>talðòt5</i>	‘constantly, all the time’ (CONST)
aspectual-	<i>lùajø-lùaj4</i>	‘regularly, continually’ (REG)
modal	<i>lèèw4</i>	‘already’ (perfect; PRF)
complex	<i>heng3/don3</i>	‘for a long time’ (FOR.LONG)
	<i>leej2</i>	‘without ado’ (NO.ADO)
	<i>juu1</i>	‘continuous’ (CONT)
	<i>loot4</i>	‘without hesitation’ (NO.HES)
	<i>sùø-sùù1</i>	‘that’s all, nothing more’ (NOT.MORE)
	<i>daj4</i>	‘can’ (general modal of possibility; CAN)
	<i>pên3</i>	‘know how to’ (acquired abilitive; KNOW.HOW)
	<i>vaj3</i>	‘be possible’ (PSBL)

In following sections, I describe these markers with illustrative examples. The analytic distinctions and terminology are taken from standard linguistic sources such as Comrie (1976, 1985) and Palmer (2001). If I use a term which is also used for an aspectual-modal marker in another

language, I am not claiming that their meanings are exactly the same, only that they are comparable.

Before beginning, I note a few general points about the system.

The first point concerns the status of markers which are grouped in the three ‘ASP-MOD’ (aspectual-modal) slots in Figure 9.1 (pre-negation, post-negation, and postverbal). Many of them have double lives as open class items. Most of these are either erstwhile verbs or are still active as verbs. Typically, in closed class function, they will be phonologically reduced (de-stressed, cliticized), restricted in grammatical behavior (e.g., not taking negation), and demonstrably different in meaning to the open class function. An example is *mak1*, which may be a main verb meaning ‘to like’ (either to like a thing, or to like doing something), or may be an aspectual-modal marker meaning ‘tend to (be the case)’ or ‘likely to (be the case)’. There is a clear difference in meaning between the two functions. In support of this claim, consider the following word play that turns on this distinction: *khòdj5 mak1 lùùm2, tèè1 khòdj5 bòø mak1 lùùm2* ‘I tend (=mak1₁) to forget, but I don’t like (=mak1₂) forgetting’. When *mak1* occurs with an inanimate subject—something which cannot fill the role of ‘liker’—it is restricted to its ‘tend to’ meaning, as in the following example:

- (373) *thèèw3 nii4, khaw5 bòø mak1 ngaam2*
 area DEM rice NEG tend look.good
 ‘(In) this area, rice tends not to look good (i.e., be of good quality).’

For other aspectual-modal markers which also function as verbs, it is not always clear that the verb meaning and the aspectual-modal meaning are significantly different. What appears to be an aspectual-modal marker may in fact be a verb in a multi-verb construction (one of the many kinds described in Part V of this book). Clearly, verb serialization is the path through which most of these markers have grammaticized (see Enfield 2003c for a case study). The present chapter concentrates mainly on those aspectual-modal markers that display the least verb-like properties (for example, being unable to take negation). A smaller number of the aspectual-modal markers are related to nouns. Where appropriate, in the discussion below, I shall remark on the open class function of the marker under discussion.

Second, the apparently neat distribution of various grammatical markers across the array of slots in Figure 9.1 is to some extent an artifact of the grammarian's need to bring order to a description of the verb-marking complex. A number of aspectual-modal markers may appear in more than one slot. For example, *mak1* 'tend to', *khuan2* 'should', and *tòng4* 'must' can appear in both the pre-negation and post-negation slots. In Figure 9.1, I have assigned these more precocious operators to a slot where they occur more commonly or seem more natural. Placement in different slots may or may not entail a meaning difference. This variation is clearly associated with the vagaries of the source of these markers in multi-verb constructions, for which see Part V of this book. Where possible, in the discussion below, I shall note variation in the possible placement of an aspectual-modal marker, and any effects of this.

Third, there may be dependencies between aspectual-modal markers which appear in different slots. Markers may or may not be used alone. Some markers obligatorily co-occur with other markers in other slots. Or such co-occurrence may be optional, but may signal idiosyncratic meaning differences. For example, the pre-negation aspectual-modal *khù2* may act as a modal meaning 'probably', in which function it must always be followed directly by the irrealis marker *siø*, as in the following example:

- (374) *phen1 khù2-siø paj3*
 3.P OBLIG.WEAK-IRR go
 'He is probably going.'

Khù2 may also act as a content question marker meaning 'why?' in the same slot, but with this question function it CANNOT occur with the irrealis marker *siø*:

- (375) *phen1 khù2 paj3*
 3.P WHY go
 'Why is he going?'

To give another example, as a post-negation aspectual-modal, *than2* must always appear with negation, to mean 'not yet', as in the following example:

- (376) *phen1 bòø than2 maa2*
 3.P NEG ON.TIME come
 'He hasn't come yet.'

A fourth preliminary point is that the internal structure of the slot labeled Post-Verbal Aspectual-Modal Complex in Figure 9.1 is deliberately left vague. It is not possible to neatly describe a general internal structure to it in terms of slots. Part V of this book surveys in detail many of the ways in which combinations of verbs (complementation-style or secondary-predication style) are employed for modification of predicates, yielding structures which look like or are identical to the kinds of post-verbal aspectual-modal structures described in the present chapter. The post-verbal aspectual modal complex can be like a mini verb phrase, which is internally complex and which, for instance, may take negation and other aspectual-modal markers internally. Here is an example of the postverbal aspectual-modal *daj4* ‘can’ taking negation directly in postverbal position:

- (377) *phen1 paj3 bə̀ɔ̃ daj4*
 3.P go NEG CAN
 ‘She can’t go.’

This negation directly on the modal can co-occur with negation on the main predicate. Compare (377) to the following, where negation appears twice:

- (378) *phen1 bə̀ɔ̃ paj3 bə̀ɔ̃ daj4*
 3.P NEG go NEG CAN
 ‘She can’t not go.’ (i.e., She must go.)

Fifth, note that the system of markers described in this chapter is not the only site for expression of modal meaning. Sentence-final particles, described in Chapter 4, above, typically encode meanings concerning the stance of the speaker toward the proposition, along with suppositions about the addressee’s stance. This often relates to distinctions which would normally come under the heading of epistemic modality or evidentiality.

Finally, note that there is no general or obligatory grammatical marking of tense in Lao. Utterances are open to interpretation as being situated in past, present, or future time. So, when supplied out of context, a simple utterance like the following is open to several readings:

- (379) *phen1 kiaw1 khaw5*
 3.P harvest rice
 i. ‘She will harvest rice (e.g., tomorrow).’
 ii. ‘She harvested rice (e.g., yesterday).’
 iii. ‘She is harvesting rice (now).’

The irrealis markers *siø/caø* are often used in utterances which represent future or intended states of affairs, but their use does not entail future tense. The ‘future’ orientation of the irrealis markers may be anchored in a point in time other than the speech event itself, i.e., any time in the past or future (see section 9.1.4, below).

The following sections present brief descriptions of each aspectual-modal marker, along with examples. We begin with the somewhat heterogeneous postverbal aspectual-modals, before working through the set of preverbal slots in order from left to right (see Figure 9.1).

9.1.1 Post-verbal aspectual-modal markers

talòt5 – ‘constantly, all the time’ (CONST)

The word *talòt5* is like a particle in that it has no verb-like properties (e.g., it cannot take negation, it cannot be reduplicated). It conveys the idea that a state of affairs is the case all the time or continually, or for an extended period. For example, a speaker is describing a days-long boat journey from Southern Laos to Vientiane, where he is employed as a laborer. He follows orders and works away the whole time, marking this sustained activity with *talòt5*:

- (380) *haw2 kaø leejø mian4 taam3 khaw3 bòd5, hêt1*
 1.FA T.LNK NO.ADO clear.up follow 3PL.B tell do
nèw2 nan4 maa2 talòt5 thaw1 hòt4 viang2can3
 manner DEM.NONPROX come CONST until reach V
 ‘So I cleared up according to what they told me, did that continually until reaching Vientiane.’

In another example, a speaker is describing the risky conditions in immediate post-revolutionary urban Laos (1975-1985), at a time when the new government was cracking down on what were regarded as socially

undesirable elements. This included the youth culture associated with sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll. He points out that to wear flashy clothes all the time (as marked by *talòòt5*) would be to invite a warning (and risk being sent for political re-education):

- (381) *thaa5-haak5 vaa1 caw4 nung1 khùang1 ngamø-ngaam2*
 if-in.case COMP 2SG.P wear clothes RDP.A-nice
ngapø-ngaap4 juu1 talòòt5 khaw3 kaø qeen4 pajø tùan3
 RDP.A-flashy be.at CONST 3SG.P T.LNK call DIR.ABL warn
 ‘If you wore kind of nice, kind of flashy clothes all the time, they would call you for a warning.’

lùajø-lùaj4 – ‘regularly, often’ (REG)

The inherently A-Type reduplicated phrase *lùajø-lùaj4* (with few verbal properties; e.g., no negation) has a similar meaning to *talòòt5*, but may also imply a sense of regular repetition of the predicate, possibly with some time intervening. For example, a woman working for a government institute is talking about her father, and states that her boss comes to visit him regularly, marking this with *lùajø-lùaj4*:

- (382) *hua3-naa5 sathaa3ban3 laø maa2 lin5 nam2 phen1*
 head-front institute PRF come play with 3.P
lùajø-lùaj4
 REG

‘The chief of the institute comes to see him regularly.’

In another example, a man is talking about his previous job as a policeman, and describes his working relationship with a man who served in the police force of a neighboring district. They would encounter each other regularly, as marked by *lùajø-lùaj4*:

- (383) *pajø phòò4 kan3 lùajø-lùaj4*
 DIR.ABL meet COLL REG
 ‘(We’d) meet each other regularly.’

In another example, a woman and her bandit husband are journeying on foot. They come to a river. He tells her that he will go across the river to fetch a raft and come back to get her and ferry her across. But he goes ahead without stopping (as marked by *lùajø-lùaj4*), leaving her behind

for good. She can't see him anywhere, and she has no chance of catching up with him:

- (384) *phòq1 vaa1 coon3 nanø paj3 naa5 lùajø-lùaj4*
 because COMP bandit TPC.NONPROX go front REG
dêê4
 FAC.FILLIN
 'Because the bandit went ahead continually (i.e., without stopping), you see.'

In this case, we see semantic overlap between *lùajø-lùaj4* and *talòòt5*, where both may mean 'continually, without stopping'.

In a final example, a speaker is talking about the early days of the revolution of 1975. At that time, many Vientiane people fled across the Mekong River as refugees. This speaker was afraid to do this, since there were often potentially lethal exchanges with security forces. The regularity of these incidents is marked here with *lùajø-lùaj4*:

- (385) *daj4-ñin2 vaa1 khaw3 ñing2 kan3 juu1 lùajø-lùaj4 juu1*
 hear COMP 3PL.B shoot COLL CONT REG be.at
khèèm2 khòòng3
 bank Mekong
 'I heard they were shooting each other regularly along the banks of the Mekong.'

lèèw4 – perfect marker (PRF)

As a verb, *lèèw4* means 'to be finished' or 'to finish something (off)':

- (386) *kuu3 siø lèèw4 viak4 nii4 kòòn1*
 1 SG.B IRR finish.off work DEM before
 'I'll finish off this work first.'

As a postverbal marker, *lèèw4* conveys the idea that an event or state transition has taken place, and the state of affairs resulting from that transition (now/still) pertains at the time of speech. Accordingly, I gloss it as 'perfect' (PRF) (cf. Comrie 1976:52ff). In an example, a speaker relates an experience when he and his wife are at the market and see a large goose at a bargain price. They want to buy it, but don't have enough cash. The two decide to go home together to get money, but when they come

back for the goose, it has been sold to someone and is already gone. This is captured using *lèèw4*:

- (387) *maa2, khaw3 qaw3 pajø kin3 lèèw4*
 come 3PL.B take DIR.ABL eat PRF
 ‘(Having) come (back), they had taken (it) to eat already.’

There will be different interpretations of *lèèw4* depending on the internal aspectual structure of the predicate which it marks. The simplest cases involve achievement verbs with meanings like *taa3* ‘die’ and *hòt4* ‘arrive’, whose aspectual structures consist of a single transition from one state (e.g., alive, absent) to another (e.g., dead, present). With these predicates, marking with *lèèw4* straightforwardly gives rise to an interpretation that the state which results from the transition inherent to the verb’s meaning pertains at the time of speech—e.g., ‘dead’ in the case of ‘die’, ‘present’ in the case of ‘arrive’:

- (388) a. *man2 taa3 lèèw4*
 3.B die PRF
 ‘It has died.’
 b. *khaw3 hòt4 lèèw4*
 3PL.B arrive PRF
 ‘They have arrived.’

With other semantic classes of verb, ambiguities arise, because the semantic structure of the predicate features more than one transition of states of affairs that may be picked out by *lèèw4*. For example, with an activity verb like *maa2* ‘come’, the relevant transition might be the onset of the activity of coming (i.e., having left, being on the way), or the completion of the activity of coming (i.e., having arrived), resulting in the following ambiguity:

- (389) *khacaw4 maa2 lèèw4*
 3PL.P come PRF
 i. ‘They’ve already left (and are now on the way here).’
 ii. ‘They’ve already arrived (and are now here).’

If necessary, this ambiguity can be removed by using multi-verb constructions to make the event structure more explicit. For example, the (389i) reading may be forced by inclusion of the verb *qòk5* ‘exit’ in a path-direction construction, as in (390):

- (390) *khacaw4 qòòk5 maa2 lèèw4*
 3PL.P exit come PRF
 ‘They’ve already left (and are coming).’ (= 389i, ≠ 389ii)

Or, the (389ii) reading may be forced by inclusion of a resultative achievement verb like *hòòt4* ‘reach, arrive’, as in (391):

- (391) *khacaw4 maa2 hòòt4 lèèw4*
 3PL.P come reach PRF
 ‘They’ve (come and have) already arrived.’ (= 389ii, ≠ 389i)

Similarly, with accomplishment verbs like *tom4* ‘to boil (tr.)’, there is more than one transition-from-one-state-of-affairs-to-another which *lèèw4* might profile—i.e., either the onset of having been put to boil (392i), or the completion of having come to the boil (392ii):

- (392) *nam4 nan4 tom4 lèèw4*
 water DEM.NONPROX boil PRF
 i. ‘That water has already been put to boil (and is now heating up).’
 ii. ‘That water has already been boiled (and is now okay to drink).’

With adjectives and other stative verbs, *lèèw4* has a coercive effect, foregrounding or imposing a state change (which may otherwise be merely implied) on the reading of the predicate. For example, for adjectives like *thaw5* ‘old (of a person)’ or stative verbs like *mii2* ‘have’, which each presuppose or imply a natural transitional onset (aging or acquiring), it is this onset that will be picked out by *lèèw4*:

- (393) *phen1 thaw5 lèèw4*
 3.P old PRF
 ‘He’s already old; He has become old.’
- (394) *khòòj5 mii2 lèèw4*
 1SG.P have PRF
 ‘I already have (one); I got (one) already.’

For adjectives like *dèèng3* ‘red’, *lèèw4* will coerce an inchoative reading by introducing a state change into a predication which normally conveys no more than a simple state:

- (395) *man2 dèng3 lèw4*
 3.B red PRF
 ‘It’s already red; It’s become red.’

When marking a negated predicate, *lèw4* may mean ‘not any more’. In an example, an ogre captures a new wife, and while he is sleeping, she is taken away. Upon waking, the ogre cannot see his wife. The speaker employs *lèw4* as a way of profiling the transition into the state of not being seen, i.e., the wife’s kidnapping:

- (396) *bòø hèn3 mia2 lèw4*
 NEG see wife PRF
 ‘(He) couldn’t see (his) wife any more.’

Note that negation may also occur directly on *lèw4* itself, but this is only where it is interpreted as having its full verb meaning ‘to finish off’, e.g., as V2 in a resultative construction (cf. Chapter 17):

- (397) *man2 puk2 hùan2 bòø lèw4*
 3.B build house NEG finish.off
 ‘He didn’t finish building the house.’

When postverbal *lèw4* has its aspectual function, it may not be negated, as shown in this ungrammatical version of (393), above:

- (398) **phen1 thaw5 bòø lèw4*
 3.P old NEG PRF
 (He’s not finished getting old?)

The meaning and structural position of *lèw4* as a post-verbal marker of completion lends it naturally to functioning as a connector between predications in a narrative sequence. In an example, a speaker is talking about his early education. He explains that he went to a particular temple to be trained as a monk. Marking with *lèw4* on the first clause shows that the first state of affairs is completed (he is ordained) and pertains as a condition for the state of affairs in the subsequent clause (he passes his higher-level exams):

- (399) *buat5 lèw4 kaø sòp5 nakø-tham2 daj4 qiik5*
 ordain PRF T.LNK test CT.AGT-dharma succeed more
 ‘Having been ordained, (I) passed my exams as a practitioner of the dharma.’

In another example, the speaker is describing his police training. In the first clause, he completes his studies (marked by *lèw4*), after which, and conditional upon which, in the second clause, he is given the rank of sergeant:

- (400) *hian2 cop2 lèw4 phen1 haj5 sip2-qêk5*
 study graduate PRF 3.P give sergeant
 ‘Having graduated already, they gave (me the rank of) sergeant.’

In another example, a market lady is telling a customer how to cook the sausages she is trying to sell him. She uses *lèw4* to mark the completion of one step as a condition for going on to the next:

- (401) *lang3 caak5 namø-man2 muu3 man2 fot2 dèl1 lèw4*
 back from CT.LIQUID-oily pig 3.B boil a.little PRF
caw4 kaø qaw3 saj5-kòk5 niø long2
 2SG.P T.LNK take sausage TPC descend
 ‘After the pork oil is boiling a little, you put the sausages in.’

Note in example (401), *lèw4* is postverbal to the first clause, and *kaø* is in second position to the second clause, with the subject of the second clause—*caw4* ‘you’—intervening. It is often the case that the subject of the second clause is ellipsed, as in (399), above, with the result that *lèw4* and *kaø* come together. This appears to be a very common phenomenon, resulting in the grammaticization of a clause linking particle *lèkaø*, a phonologically reduced form of *lèw4 kaø*:

- (402) *khaw3 kin3 khaw5-saw4 lèkaø mùa2*
 3PL.B eat rice-morning C.LNK return
 ‘They ate breakfast and then returned.’

don3/heng3 – ‘for a long time’ (FOR.LONG)

The notion of ‘a long time’ may be expressed by *don3* and *heng3* in postverbal aspectual-modal function. These are distinctly verb-like, for example allowing both reduplication and negation. I am not aware of any distinguishable differences in semantics or grammar between these two words. The difference appears to be sociolinguistic, with *heng3* having a more rustic feel. They occur immediately after the verb phrase which they modify, conveying the idea that the state of affairs predicated by the verb phrase is the case for a long time:

- (403) *laaw2 nang1 juu1 don3 lèw4*
 3SG.FA sit CONT FOR.LONG PRF
 ‘He had been sitting a long time (before he noticed...).’
- (404) *maø juu1 laaw2 don3 lèw4*
 DIR.ALL be.at Laos FOR.LONG PRF
 ‘(He) had been (here) in Laos for a long time already.’
- (405) *sùw4 vaj4 kin3 kum4 don3*
 buy keep eat cover FOR.LONG
 ‘Buy (these sausages) to put aside to keep for a long time.’
- (406) *huaj4, suu3 phatø maa2 heng3 paan3 daj3 niø*
 INTJ 2PL.B CONTR come FOR.LONG extent INDEF TPC
 ‘Hey, how long have you all been here?’

Don3 and *heng3* may be Type A reduplicated, like regular adjectives (cf. Chapter 10, section 10.2.3):

- (407) *khan2 thaa5 haw2 tom4 donø-don3 lèw4 man2 cùw5*
 if if 1.FA boil RDP.A-FOR.LONG PRF 3.B bland
kin3 sabaaj3
 eat easy
 ‘If we boil (the bamboo shoots) for a rather long time, then they are going to be bland (i.e., no longer bitter) and easy to eat.’
- (408) *tom4 qanø hengø-heng3 haj5 man2 cùw5*
 boil HES RDP.A-FOR.LONG give 3.B bland
 ‘Boil um (the bamboo shoots) for a rather long time and make them bland (i.e., no longer bitter).’

The markers *don3* and *heng3* may be compared to the pre-negation aspectual-modal *naan2* ‘take a long time’ (section 9.1.6, below). While *don3* and *heng3* scope over a state of affairs from the beginning of its inception, *naan2* refers to the length of time PRECEDING the inception of the state of affairs. So, while *don3* and *heng3* mean ‘FOR a long time’, *naan2* means that the event ‘TAKES a long time’ to occur. Consider these contrasts:

- (409) a. *naan2 saw2*
 TAKE.LONG stop
 ‘It’s taking a long time to stop.’

- b. *saw2 don3*
 stop FOR.LONG
 ‘It has stopped for a long time.’

The following examples both describe a scene of waiting at a red traffic light for a long time. (410a), using *naan2* ‘take a long time’, frames it in terms of how long it is taking for the lights to go green, while (410b), using *don3* ‘for a long time’ frames it in terms of how long it is that the lights are staying red:

- (410) a. *naan2 khiaw3*
 TAKE.LONG green
 ‘(It’s) taking a long time to (go) green.’
 b. *dèng3 don3*
 red FOR.LONG
 ‘(It’s staying) red for a long time.’

juu1 – continuous (CONT)

As a main verb, *juu1* means ‘to be somewhere’ or ‘to live somewhere’:

- (411) *man2 juu1 talaat5*
 3.B be.at market
 ‘He is at the market.’
 (412) *man2 juu1 viang2can3*
 3.B BE.AT V
 i. ‘He is in Vientiane.’
 ii. ‘He lives in Vientiane.’

With this meaning, *juu1* also serves as a locative adjunct marker:

- (413) *pajø pên3 nakø-hian2 saa3lavat1-thahaan3 juu1*
 DIR.ABL COP CT.AGT-student police-military be.at
khaaj4 nòng3-duang4
 barracks N-D
 ‘(I) went to be a military police student at the Nong Douang Barracks.’

- (414) *phen1 lùaj1 maj4 juu1 vat1*
 3.P saw wood be.at temple
 ‘He’s sawing wood at the temple.’

As a postverbal aspectual-modal, *juu1* is associated with the notion of a present, ongoing, continuous state of affairs. *Juu1* often co-occurs with semantically similar markers such as *ñang2* ‘still’, as in (415-416) or *kamlang2* ‘PROG’, as in (417):

- (415) *diaw3-nii4 khandòj5 ñang2 mii2 luuk4 qòdn1 juu1*
 NOW 1SG.FO STILL have child weak CONT
 ‘Now, I presently still have a dependent child.’
- (416) *tham2 kaan3 bðø dii3 juu1 naj2 qanø tòdn3 thii1 ñang2 pên3*
 do NZR NEG good be.at in HES time REL STILL COP
khon2 juu1
 person CONT
 ‘(They) did bad things in um the time that they were still people.’
- (417) *nam4 kamlang2 fot2 juu1*
 water PROG boil CONT
 ‘The water is boiling (now).’

Juu1 may also mark continuous state or action without these other, similar markers (cf. (415) and (417)):

- (418) *diaw3-nii4 khandòj5 mii2 luuk4 qòdn1 juu1*
 NOW 1SG.FO have child weak CONT
 ‘Now, I presently still have a dependent child.’
- (419) *nam4 fot2 juu1*
 water boil CONT
 ‘The water is boiling (now).’
- (420) *khaw3 maa2 juu1*
 3PL.B come CONT
 ‘They are coming (now).’

Another example shows *juu1* marking one state of affairs as ongoing (sitting and selling sausages), in order to frame another (calling out):

- (421) *mèø-paa4 nanø, laaw2 kaø nang1 khaaj3*
 CT.Mo-Pa.eZ TPC.NONPROX 3SG.FA T.LNK sit sell
saj5-kòðk5 juu1 lèkaø hòðng4
 sausage CONT C.LNK call
 ‘That aunty, she was sitting and selling sausages, and (she) called out...’

In a final example, the notion of continuous, ongoing state of affairs conveyed by *juu1* is in line with the iterated onomatopoeic *puaq2*, referring to the bubbling of boiling water:

- (422) *fot2 puaq2-puaq2-puaq2-puaq2 juu1*
 boil ONOM CONT
 ‘(It) was boiling *puaq-puaq-puaq-puaq*.’

leej2 – ‘without (further) ado’ (NO.ADO)

As a verb, *leej2* means ‘to go beyond’. It is much more common, however, as a postverbal aspectual-modal. In its postverbal aspectual-modal usage, *leej2* conveys the idea that a state of affairs is the case without anything else happening—e.g., without hesitation or other delaying action. Postverbal *leej2* cannot take negation.

When used with agentive verbs, *leej2* conveys the idea that the agent does not hesitate or engage in any activity other than that of the main predicate. In an example, a man wants to flee from his wife. He tells her he’s crossing the river to get a raft in order to come back and pick her up. Instead, once across the river, he flees without ado:

- (423) *paj3 hòðt4 fang1 nan4 lèèw4 laø mèèn1 nii3 paj3*
 go reach bank DEM.NONPROX PRF and BE.SO flee go
leej2
 NO.ADO
 ‘(He) went to the other side, and then fled without ado.’

In another example, a man is pushed over a cliff, *leej2* here conveying a lack of hesitation on the part of the culprits:

- (424) *suk1 long2 hêèw3, suk1 long2 paj3 leej2*
 push descend cliff push descend go NO.ADO
 ‘(They) pushed (him) down the cliff. (They) pushed (him) down without any ado.’

In another example, a man describes a government project to build an irrigation channel which was destroyed by heavy rain at a late stage. In this case, postverbal *leej2* is translatable as ‘at all’:

- (425) *khòng2-mùang3 kaø saj4 bòø daj4, bòø dajø saj4*
 irrigation.channel T.LNK use NEG can NEG ACHV use
ñang3 leej2
 INDEF.INAN NO.ADO
 ‘The irrigation channel was then unusable, (it) wasn’t used for anything at all.’

With non-stative verbs whose subjects are not animate, *leej2* gives the idea that ‘nothing else happened’:

- (426) *man2 labeet5 leej2*
 3.B explode NO.ADO
 ‘It simply exploded.’

With verbs that predicate states rather than actions, postverbal *leej2* may invoke some reference to an underlying action component of the utterance. For example, in using *leej2* with *met2* ‘to be finished up’ as a main verb, we get the idea that the events which caused it (e.g., people eating) were concentrated and unwavering:

- (427) *khaw5 met2 leej2*
 rice finished NO.ADO
 ‘The rice is all finished (eaten up completely, suddenly, unexpectedly).’

Like *lèew4*, discussed above, postverbal *leej2* may serve as a connector between clauses, as a result of its final positioning on a first clause, adjoined then to a second clause which predicates a subsequent course of action or events. In this function, it is often translatable with ‘then’ or ‘and so’:

- (428) *man2 paj3 saj1 tum4 leej2 maa2 hùan2*
 3.B go put basket.trap NO.ADO come house
 ‘He went to place a basket trap and then came (straight) home.’

Often in this function, *leej2* is preceded by the topic linker *kaø*. Consider the following two examples:

- (429) *jaak5 daj4 pajø hêt1 mia2, kaø-leej2 keet5*
 want acquire DIR.ABL make wife T.LNK-NO.ADO happen
kaan3 tòð1-suu5 kan3 khùn5, ñaat4-ñèèng1 qaw3 mia2 kan3
 NZR struggle COLL arise snatch take wife COLL
 ‘(The two bandits) wanted (her) as a wife, and so without ado
 there erupted fighting, competing against each other to take (her)
 as a wife.’
- (430) *jaak5 huu4 vaa1 mèn1 kap2 nanø mii2 mèn1*
 want know COMP COP box DEM.NONPROX there.is COP
ñang3 juu1 naj2 han5, kaø-leej2 khaj3
 INDEF.INAN be.at inside DEM.DIST T.LNK-NO.ADO open
beng1
 look
 ‘(He) wanted to know what was in that box, and so without ado
 (he) opened it to look.’

Examples such as the following illustrate *leej2* with this kind of meaning in a second position slot (see below). In this example, *leej2* occurs after the subject of the second clause in the series (i.e., *khòðj5* ‘I’):

- (431) *mòð1 hòðt4 talaat5 dong3-paa1-laan2 hanø, khòðj5*
 close reach market D-P-L TPC.DIST 1SG.P
leej2 hên3 qaa1 lot1-cak2 khan2
 NO.ADO see HES CT.VEHICLE-motorcycle CLF.VEHICLE
nùng1 lèèñ1- lèèñ1 kòðñ1 khòðj5 hanø naa3
 one run run before 1SG.P TPC.DIST FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘Close to reaching the Dongpalane market there, I then saw um a
 motorcycle riding in front of me.’

Finally, note that *leej2* may occur together with other postverbal aspectual-modal markers, typically in final position. For example:

- (432) *phen1 kin3 bòø daj4 leej2*
 3.P eat NEG CAN NO.ADO
 ‘She can’t eat (it) at all.’

loot4 – ‘without hesitation’ (NO.HES)

Loot4 is very similar in meaning to *leej2*, just described. It is apparently

more restricted in distribution, normally only occurring with predicates of action, and less likely to occur with stative expressions such as (427), above. Here are some examples:

- (433) *mùng2 qaw3 paj3 loot4*
 2SG.B take go NO.HES
 ‘You go ahead and take (them) right away!’
- (434) *phaj3 nam2 qaw3 nòng4 maø haj5, siø mòðp4 mùang2*
 who go.get take yG DIR.ALL give IRR present kingdom
haj5 loot4
 give NO.HES
 ‘Whoever brings (my) younger sister (to me), (I) will present my kingdom to them without hesitation.’
- (435) *kaø mùù4-lèng2 qaw3 ngen2 paj3 haj5 mèø-thaw5 loot4*
 T.LNK day-evening take money go give CT.MO-old NO.HES
 ‘So (that) evening (I) took the money and gave it to (my) mother-in-law without hesitation.’

sùø-sùù1 – ‘that’s all, nothing more’ (NOT.MORE)

The phrase *sùø-sùù1* is an Type A reduplication of *sùù1*, an adjective meaning ‘straight, direct’:

- (436) *khòj5 jaak5 daj4 maj4 sùø-sùù1*
 1SG.P want acquire wood RDP.A-straight
 ‘I want a straight-ish (piece of) wood.’

As a post-verbal aspectual-modal, *sùø-sùù1* means ‘that’s all, nothing more’. In an example, a speaker explains that hippies from Western countries who were in Vientiane just prior to the revolution in 1975 were not there to seek work or the like, all they wanted to do was goof off and have fun. The notion ‘that’s all’ is marked by *sùø-sùù1*:

- (437) *man2 tang4 maø thiaw1 maø kin3 sùø-sùù1*
 3.B intend DIR.ALL tour DIR.ALL consume NOT.MORE
 ‘Their intention was just to tour around and to consume, that’s all.’

In another example, a speaker describes a period of hard times in which citizens were required to be fully self-sufficient, and had only enough food to feed themselves:

- (438) *qòòk5 hèèng2 puuk5 phak2 puuk5 mii1, phòò2 dajø kin3*
 exit force plant vegetable plant noodle enough ACHV eat
khaw5 sùø-sùù1
 rice NOT.MORE
 ‘Working to plant vegetables and the like, it was just enough to eat (with) rice, nothing more.’

In another example, a speaker explains that immediately after the revolution of 1975, those who were seen to be associated with hippies or other social undesirables were taken away for a period of re-education. He explains that one would be targeted just for having long hair:

- (439) *phom3 ñaaw2 sùø-sùù1 kaø qaw3 paj3*
 hair long NOT.MORE T.LNK take go
 ‘Just for (having) long hair, (they’d) take (you) away.’

daj4 – general modal of possibility (CAN)

The word *daj4* has multiple aspectual-modal functions (Enfield 2003c). As a main verb, it means ‘acquire’:

- (440) *khòòj5 saj1 tum4 lèkaø daj4 qian1 sòòng3 too3*
 1SG.P put basket.trap LINK acquire eel two CLF.ANIM
 ‘I laid a basket trap and got two eels.’

In its postverbal modal function, *daj4* shows a number of definitive verb properties, such as the possibility of direct negation, as illustrated here:

- (441) *ton4-maj4 suung3 mèø-ñing2 khùn5 bòø daj4, haw2*
 CT.PLANT-wood tall CT.MO-woman ascend NEG CAN 1.FA
khùn5 daj4
 ascend CAN
 ‘Tall trees, women can’t climb, (but) we (men) can climb (them).’

As a postverbal aspectual-modal, *daj4* is a general modal of possibility, covering a range of modal distinctions, including abilitive and permissive. As in the English translation, the (in)ability predicated in the following example encompasses both ‘can of ability’ (in various sub-senses; Palmer 2001:77ff) and ‘can of permission’:

- (442) *phen1 vaw4 phaa2saa3 laaw2 bə̀ə daj4*
 3.P speak language Lao NEG CAN
 ‘She can’t speak Lao.’

This could be because her mother forbids her to speak Lao, she has never studied Lao, or she’s tired, she can’t think, among other reasons.

In another example, having assessed a group of contenders for a championship fight, an employee of the king uses *daj4* ‘can’ to mean ‘may, allowed to’ in telling those who were not selected that they are free to go home:

- (443) *kap2 baan4 daj4*
 return home CAN
 ‘(You) may return home.’

In the following three examples, *daj4* ‘can’ marks possibility due to physical, learned, or other capacity:

- (444) *khò̀ng3 nak2 mè̀ə-ńing2 bə̀ək5 bə̀ə daj4*
 things heavy CT.MO-woman carry.on.back NEG CAN
 ‘Heavy things, women can’t carry.’

- (445) *lùang1 phii3 niə̀ khò̀j5 kaə̀ law1 haj5 daj4*
 story spirit TPC 1SG.P T.LNK tell give CAN
 ‘(As for) the matter of spirits, I can tell (you about it).’

- (446) *bə̀ə luk1 kaə̀ bə̀ə daj4*
 NEG arise T.LNK NEG CAN
 ‘We couldn’t not get up (in the morning).’ (i.e. ‘We had no choice but to get up.’)

Other modals are more restrictive than *daj4* in their semantics, and do not allow this wider range of modal interpretations. The following example, using the postverbal acquired abilitive dynamic modal *pən3* (see below), entails that the subject cannot speak Lao, and could not speak Lao if he wanted to (i.e., has never spoken it):

- (447) *phen1 vaw4 phaa2saa3 laaw2 bə̀ə̀ pən3*
 3.P speak language Lao NEG KNOW.HOW
 ‘He is incapable of speaking Lao.’ (...doesn’t know how to...)

It would not make sense to use this expression in a context in which he is capable of speaking Lao, but is not ALLOWED to. If the contextual background explanation for (447) were ‘...because his mother forbids him to’, the interpretation would have to be that his mother had always forbidden him to speak, and so he never learned, and therefore now cannot speak and could not speak if he wanted to. The meaning of *daj4* ‘can’ in (442) is more general than this other postverbal modal *pən3* ‘know how to, be able to if wants to’ in (447).

It is rare for an unmarked V-*daj4* expression to convey an epistemic (speculative) modality interpretation, although this interpretation is made more likely or acceptable by the presence of the topic linker *kaə̀*. The epistemic interpretation is more readily achieved by an idiomatic expression *pən3 paj3 daj4* [COP go CAN] ‘it’s possible’, or less commonly *pən3 daj4* [COP CAN] as in this example:

- (448) *qaat5 caə̀ thùük5 cap2 kaə̀ pən3 daj4*
 might IRR suffer catch T.LNK COP CAN
 ‘It’s possible that you would even be arrested.’

In this case, postverbal *daj4* alone (i.e., without the copula *pən3*) would remain compatible with an epistemic interpretation. A second construction which lends itself to epistemic interpretations involves the preverbal abilitive marker *saa3maat4* in combination with *daj4* (see section 9.1.6, below). It is not that epistemic modality represents a separate MEANING for ‘can’, but rather a contextual reading, pragmatically emergent due to a common pattern of inference from which epistemic meanings transpire (Bybee and Pagliuca 1985:73, Traugott 1989, Sweetser 1990:54, Hopper and Traugott 1993:79).

The grammatical behavior of *daj4* shows close parallels to resultative and adverbial constructions (see Chapters 17 and 21). First, *daj4* ‘can’ appears to the right of a verb phrase, in V2 position (as illustrated in (443), above). Second, *daj4* ‘can’ is head of the construction for yes-answer purposes:

- (449) Q *laaw2 vaw4 phaa2saa3 laaw2 daj4 bðð3*
 3SG.FA speak language Lao CAN QPLR
 ‘Can she speak Lao?’
 Ai *daj4*
 CAN
 ‘(Yes, she) can (speak Lao).’
 Aii * *vaw4 (phaa2saa3 laaw2)*
 speak (language Lao)
 ((Yes, she can) speak (Lao).)

Third, negation is usually marked directly on *daj4* ‘can’ rather than the main verb:

- (450) *laaw2 vaw4 phaa2saa3 laaw2 bðø daj4*
 3SG.FA speak language Lao NEG CAN
 ‘She cannot speak Lao.’

But postverbal modal *daj4* is distinct from many resultative verbs in that it cannot be separated from the preceding verb phrase by the clause linker *lèkaø*:

- (451) * *laaw2 vaw4 phaa2saa3 laaw2 lèkaø daj4*
 3SG.FA speak language Lao C.LNK CAN
 (She speaks Lao and can.)

The non clause-separability shown in (451) demonstrates that the two verbs are not in a relationship of coordination.

The following examples show postverbal *daj4* ‘can’ directly adjoining the topic linker *kaø*, a common pattern which is typically translatable along the lines ‘It’s okay to’:

- (452) *hèt1 juu1 theng2 phoon2 kaø daj4*
 make be.at on.top hillock T.LNK CAN
 ‘It’s okay to make (them; i.e., chicken coops) on hillocks.’
 (453) *ñùù4-qaw3 kaø daj4*
 reach.across-take T.LNK CAN
 ‘It’s okay to reach across and take (some).’

pên3 – acquired abilitive dynamic modal (KNOW.HOW)

As a main verb, *pên3* is a copula, used, for example, when stating people's occupations or kin relations:

- (454) *phen1 pên3 qaa3 khòj5*
 3.P COP Fa.yZ 1SG.P
 'She is my younger maternal aunt.'
- (455) *phen1 pên3 thahaan3*
 3.P COP soldier
 'She is a soldier.'

Pên3 may also be used to denote suffering from an illness, where the A argument is the sufferer and the O argument is the illness:

- (456) *phen1 pên3 vat2/khaj5/qêêt5/malêêng2*
 3.P COP cold/fever/AIDS/cancer
 'He has a cold/fever/AIDS/cancer.'

(See chapter 17, section 17.1.3.3, for description of a function of *pên3* in marking secondary predicative adjuncts.)

As a post-verbal aspectual-modal, *pên3* is a dynamic modal of acquired ability. It denotes a subject's ability to do something, in the specific sense of knowing how to do it, through having learnt it or experienced it before:

- (457) *khòj5 vaw4 phaa2saa3 ciin3 bòø pên3*
 1SG.P speak language Chinese NEG KNOW.HOW
 'I don't know how to speak Chinese.'
- (458) *man2 lòj2 nam4 pên3*
 3.B float water KNOW.HOW
 'He knows how to swim.' (i.e., '...can swim.')
- (459) *caw4 kin3 qahaan3 laaw2 pên3 bòø3*
 2SG.P eat food Lao KNOW.HOW QPLR
 'Do you know how to eat Lao food?'

vaj3 – modal of possible result (PSBL)

The verb *vaj3* ‘to move’ occasionally serves a postverbal modal function. It acts as a maximally general resultative complement for active verbs (cf. Chapter 19), and is typically negated, to mean that the marked state of affairs is an impossibility (in the sense of dynamic modality of physical ability or possibility). For example, a man tries to lift a car with his bare hands but it proves too heavy:

- (460) *ñok1 bə̀ɸ vaj3*
 lift NEG PSBL
 ‘(I) cannot lift it.’ (i.e., ‘I lift (it, it) doesn’t move.’)

In another example, a man gets into a fist fight but is unable to stand up to his opponent:

- (461) *mò̀3 nan4 suu5 bə̀ɸ vaj3*
 bloke DEM.NONPROX fight NEG PSBL
 ‘That bloke was unable to fight.’

9.1.2 Second-position markers

kaɸ – topic linker (T.LNK)

The more common of the two second position markers is *kaɸ*. ‘Second position’ here means the position immediately after the subject—that is, second position in the clausal core, not counting the Left Position in which extraposed topics may appear (see Figure 1.1, above). A second position particle is a sentence-level marker, and cannot appear inside clauses which are tightly subordinated to main predicates (such as controlled complement clauses) or which are modifiers in noun phrases (i.e., relative clauses). The second-position particle appears immediately before the main verb phrase (including any of its left aspectual-modal marking), and immediately after the sentential subject, if one appears (regardless of the presence of preceding coordinators or adverbial phrases; cf. (463-464), below). The following examples are typical:

- (462) *man2 kaø bðø mèn1 phii3 dêj2*
 3.B T.LNK NEG COP spirit FAC.NEWS
 ‘And so she was not a spirit, you know.’
- (463) *tèè1 khòj5 kaø bðø cù1 khak1 paan3 daj3*
 but 1SG.P T.LNK NEG remember clear extent INDEF
 ‘But then I can’t remember very clearly.’
- (464) *lèèw4 hòt4 mù4 maj1 mù4 lun1 haw2 kaø siø maø*
 PRF reach day new day after 1.FA T.LNK IRR DIR.ALL
thaam3 qiik5 vaal san4
 ask more say thus
 ‘“And so when it comes to the new day [i.e. tomorrow], then I will come and ask further”, he said.’

Any material in the extracausal, topic-like Left Position does not count as first position in the relevant sense. *Kaø* can appear immediately between left-extraposited topic and verb only as a surface outcome of the subject having been omitted (cf. (465b)), but cannot appear before the subject, as illustrated in example (465c):

- (465) a. *paø-dèk5 khòj5 kaø kin3*
 CT.FISH-stuff.in 1SG.P T.LNK eat
 ‘Jugged fish, I do eat.’
- b. *paø-dèk5 Ø kaø kin3*
 CT.FISH-stuff.in T.LNK eat
 ‘Jugged fish, (I) do eat.’
- c. **paø-dèk5 kaø khòj5 kin3*
 CT.FISH-stuff.in T.LNK 1SG.P eat
 (Jugged fish, I eat.)

To illustrate the meaning of *kaø*, we begin with a minimal pair:

- (466) *khòj5 kin3 siin4*
 1SG.P eat meat
 ‘I eat meat.’
- (467) *khòj5 kaø kin3 siin4*
 1SG.P T.LNK eat meat
 ‘I too eat meat.’

While (466) is a flat statement, (467) invokes something prior, and makes a link to it. The following makes this explicit, adding a clause prior to that already shown in (467):

- (468) *qaaj4 khòj5 kin3 siin4, khòj5 kaø kin3 siin4*
 eBr 1SG.P eat meat 1SG.P T.LNK eat meat
 ‘My brother eats meat; I too eat meat.’

The prior proposition functions as a topic for the *kaø*-marked one. So, in (468), the initial proposition ‘my brother eats meat’ functions as background against which the foregrounded assertion ‘I eat meat’ has relevance. In this case, the meaning which results is translated as ‘too’.

The general function of *kaø* is to link an assertion back to something which serves as a topic. The proposition marked by *kaø* is foregrounded as an assertion whose relevance is computed with reference to the now backgrounded prior proposition. When that prior proposition is explicitly available in the context, as for example in (468), *kaø* presupposes it and retrospectively marks it as a background topic. When there is no such explicitly available prior proposition, one will nevertheless be alluded to by the presence of *kaø*, and the hearer will be thereby directed to look for it. So, upon hearing (467), above, in isolation, a listener will notice the absence of something prior.

In example (468), the *kaø*-marked second clause foregrounds a participant and links it back to a prior one, where what is at issue is a commonality of the two participants (they eat meat). Another common function of *kaø* in coordinated clause constructions concerns conditional relations in narrative sequence. *Kaø* marks the second clause, and is translatable as ‘so’ or ‘then’ (cf. (464), above):

- (469) *khan2 mùng2 paj3, kuu3 kaø paj3*
 if 2SG.B go 1SG.B T.LNK go
 ‘If you go, then I go.’

The analysis of *kaø* as a topic linker fits with Haiman’s (1978) observation that conditional clauses are functionally like topics. The way *kaø* works here is to link back to the prior clause as a backgrounded proposition for the one to come. Accordingly, in the absence of explicit markers like *khan2* ‘if’ (as in (469)), the presence of *kaø* in a subsequent clause can be sufficient to identify the prior clause as a conditional:

(470) *mùng2 paj3, kuu3 kaø paj3*
 2SG.B go 1SG.B T.LNK go
 ‘(If) you go, then I go.’

(471) *haw2 caø patisêêt5 kaø bðø pên3 kaan3-somkhuan2*
 1.FA IRR refuse T.LNK NEG COP NZR-appropriate
 ‘(If) I (were to) refuse, (it) would not be appropriate.’

Example (471) is similar in meaning to the English ‘for to’ complement construction, where a full clause (followed by *kaø*) acts as sentential subject. Another translation might be: ‘For me to refuse would not be appropriate’.

We have seen that when the topic linker *kaø* is used, the clause is being foregrounded as an assertion. The reference of its primary argument (i.e., the subject) must be part of the assertion made at the sentence level. Accordingly, the subject of a *kaø*-marked predicate cannot be interpreted as an interrogative pronoun. As an illustration, consider the indefinite pronoun *phaj3* (cf. Chapter 5, section 5.2), which may mean ‘who?’ (in a content question), or ‘whoever/anyone’ (in a declarative sentence). The following example, without *kaø*, is ambiguous:

(472) *phaj3 kin3 siin4*
 INDEF.HUM eat meat
 i. ‘Who eats meat?’
 ii. ‘Anyone/everyone eats meat.’

Insertion of *kaø* after the subject *phaj3* forces the declarative ‘anyone’ reading (472ii) and disallows the interrogative reading ‘who?’:

(473) *phaj3 kaø kin3 siin4*
 INDEF.HUM T.LNK eat meat
 ‘Anyone/everyone eats meat.’
 (NOT: ‘Who eats meat?’)

Since *kaø* can only appear in second position of a MAIN clause at the sentence level, it cannot appear in a clause which has been relativized and which functions as a modifier within a noun phrase (square brackets mark the subordinate clause):

- (474) *khòj5 bə̌ mak1 [phaj3 kin3 siin4]*
 1SG.P NEG like INDEF.HUM eat meat
 ‘I don’t like anyone who eats meat.’
- (475) **khòj5 bə̌ mak1 [phaj3 kǎ kin3 siin4]*
 1SG.P NEG like INDEF.HUM T.LNK eat meat
 (I don’t like anyone who also eats meat.)

The predication in the relative clause in example (474)—‘eat meat’—does not make an assertion on the sentence level. What is being asserted in this sentence is being asserted by the negated main verb *bə̌ mak1* [NEG like] ‘don’t like’. Accordingly, just before this verb (including its left aspectual-modal marking) is the only place where *kǎ* can be inserted. This is illustrated in (476):

- (476) *khòj5 kǎ bə̌ mak1 [phaj3 kin3 siin4]*
 1SG.P T.LNK NEG like INDEF.HUM eat meat
 ‘I too don’t like anyone who eats meat.’

Similarly, *kǎ* cannot occur inside a tight control complement clause (cf. Chapter 19), as in the following example showing the predicate ‘eat’ embedded under a main complement-taking predicate *hèn3* ‘see’:

- (477) *khòj5 hèn3 [phen1 kin3 siin4]*
 1SG.P see 3.P eat meat
 ‘I saw him eat meat.’
- (478) **khòj5 hèn3 [phen1 kǎ kin3 siin4]*
 1SG.P see 3.P T.LNK eat meat
 (I saw him also eat meat.)

Finally, note that *kǎ* is a common locus for hesitation or pausing (after subject and before predicate), in which case it may be phonetically extended (i.e., the vowel lengthened), as a kind of filled pause. It may also be pronounced as *kòl*, although this is less common. It is always written in Lao as if it were pronounced *kòl*.

For further discussion of *kǎ*, see Chapter 14, section 14.5.

phatø – contrast linker (CONTR)

The marker *phatø* has the same syntactic properties as *kaø*, but is significantly less common in usage, and is different in meaning to *kaø*. Like *kaø*, *phatø* is associated with sentence-level focus, presuming some kind of link to a preceding, topical structure. Unlike *kaø*, *phatø* signals that the main assertion to come is a shift in the direction of discourse, often where the main assertion is counter to expectation in some way. Second-position *phatø* is often translatable using ‘but then’ or ‘for X’s part’. In the following example, *phatø* is translatable as ‘but’:

- (479) *haw2 ngen2-dùan3 sòdng3-phan2-haa5 phatø lin5 kin3*
 1.FA money-month two-thousand-five CONTR play eat
lèèw4 dêê4, tòn3 nan4
 PRF FAC.FILLIN time DEM.NONPROX
 ‘(As for) me, the salary was 2500, but (I used to) spent it all, you see, (at) that time.’

In another example, the notion of contrast in the meaning of *phatø* conveys the idea that the marked predicate is an unexpected surprise. The speaker is relating how he found a real bargain at the market in the form of a large turkey being sold at a good price. He spotted the turkey outside the market as he was leaving. At that moment, he was not expecting to buy anything more:

- (480) *lang3 caak5 khòd5 qòd5 maa2 thaang2 nòd4 nòq1,*
 back from 1SG.P exit come direction outside QPLR.AGREE
khòd5 phatø maø hèn3 kaj1-nguang1 naø
 1SG.P CONTR DIR.ALL see chicken-turkey TPC.PERIPH
 ‘After I came outside (of the market), right? I came unexpectedly upon this turkey.’

In a final example, a King offers his kingdom to anyone who can recapture his kidnapped younger sister and bring her back to him. While the kingdom should rightfully pass to the eldest prince, a group of six young men are interested in beating him to it by retrieving the king’s sister first and winning the kingdom as a reward. The sense of contrast here is marked by *phatø*:

- (481) *thaaw4 thang2 hok2 phatø jaak5 daj4 nòq1*
 young.man all six CONTR want acquire QPLR.AGREE
 ‘The six young men, for their part, wanted to obtain (the kingdom), right?’

In coordinated clause constructions, *phatø* has the same forward-linking discourse function as *kaø* (cf. (469), above), but rather than conveying the notion ‘too, and, as well’, *phatø* means ‘on the contrary, but’. To illustrate, it is useful to compare *kaø* and *phatø* directly. In the following multi-clause constructions, *kaø* is appropriate where the assertion in the second clause conforms with the first (while subject arguments alter), and *phatø* is appropriate where the assertion in the second clause contrasts with that of the first in some way:

- (482) a. *khan2 mùng2 paj3 kuu3 kaø paj3*
 if 2SG.B go 1SG.B T.LNK go
 ‘If you go, then I go.’
 b. *khan2 mùng2 paj3 kuu3 phatø juu1*
 if 2SG.B go 1SG.B CONTR remain
 ‘If you go, I, for my part, will stay.’
- (483) a. *qaaj4 khòj5 kin3 cêê3, khòj3 kaø kin3 cêê3*
 eBr 1SG.P eat vegetarian 1SG.P T.LNK eat vegetarian
 ‘My brother eats vegetarian; I too eat vegetarian.’
 b. *qaaj4 khòj5 kin3 cêê3, khòj3 phatø kin3 siin4*
 eBr 1SG.P eat vegetarian 1SG.P CONTR eat meat
 ‘My brother eats vegetarian; I, on the other hand, eat meat.’

laø, leejø, lootø as second position markers

A few other markers may occasionally appear in second position. These include *laø*, a reduced form of the perfect marker, and a clausal connector meaning ‘and, and then’ (484); *leej2/leejø*, a postverbal aspectual-modal meaning ‘without ado’ (485); and *loot4/lootø*, a marker of similar meaning and function to *leej2* (486; see above sections):

- (484) *hua3-naa5 sathaa3ban3 laø maa2 lin5 nam2 phen1 lùajø-lùaj4*
 chief institute PRF come play with 3.P REG
 ‘And the chief of the institute comes to see him regularly.’

- (485) *phen1 leejø maa2 baan4*
 3.P NO.ADO come home
 ‘And then he came (straight) home.’
- (486) *lot1 khan2 nan4 lootø tat2 naa5 haw2*
 vehicle CLF.VEHICLE DEM.NONPROX NO.HES cut front 1.FA
 ‘That vehicle went and cut us off.’

Of these three, only *leej2/leejø* may appear in combination with *kaø* as a kind of compound second-position marker:

- (487) *qaaj4 khòj5 kaø-leej2 bðø dajø paj3 sam4*
 eBr 1SG.P T.LNK-NO.ADO NEG ACHV go FAC.SURPR
 ‘And so my brother just didn’t go after all.’

9.1.3 Pre-negation aspectual-modal markers

haa3-kòð1 – recent past (PST.RCNT)

There are several preverbal markers which convey the idea that something has just happened. These include *haa3-kòð1*, *haa3-siø*, *pheng1*, and *pheng1-siø*. I am not aware of any significant syntactic or semantic distinction between them. The differences may be sociolinguistic or dialectal. The most common of these (the only one found in my texts) is *haa3-kòð1*.¹ The following examples are typical:

- (488) *dêk2-nòj4 hanø, khaw3 pajø nòk2 naa2, haa3-kòð1*
 child-small TPC.DIST 3PL.B DIR.ABL sleep paddy PST.RCNT
maa2
 come
 ‘The kids, they slept at the paddy, (they) just came (here).’
- (489) *man2 haa3-kòð1 sùj4 nòq1*
 3.B PST.RCNT buy QPLR.AGREE
 ‘He just bought (one), right?’

¹On *haa3-siø* and *pheng1-siø*, it is strange that these past-oriented markers incorporate the future-oriented irrealis marker *siø*.

In another example, a speaker is talking about her husband's recovery from an accident. He was unable to walk for some time, and has just been asked if he can now walk again. His wife says that it has been two or three days, conveying the idea of recency by using *haa3-kòò1*:

- (490) *haa3-kòò1 ñaang1 daj4 sòòng3 mùù4, saam3 mùù4 nii4*
 PST.RCNT walk CAN two day three day DEM
lèq1
 FAC.PRF
 '(He is) just now able to walk since two days (ago), three days today.'

In another example, a hotel keeper is describing the drinking habits of one of her guests. She says, 'He was extremely drunk and slept for two days without waking up at all.' She then says that he had woken up just the day before, marking the lateness of the past narrated event in terms of its recency to the speech event, with *haa3-kòò1*:

- (491) *haa3-kòò1 tùùn1 mùù4-vaan1-nii4*
 PST.RCNT wake yesterday
 '(He) just woke up yesterday.'

Another way to express recency of a past event is to use the syntactically independent adverbial phrase *vaang1 kii4 niø* 'this very minute', as in the following example:

- (492) *man2 mùà2 baan4 vaang1-kii4-niø*
 3.B return home this.very.minute
 'He went home this very minute (i.e., just a second ago).'

The semantics of this marker appear to be concerned solely with the marking of tense. However, we are not able to say that there is systematic marking of tense in the language, since there is no tense SYSTEM of which this marker forms a part. Its semantics are narrow, and do not contrast with more general marking of tense such as 'future' or 'past'.

kùap5 – 'almost' (ALMOST)

The pre-negation marker *kùap5* has no verbal usage or verb-like properties. It means 'almost', conveying the idea that some transition of states of

affairs encoded in the predicate nearly takes place, but doesn't (or doesn't yet). In an example, a speaker is describing a near-miss she had on her bicycle as she cycled to work:

- (493) *khòòj5 kùap5 keet5 qupatihêêt5 mùù4 nan4*
 1SG.P ALMOST happen accident day DEM.NONPROX
 'I almost had an accident that day.'

She goes on to say that she was almost too afraid to cycle home again in the afternoon:

- (494) *mùù4-lèng2 maa2, khòòj5 kùap5 mùà2 bòø daj4, khòòj5*
 day-evening come 1SG.P ALMOST return NEG CAN 1SG.P
jaan4 hèèng2
 afraid strong
 'The evening came (and) I almost couldn't return, I was so scared.'

The next example shows *kùap5* 'almost' appearing together with the irrealis marker *siø*:

- (495) *khòòj5 qòòk5 kaan3 kòòn1 maa2 hanø laø man2 kùap5*
 1SG.P exit work before come TPC.DIST PRF 3.B ALMOST
siø khaw5 qanø haa5 dùan3 lèq1
 IRR enter HES five month FAC.PRF
 'I had left my earlier job before coming (here), almost five months before (that).'

Occasionally, *kùap5* occurs before the subject, as in the following example, or in (497), a re-phrasing of (493):

- (496) *kùap5 khòòj5 lom4*
 ALMOST 1SG.P fall.over
 'I almost fell over.'
- (497) *kùap5 khòòj5 keet5 qupatihêêt5 mùù4 nan4*
 ALMOST 1SG.P happen accident day DEM.NONPROX
 'I almost had an accident that day.'

Since *kùap5* picks out a single transition in state of affairs, its use with verbs whose base aspectual structure has more than one transition can be ambiguous (cf. Dowty 1979:58 and *passim*). For example, the verb

khaa5 ‘kill’ contains reference to an activity (an agent does something to an animate patient), which itself has an onset, and a resultant state change (an animate patient becomes dead). The use of *kùap5* may pick out either the transition into the activity phase (498i), or the transition into the resultant state (498ii):

(498) *khòj5 kùap5 khaa5 man2*
1SG.P ALMOST kill 3.B

i. ‘I almost killed it (i.e., I almost did something to it which would have killed it.)

ii. ‘I almost killed it (i.e., I did something to it, because of which it almost died.)

ñang2 – ‘still/yet’ (STILL)

As a main verb, *ñang2* means ‘to be remaining’. Here is an example from a story in which a boy has defended himself against an attack by a tiger, using a pot of boiling water. The tiger is lying motionless. The speaker uses *ñang2* to mean ‘alive’:

(499) *cak2 vaa1 man2 siø taaj3 lùù3 siø ñang2*
don’t.know COMP 3.B IRR die or IRR remain
‘Who knows whether it was dead or (still) alive.’

Here are two more examples of *ñang2* as a verb meaning ‘to remain’ or ‘to be left (over)’:

(500) *khaw5 ñang2 bòd3*
rice remain QPLR

‘Is there any rice left over?’

(501) *luuk4-nòng4 man2 kaø taaj3 met2, ñang2 tèè1 hua3-naa5*
C-yZ 3.B T.LNK die all remain only head-front
man2
3.B

‘His underlings all died. Only his chief was left.’

Note also that the notion of ‘remaining’ encoded by *ñang2* can cover simple existence. The word *ñang2* can be used in a literary idiom for story openings, as in ‘Once upon a time’:

- (502) *ñang2 mii2 sòdng3 mèè1 luuk4 mùa2 hêt1 haj1*
 remain there.is two mother child return make swidden
 ‘There was once a mother and child pair (who) went to work on their swiddens.’

As a postverbal aspectual-modal, *ñang2* means ‘still’ or ‘(not) yet’. In an example, a speaker is asking an ex-colleague for news about her old boss, who she hasn’t seen for a long time. She wants to know if the boss’s old sweetheart still comes to visit:

- (503) *fèèn2 laaw2 kaø ñang2 maa2 juu1 vaa3*
 sweetheart 3SG.FA T.LNK STILL come CONT QPLR.INFER
 ‘So does her sweetheart still come?’

The word *ñang2* is commonly used as a stand-alone response meaning ‘not yet’ to a question about whether something has already occurred:

- (504) Q *khaw5 suk2 lèèw4 vaa3*
 rice cooked PRF QPLR.INFER
 ‘Is the rice cooked already?’
 A *ñang2*
 STILL (not cooked)
 ‘Not yet.’

In this function, meaning ‘not yet’, *ñang2* is used in isolation, and does not take negation. However, when used in combination with a verb phrase, *ñang2* must be combined with explicit negation on the verb in order to convey the idea ‘not yet’:

- (505) *ñang2 bðø suk2*
 STILL NEG cooked
 ‘(It’s) still not cooked.’ (i.e., ‘It’s not cooked yet.’)

Typically, *ñang2* makes a temporal distinction, as illustrated in (503) and (504). Accompanying this temporal distinction is an idea that the truth of the predicate is in some sense counter to expectation. For example, in (504), it is expected that the rice will at some point become cooked, but this is not yet the case. A number of examples pick out this counter-to-expectation component of *ñang2*, yet without predicating any temporal distinction. For example, a man is at home in his village, and

sees others arriving from a trip to another village, bringing a sack of fresh bamboo shoots with them. The man wants to say that bamboo shoots are abundant in their own village, ‘yet’ they ‘still’ bring shoots in from elsewhere:

- (506) *juu1 baan4 nòð1-maj4 laø ñang2 qaw3 nòð1-maj4*
 be.at village bamboo.shoot PRF STILL take bamboo.shoot
maø kin3
 DIR.ALL eat
 ‘(They) live at a bamboo shoot village, and still bring bamboo shoots (from elsewhere) to eat!’

In another example, a woman is discussing problems of access in and out of her village, due to the bad state of roads from surrounding villages. She lists a number of routes which are not currently functional, adding that ‘even’ the road through the village of Oudom Phon—a relatively large village nearby, whose access route is not normally obstructed—is inaccessible. This sense of ‘even’ is conveyed by *ñang2*:

- (507) *qudom3-phon3 kaø ñang2 paj3 bòø daj4*
 Q-P T.LNK STILL go NEG CAN
 ‘Oudom Phon, (we) couldn’t even go to.’

kamlang2 – progressive (PROG)

As a noun, *kamlang2* refers to ‘strength’ or ‘power’.² As a preverbal operator, *kamlang2* means ‘to be in the process of (V)-ing’. It does not occur often in texts, and is limited to situations in which the ongoing or extended nature of the action is critical to the current framing of discourse. Typically, this is when a speaker wants to portray one event as extended over time in order to use it as a temporal frame within which a second event is contained. For example, while a group of women are bathing and chatting, one of them is kidnapped by an ogre. The ongoing, framing event of chatting is marked by *kamlang2*:

²*Kamlang2* is a borrowing from Khmer. In Khmer it is a derivation from *klang* ‘to be forceful, strong’ with a nominalizing infix *-am-*.

- (508) *kamlang2 son3-siaw3 kan3 juu1 ... laø ñak1 pap2 maø*
 PROG chat COLL CONT PRF ogre IDEO DIR.ALL
hòðp5 qaw3 naang2 sumun2thaa2 paj3 lèèw4
 carry.in.arms take miss S go PRF
 ‘(While they) were chatting ... the ogre came and suddenly took Sumunthaa away.’

In another example, while two men are wrestling, their swords fall from their hands. The ongoing, framing event of wrestling is marked by *kamlang2*:

- (509) *vêlaa2 thii1 kamlang2 pam4 kan3 juu1 han5 laø*
 time REL PROG wrestle COLL be.at DEM.DIST PRF
mèèn1 taang1 khon2 kaø taang1 ngaaw4 luut5 qòðk5 caak5
 COP other person T.LNK other sword slip exit from
mùù2
 hand
 ‘At the time they were wrestling there, each of their swords slipped from their hands.’

In another example, a man describes the circumstances of his detainment by authorities, and subsequent transportation to a re-education facility. He was approached by armed, uniformed men on the street, and was asked to step into a military truck. He explains that this happened as he was coming out of a cinema, marking this framing event with *kamlang2*:

- (510) *vêlaa2 nan4 laø mèèn1 haw2 kamlang2 qòðk5*
 time DEM.NONPROX PRF COP 1.FA PROG exit
maa2 caak5 hoong2 sinêê2
 come from hall cinema
 ‘At that time, I was coming out of a cinema hall.’

For the progressive, framing function illustrated in the above three examples, the predicate denotes an activity (e.g., chatting, wrestling, moving). Sometimes *kamlang2* may also be used with stative verbs or adjectives. This functions to highlight the transience or ‘currentness’ of the state. In the following example, the speaker refers to a mother cow with calf, marking the predicate *mii2* ‘have’ with *kamlang2* as a way of highlighting the passing nature of the relation of dependence:

- (511) *mii2 mètè1 ngua2 to∅ nùng1 kamlang2 mii2 luuk4*
 there.is mother cow MC.ANIM one PROG have child
nòdòj4
 small

‘There was a mother cow, who was currently with a small calf.’

A lexical alternative to *kamlang2* is *phuam2*. This word is not common, and appears to be sociolinguistically marked (perhaps more common in dialects other than that of Vientiane). It does not appear to be different in meaning to *kamlang2*. An example is from a description of building chicken coops. The speaker discusses how to calculate the size of the structure, depending on how big the chickens have grown:

- (512) *laj1 kaj1, kaj1 phuam2 ñaj1 nòq1, khan2*
 calculate chicken chicken PROG big QPLR.AGREE if
kaj1 ñaj1 laaj3 lètèw4 haw2 ka∅ khaaj3 qòdòk5 la∅
 chicken big much PRF 1.FA T.LNK sell exit PRF
dêê4

FAC.FILLIN

‘(That’s) calculating (for) chickens which are becoming big (i.e., not yet big), right? If the chickens are very big already, we will have sold them off, you see.’

In this case, the use of the progressive marker with an adjective coerces an inchoative reading of the adjective: i.e., *ñaj1* ‘big’ in the first line of (512) is interpreted to mean ‘to become big’ rather than ‘to be big’.

khùù2-si∅ – assumptive epistemic modal ‘probably, presumably’ (PROB)

The expression *khùù2-si∅* is an assumptive epistemic modal, meaning ‘probably’ or ‘presumably’. *Khùù2* is a verb meaning ‘to be like (something)’ or ‘to be the same as (something)’. When it functions as a preverbal aspectual-modal marker meaning ‘probably’, *khùù2* must always appear in combination with the irrealis marker *si∅*. In an example from a narrative, a bandit gets in a fight with a man, and the man’s wife betrays the man (her husband) by helping the bandit to kill him. She then becomes the wife of the bandit and goes with him. Later reflecting on the woman’s betrayal of her first husband in order to be with him, the bandit suspects that she will one day betray him too:

- (513) *phuø-ñing2 phuø nii4 khùù2-siø bðø mii2 caj3*
 MC.HUM-woman MC.HUM DEM PROB-IRR NEG have heart
sat2-sùù1
 honest-straight
 ‘This woman probably doesn’t have an honest heart.’

In another example, a speaker describes a Spanish hippy he knew in pre-1975 Vientiane who would contact his parents in Spain whenever he ran out of money. In this way, the Spaniard was able to survive in Vientiane without having a paying job. The speaker surmises:

- (514) *khùù2-siø mèn1 phòð1-mèè1 man2 laø khon2 mii2 ngen2*
 PROB-IRR BE.SO mother-father 3.B PRF person have money
dèè1
 a.little
 ‘Its probably the case that his parents (were) people with a bit of money.’

In another example, a speaker describes the experience of having been detained before being sent to a re-education camp. The authorities gave no indication that anything bad was going to happen. He says, ‘They spoke to us very nicely, there was no problem, as if they weren’t going to punish us in any way’. He surmised at the time—mistakenly—that nothing was wrong, marking the likelihood of this with *khùù2-siø*:

- (515) *haw2 kaø sùà1 vaa1 man2 khùù2-siø bðø mii2*
 1.FA T.LNK believe COMP 3.B PROB-IRR NEG there.is
ñang3 dòðk5, qee5 bðø huu4 vaa1 khaw3 siø
 INDEF.INAN FAC.RESIST INTJ NEG know COMP 3PL.B IRR
qaw3 pajø dat2-saang5
 take DIR.ABL transform-build
 ‘We believed that there probably wasn’t anything (wrong), Uh-huh, (we) didn’t know that they were going to take (us) for re-education.’

qaat5-caø – speculative epistemic modal ‘possibly, might’ (SPEC)

As a preverbal aspectual-modal marker meaning ‘possibly’ or ‘might’, *qaat5* (historically a verb meaning ‘to be capable’, ‘to have power’) must

always appear in combination with the irrealis marker *caø* (or, very occasionally, *siø*; see example (519), below). In an example from a narrative, a man suspects his new wife to be unfaithful, and considers what might happen if he is unable to bring sufficient income to her. The possibility that she could abandon him is coded by *qaat5-caø*:

- (516) *laaw2 qaat5-caø pian1 caj3 caak5 haw2*
 3SG.FA SPEC-IRR change heart from 1.FA
 ‘She might change her mind (away) from me.’

In another example, a speaker explains that the value of money was very different in former times. The possibility of getting a house for five thousand Kip (significantly below modern house prices of ten million Kip minimum) is marked by *qaat5-caø*:

- (517) *qaat5-caø daj4 hùan2 nùng1 pamaan3 haa5-phan2*
 SPEC-IRR acquire house one approximately five-thousand
kiip5
 kip
 ‘(You would) possibly get one house for around five thousand kip.’

In another example, a speaker is talking about the ubiquity of road-side police checks in the period shortly after the revolution of 1975. The speaker is not committed to the exact number, and marks his estimate of ‘two or three locations’ with *qaat5-caø*:

- (518) *lavaang1 viang2can3 phoon2hoong2 niø qaat5-caø mii2*
 between V P TPC SPEC-IRR have
juu1 sòðng3 bòðn1 lùù3 saam3 bòðn1
 FAC.WEAK two place or three place
 ‘Between Vientiane and Phonehong there might have been two or three locations.’

In a final example, a speaker is talking about how high the roof on a chicken coop needs to be. He says that if the roof is made of corrugated iron, it can be installed higher, so that the interior of the coop doesn’t get too hot. The idea that one ‘might’ (i.e., ‘might want to’ or ‘would be well advised to’) make a higher roof is conveyed by marking with *qaat5-siø*:

- (519) *khan2 mung2 duaj4 sang3kasii3 niø qaat5-siø hêt1 suung3*
 if to.roof with zinc TPC SPEC-IRR do high
dèè1 caak5 phùùn4
 a.little from ground
 ‘If (you) roof (it) with corrugated iron, (you) might make it a bit high from the ground.’

9.1.4 Irrealis markers

The irrealis markers *siø* and *caø* are equivalent in meaning, and seem to contrast only in stylistic and sociolinguistic terms.³ The two are generally interchangeable, except in certain fixed combinations. For example, as shown in the previous sub-section, when *khùù2* functions as a prenegation aspectual-modal marker meaning ‘probably’ it must appear with *siø* (as *khùù2-siø*) and not *caø* (*??khùù2-caø*; see section 9.1.3, above). By contrast, *qaat5* ‘might’ and *khuan2* ‘should’ must appear with *caø* (as *khuan2-caø* and *qaat5-caø*), not *siø* (*??khuan2-siø*, *??qaat5-siø*). It appears that *siø* is more frequent in general.

A common function of the irrealis markers is to convey the idea that the state of affairs referred to by the predicate will be the case at a time after the speech event. They often function effectively as future tense markers. For example, a hotel manager is talking about the activities of one of her guests. After a long night of drinking, the guest sleeps in until four in the afternoon. He gets up, and then upon leaving the hotel, he tells her his plans, marking the projected future events with *siø*:

- (520) *khòj5 siø pajø kin3 bia3 qiik5 kòn1 dee4*
 1SG.P IRR DIR.ABL eat beer more before FAC.ONRCD
 ‘I’m going to go and drink some more beer, y’hear.’

In another example, a man is speaking of the lean years just after the revolution of 1975, when everybody was required to work on their market gardens just to get food to eat. The *siø*-marked predicate is interpreted as irrealis, in the sense that the speaker does not commit to the truth of the

³The nature of this contrast is not understood, but it is worth noting that neighboring Thai has only *caø*. *Caø* appears to be historically related to a verb *cak2* ‘to know’. *Siø* may be related to a marker with similar meaning in many Mon-Khmer languages of the area — e.g., Kariì *ci*.

state of affairs referred to by the marked predicate (i.e., *kin3* ‘eat’), but to its possible or likely truth after a reference time. In this example, the relevant reference time is not the time of the speech event, but is a time in the past. And as this example shows, the truth of the *siø*-marked predicate is not necessarily portrayed as certain. Here, it is conditional, as coded in the preceding clause:

- (521) *thaa5 vaa1 haw2 niø – qee5 – bðø hêt1 viak4 niø, haw2 siø*
 if COMP 1.FA TPC INTJ NEG do work TPC 1.FA IRR
bðø dajø kin3 khaw5 thèø-thèè4 dêj2
 NEG ACHV eat rice RDP.A-true FAC.NEWS
 ‘If we – uh-huh – didn’t work, we really wouldn’t get to eat, you know.’

In another example, a man who was detained before being taken to re-education is saying that as he waited before being taken away he had no idea what was going to happen. At the time, he figured nothing serious would take place. He didn’t know what the subsequent state of affairs (marked here by *siø*) was going to be:

- (522) *bðø huu4 vaa1 khaw3 siø qaw3 pajø dat2-saang5*
 NEG know COMP 3PL.B IRR take DIR.ABL transform-build
 ‘(We) didn’t know they were going to take (us) for re-education.’

In another example, a hotel manager is talking about a man who had been a guest in her hotel for some months, and who was planning to flee without paying. The contents of his plan, to transpire at a later time than the narrated event of ‘planning’, is marked with *siø*:

- (523) *vaang2 phèèn3 siø nii3 leej2, tèè1 vaa1 khòðj5 cap2 daj4*
 lay plan IRR flee NO.ADO but COMP 1SG.P catch CAN
 ‘(He) laid a plan to flee without ado, but I was able to catch (him).’

In a final example, *siø* marks a state of affairs which is being entertained as a possible event, embedded under a conditional. This arises at the opening of a description of how to cook a Lao dish called *larb*:

- (524) *khan2 haw2 siø hêt1 laap4 nòq1, qaw3 siin4- siin4*
 if 1.FA IRR make larb QPLR.AGREE take meat meat
ngua2 bðð3 lùù3 vaa1 siin4 khuaj2 kaø daj4
 cow QPLR or COMP meat buffalo T.LNK CAN
 ‘If we’re going to make larb, right?, take meat- beef for instance,
 or buffalo is okay.’

There are several other modal-aspectual operators which tend to occur with *siø* or its cousin *caø*: e.g., *khùù2-siø*, *qaat5-caø* (see above).

9.1.5 Negation marker

The marker of negation is *bðð1* (if occurring in isolation) or *bðø* (de-stressed and phonologically dependent). This marker has a slot of its own, as outlined in Figure 9.1, above. Many examples throughout this book illustrate the negative marker in situ. There is no special syntax of negation, the only apparent variation concerning optional ordering of negation with reference to a small number of other aspectual-modal markers (e.g., *naa5-caø* counterfactual weak obligative modal ‘should’; see section 9.1.6, below).

Note that the marker *bðð1* may be a stand-alone word, as a negative answer to a polar question, illustrated in Aii:

- (525) Q *mùng2 hên3 khaw3 bðð3*
 2SG.B see 3PL.B QPLR
 ‘Did you see them?’
 Ai *bðø hên3*
 NEG see
 ‘(I) didn’t see (them).’
 Aii *bðð1*
 NEG
 ‘No.’

Note also that there is a dedicated negative imperative marker *jaa1* ‘don’t’ (also a verb ‘to abandon something, to give something up’) which does not co-occur with other aspectual-modals:

- (526) *qoo4 caw4 jaa1 vaw4 cang1 san4*
 INTJ 2SG.P NEG.IMP speak like thus
 ‘Oh, don’t you speak like that!’

The negative imperative marker *jaa1* may also appear as a stand-alone utterance, meaning ‘Desist!’.

9.1.6 Post-negation aspectual-modal markers

kheej2 – experiential (perfect) ‘have ever’ (EXP)

The post-negation marker *kheej2* means to ‘be accustomed to’ doing something or to ‘have ever’ done something (or for something to ‘have ever’ been the case). For example, a speaker claims her authority to supply recipes, stating her experience of studying cooking using *kheej2*:

- (527) *khòj5 kaø kheej2 pajø hian2 pung3-tèng1*
 1SG.P T.LNK EXP DIR.ALL study fix-prepare
 ‘I have (once) studied cooking.’

In another example, the same speaker is talking about dealing with foreign guests who have never previously eaten MSG. This inexperience is marked with *kheej2*, negated:

- (528) *qanø-nan4 kaø vaa1 bəø sèèp4 phòq1*
 MC.INAN-DEM.NONPROX T.LNK say NEG delicious because
vaa1 phen1 bəø kheej2 kin3
 COMP 3SG.P NEG EXP eat
 ‘That stuff (they) say is not delicious, because they haven’t ever eaten (it).’

In another example, a speaker is talking about the bridge which spans the broad mouth of the Kading River in central Laos. He explains that there was no other bridge prior to the present one, that is there had never been a bridge there before. This is marked with *kheej2*, negated:

- (529) *khua3 khaam5 mèø-nam4 paak5 kading4 tèè1 kòdn1 bðø*
 bridge cross CT.Mo-water mouth K from before NEG
kheej2 mii2 dêê4
 EXP have FAC.FILLIN
 ‘A bridge crossing the river at the mouth of the Kading, before,
 there had never been (one), you see.’

In a final example, a speaker is describing the hippy travelers that he associated with in Vientiane in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He says, ‘These people, they wore straggly clothes, they had long hair and shoulder-bags, these hippies.’ Then he asks if his addressee had ever seen hippies :

- (530) *caw4 kheej2 hèn3 bðð3, phuak4 hip2pii4 niø*
 2SG.P EXP see QPLR group hippy TPC
 ‘Have you ever seen (them), these hippies?’

bðø than2 – ‘not yet’ (ON.TIME)

A common way to express the idea of ‘still’ or ‘(not) yet’ is to use the pre-negation aspectual-modal marker *ñang2*, described above. Another way, which may or may not be combined with *ñang2*, is to use *than2* as a post-negation aspectual-modal marker. *Than2* is a verb meaning ‘to be on time’, or ‘to keep up with’:

- (531) *caw4 siø than2 haa5 moong2 bðð3*
 2SG.P IRR ON.TIME five o’clock QPLR
 ‘Are you going to be on time (for) five o’clock?’
- (532) *khaw3 bðø than2 mùng2*
 3PL.B NEG ON.TIME 2SG.B
 ‘They didn’t/couldn’t keep up with you.’

As an aspectual-modal marker, *than2* only occurs negated, with the meaning ‘not yet’. To illustrate this, first consider an unmarked case. If I want to say that the rice is not cooked, I use direct negation on the verb (in this case, *suk2* ‘cooked’):

- (533) *khaw5 bðø suk2*
 rice NEG cooked
 ‘(The) rice (is) not cooked.’

To express the notion ‘not YET’ (i.e., where it is expected that it will be cooked at some time, perhaps soon), I can add *than2* after the negation and before the verb:

- (534) *khaw5 bə̀ə than2 suk2*
 rice NEG ON.TIME cooked
 ‘The rice is not cooked yet.’

In an example, a calf is talking to its mother, justifying why it should sacrifice itself to a predatory tiger, rather than allowing the mother to be eaten. The calf explains that it is not yet self-sufficient, and so would die anyway if the mother were eaten:

- (535) *luuk4 kaə n̄ang2 kin3 n̄ang3 bə̀ə than2 daj4,*
 child T.LNK STILL eat INDEF.INAN NEG ON.TIME CAN
khè̀ew5 bə̀ə than2 mi2
 tooth NEG ON.TIME have
 ‘I (child) can’t yet eat anything, teeth (I) don’t yet have.’

In another example, a tiger is coming up through the floor of a raised field hut and threatening to attack a child who is alone in the hut. The child is looking for something to defend itself with, but cannot yet (marked by *bə̀ə than2*) find a machete or similar weapon:

- (536) *haa3 phaə5 n̄ang3 kaə bə̀ə than2 hèn3*
 seek machete INDEF.INAN T.LNK NEG ON.TIME see
 ‘(The child) looked for some (kind of) machete, (but) couldn’t yet see (one).’

The use of post-negation *than2* for ‘not yet’ can be further combined with the pre-negation marker of comparable meaning, *n̄ang2* ‘still’ (cf. example (505), above):

- (537) *khaw5 n̄ang2 bə̀ə than2 suk2*
 rice STILL NEG ON.TIME cooked
 ‘The rice is still not cooked yet.’

In another example (earlier in the same text as (536), above), mother and child come back from the rice fields to their field hut, unaware that a tiger is hiding underneath the floor of the hut. They are soon to find out about the tiger’s presence, but—as marked by *bə̀ə than2* ‘not yet’—they are not yet aware of it:

- (538) *sòdng3 mèè1 luuk4 kaø ñang2 bòø than2 huu4*
 two mother child T.LNK STILL NEG ON.TIME know
 ‘The pair of mother and child didn’t yet know.’

Note a further marker which may be used in expressions meaning ‘not yet’. The noun *thùa1* is the general word for ‘occasion, time’:

- (539) *khòj5 hên3 man2 sòdng3 thùa1 lèw4*
 1SG.P see 3.B two occasion PRF
 ‘I saw him two times already.’

This word is also employed in expressing the idea ‘not yet’. In this function, *thùa1* is part of the postverbal-aspectual modal complex. It almost always occurs in combination with other preverbal means for expressing this same meaning. For example, we may add *thùa1* to example (537), above, showing it in combination with both *ñang2* and *bòø than2*:

- (540) *khaw5 ñang2 bòø than2 suk2 thùa1*
 rice STILL NEG ON.TIME cooked yet
 ‘The rice is still not cooked yet.’

In another example, *thùa1* occurs with *ñang2*. This is a description of a calf which was not yet independent of its mother’s support:

- (541) *ñang2 pheng1 toø-qêêng3 bòø daj4 thùa1*
 STILL depend.on self NEG CAN yet
 ‘(It) couldn’t yet depend on itself.’

naan2 – ‘take a long time’ (TAKE.LONG)

The word *naan2* has similar meaning to the postverbal aspectual-modal *don3* (or *heng3*) ‘for a long time’, described above. As discussed, *naan2* and *don3* (or *heng3*) have different syntactic and semantic relations to the predicates they modify. If a predicate is marked with *naan2*, this means that it is taking a long time for the state of affairs to come about:

- (542) *lot1-mêê2 kaø pakot2 vaa1 naan2 maa2*
 CT.VEHICLE-bus T.LNK appear COMP TAKE.LONG come
 ‘So the bus appeared to be taking a long time to arrive.’

Example (542) does not mean that the bus was arriving for a long time, but that a long time was passing before the event of its arriving occurred. See examples (409) and (410) in section 9.1.1, above for direct comparison with *don3* (or *heng3*) ‘for a long time’.

mak1 – ‘tend to’ (TEND)

As a main verb, *mak1* means ‘to like (something)’ or ‘to like (doing something)’:

- (543) *khòj5 mak1 nang3 thaj2*
 1SG.P like movie Thai
 ‘I like Thai movies.’
- (544) *khòj5 mak1 beng1 nang3 thaj2*
 1SG.P like watch movie Thai
 ‘I like watching Thai movies.’

As a post-negation aspectual-modal marker, *mak1* means ‘tend to’ happen or be the case, or ‘be generally likely to’ happen or be the case. It often co-occurs with the irrealis marker *caø* (but never with *siø*), as a unit *mak1-caø*. In an example, a man is talking about local people’s beliefs regarding the supernatural. He explains that if someone breaks a taboo, they are likely to fall ill. The notion of likelihood is marked with *mak1*:

- (545) *man2 mak1 cêp2 sên5 cêp2 qên3, man2 mak1 pên3 laaj3*
 3.B TEND hurt nerve hurt tendon 3.B TEND COP many
nèw2
 way
 ‘They are likely to suffer from physical complaints, they are likely to suffer from many things.’

In another example, the speaker describes the likely circumstances under which people pray to spirits:

- (546) *thaa5-haak5 vaa1 hêt1 ñang3 mii2 kaan3 ñung5-ñaak4*
 if COMP do INDEF.INAN have NZR complicated
viak4-ngaán2 daj3 ñung5-ñaak4 sap2-son3 mak1-caø
 work INDEF complicated messy TEND-IRR
pajø vaj5 hanø
 DIR.ABL pray.to TPC.DIST
 ‘If (one) has done something which has complications, some work
 which is complicated or problematic, (one) tends (then) to go and
 pray to (those spirits).’

In another example, the same speaker is describing what local people think about burial forests and cemeteries:

- (547) *juu1 bòðn1 nan4 hanø mak1-caø thùù3 vaa1*
 be.at place DEM.NONPROX TPC.DIST TEND-IRR believe COMP
man2 mii2- mii2- mii2 phii3
 3.B there.is there.is there.is spirit
 ‘In those places, (people) tend to believe that there are- there are-
 there are spirits.’

In each of the above examples, the predicate marked with *mak1* is being framed as something that tends to be the case or is generally likely to be the case. As noted above (see examples (543-544)), as a main verb, *mak1* means ‘to like (doing) something’. With the meaning ‘tend to, be likely to’, *mak1* clearly does not convey this idea of positive appraisal. It is illustrated clearly in example (545), above: the speaker does not want to convey the idea that people LIKE TO get ill. But many other examples occur in bridging contexts (Evans 1990, 2003, Enfield 2003c:28), that is, contexts in which both the ‘tend to’ and ‘like to’ readings are applicable. Here is a particularly clear example from a man’s description of one of his hippy friends from early 1970s Vientiane:

- (548) *mòð3 nan4 laø phom3 bak2 ñaaw2 mak1*
 bloke DEM.NONPROX PRF hair very long like/TEND
suup5 kan3saa2 qanø- qanaa1- qin3dia3 juu1 lii2doo3
 smoke ganja HES HES India be.at L
 ‘That bloke, (his) hair was really long, (he) liked to smoke um-
 uh Indian ganja at the Lido.’

tòòng4 – modal of necessity, mainly obligative (OBLIG)

As a main verb, *tòòng4* means ‘to touch, to come into contact with’. It is not specific as to whether the contact is accidental or intentional:

- (549) *man2 tòòng4 khèèn3 khòj5*
 3.B contact arm 1SG.P
 ‘She touched/brushed against my arm.’

As a post-negation aspectual-modal marker, *tòòng4* expresses necessity, either deontic (dynamic obligative) or, occasionally, epistemic (deductive). In an example of *tòòng4* in its aspectual-modal function, a market lady gives instructions as to how to cook a certain type of sausage, explaining that it must be fried:

- (550) *caw4 tòòng4 saj1 namø-man2 muu3*
 2SG.P OBLIG put CT.LIQUID-oil pig
 ‘You must use pork oil.’

In another example, *tòòng4* conveys the idea not of physical or causal necessity but of the speaker’s certainty that the predicate will be true. ‘Must’ here means ‘certainly will’ rather than ‘have to’:

- (551) *thuk1-thuk1 pii3 khaw3 caø tòòng4 mii2 kaan3 vaj5 phii3*
 each-each year 3PL.B IRR OBLIG have NZR pray.to spirit
khòòng3 khaw3
 of 3PL.B
 ‘Each and every year they must (i.e., certainly will) have their praying to the spirits.’

The following example is similar, where a speaker is talking about people’s beliefs that those who die will certainly (i.e., ‘must’) become spirits:

- (552) *khon2 thii1 taaj3 paj3 laø tòòng4 pajø pên3 phii3*
 person REL die go PRF OBLIG DIR.ABL COP spirit
 ‘People who die must become spirits.’

Tòòng4 often co-occurs with the achievement marker *dajø*. For example, a hotel manager states that if guests’ belongings go missing, she is required to report it to the police:

- (553) *haw2 tònng4 dajø pajø haa3 tamluat5*
 1.FA OBLIG ACHV DIR.ABL visit police
 ‘I must go to visit the police.’

When combined with negation, the reading of *tònng4* is ‘need not’ (i.e., not necessary to) rather than ‘must not’ (i.e., necessary not to). For example, a chef gives the recipe for a Lao dish called *larb*, and says that one need not add a lot of MSG. The idea of necessity is conveyed with *tònng4*, negated:

- (554) *bðø tònng4 saj1 laaj3*
 NEG OBLIG put much
 ‘(One) need not put in a lot.’

To convey the idea ‘must not’ (i.e. necessary not to), a different construction is used. This involves the causative verb *haj5* (elsewhere meaning ‘give’; cf. Chapter 18), negated, as in this variation on example (554):

- (555) *bðø haj5 saj1 laaj3*
 NEG give put much
 ‘(One) must not put in a lot.’

In (555), it is as if the speaker is saying, ‘(I) don’t allow (you) to put a lot in’. (See Chapter 18 for further discussion of the role of *haj5* ‘give’ in causative constructions.) To make the same sentiment stronger, it is possible to add the verb *haam5* ‘forbid’ as a main verb:

- (556) *haam5 bðø haj5 saj1 laaj3*
 forbid NEG give put much
 ‘(One is) forbidden put in a lot.’

Tònng4 is occasionally used as an epistemic modal, or more specifically, as an inferential modal of necessity (cf. English *must* in *His car is gone, so he must have already left*). This epistemic modality reading typically arises in the frame *tònng4 mèn1* ‘(it) must be’, where the target clause is presented as a complement of the copula *mèn1*. For example:

- (557) *tònng4 mèn1 phen1 mùa2 baan4 lèw4*
 OBLIG BE.SO 3.P return home PRF
 ‘(It) must be that he’s gone home already.’ (E.g., because his motorcycle is gone.)

Note that (unlike most other verb-like aspectual-modal markers) the aspectual-modal and verbal meanings of *tòng4* can freely co-occur, as shown here:

- (558) *caw4 bə̀ tòng4 tòng4 man2*
 2SG.P NEG OBLIG touch 3.B
 ‘You needn’t (or shouldn’t) touch it.’

campên3 – strong obligative modal (OBLIG.STR)

As an intransitive main verb, *campên3* means ‘necessary, required, mandatory’:

- (559) *sua5 kan3 naaw3 campên3 dee4*
 shirt prevent cold OBLIG.STR FAC.ONRCD
 ‘A cold weather jacket is necessary, y’hear!’

As a preverbal aspectual-modal, *campên3* is restricted to a strong obligative function, and cannot be used for epistemic or evidential necessity:

- (560) *caw4 campên3 qaw3 sua5 kan3 naaw3 paj3*
 2SG.P OBLIG.STR take shirt prevent cold go
 ‘You must/are required to take a cold weather jacket there.’

In its preverbal aspectual-modal function, *campên3* is often combined with preverbal aspectual-modals of similar meaning. In an example, *campên3* is combined with the achievement marker *dajə̀* which sometimes has a modal meaning of obligation:

- (561) *phacaw4 kut2salaat4 kaə̀ campên3 dajə̀ song1 mia2 nii3*
 lord K T.LNK OBLIG.STR ACHV send wife flee
 ‘So, Lord Kutsalaat was required to send his wife away.’ (i.e., ‘...had no choice but to...’)

In another example, yet another marker of necessity is added: *tòng4* ‘must’. A hotel manager is describing her system for getting visas for foreign tourists to Vietnam and Cambodia. She normally relies on assistants to go back and forth from the hotel to the relevant embassy. But occasionally her assistants are not available, in which case it is necessary

that she herself go. This obligation is marked by *campên3* ‘necessary’ in combination with both the general modal of necessity *tòng4* ‘must’ and the achievement marker *dajø*:

- (562) *khòj5 campên3 tòng4 dajø paj3 qêng3*
 1SG.P OBLIG.STR OBLIG ACHV go self
 ‘I am required (or obliged) to go myself.’

It is also possible for *campên3* to occur just with *dajø*:

- (563) *khòj5 campên3 dajø paj3 qêng3*
 1SG.P OBLIG.STR ACHV go self
 ‘I am required to go myself.’

khuan2 – weak obligative modal (OBLIG.WEAK)

The notion ‘should’ is conveyed by the post-negation aspectual modal *khuan2*. This word has no independent verbal use, but does appear in a compound adjective *som3-khuan2* ‘to be appropriate’ (where *som3* is an adjective meaning ‘fitting’). The modality conveyed here is general, in that it may be used in expressing specific statements of what someone should do, or what should happen (i.e., when it is not happening)—as shown in example (564)—or in more general statements about what generally should happen or be the case, whether or not it actually does (example (565)):

- (564) *cua3 qong3 nii4 khuan2 nap1-thù3*
 novice.monk CLF.HOLY DEM OBLIG.WEAK count-hold
ñaa2-phò1
 abbot
 ‘This novice monk should respect (the) abbot.’ (implies that this novice monk is not respecting the abbot)
- (565) *cua3 khuan2 nap1-thù3 ñaa2-phò1*
 novice.monk OBLIG.WEAK count-hold abbot
 ‘Novice monks should respect abbots.’ (Compatible with the possibility that all novice monks do in fact respect abbots.)

In the following example, the speaker is stating the moral of a fable, using *khuan2* to mark the state of affairs which ‘should’ be the case, i.e., which is desired but not necessarily true:

- (566) *phuø pên3 luuk4 pên3 laan3 khuan2 mii2*
 MC.HUM COP child COP grandchild OBLIG.WEAK have
khuam2 katanñuu3-katavêê2thii2 tòð1 phòð1-mèè1
 NZR gratitude-piety toward father-mother
 ‘Those who are children and grandchildren should have gratitude
 and piety toward their parents.’

In a similar context, a speaker summarizes the moral of a tale he has just told, in which a child saves the day by staying calm in a terrifying situation:

- (567) *haw2 pajø phop1 khuam2 sathan4-jaan4-kua3 hanø*
 1.B DIR.ABL meet NZR fear TPC.DIST
naø haw2 bòø khuan2 jaan4 keen3 paj3
 TPC.PERIPH 1.B NEG OBLIG.WEAK afraid excessive go
 ‘(If) we encounter a terrifying situation, we should not be overly
 afraid.’

In a final example, a king is selecting from among all the bald men in the kingdom, looking for the one who can best represent him in an inter-kingdom bald head butting competition. Using ideophones (Chapter 12), the speaker distinguishes between different patterns of baldness, and states their properties. Men with one type of baldness are not appropriate for civil service:

- (568) *laan4 bèèp5 nùng1 kaø laan4 sameng4-keng4, bòø*
 bald manner one T.LNK bald IDEO NEG
khuan2 thùük5 laa2sakaan3
 OBLIG.WEAK strike civil.service
 ‘One type of baldness is *sameng-keng*, they shouldn’t go into of-
 ficial employment.’

naa5-caø – counterfactual weak obligative modal (OBLIG.CF)

The word *naa5*, a body part term meaning ‘face’ or a relational noun meaning ‘front’ or ‘in front of’, may be used as an aspectual-modal conveying a kind of counterfactual weak obligative modal meaning. The modality conveyed here is narrower than that of *khuan2*, above. It incorporates the meaning of *khuan2*, as just described, and adds that the thing

which should be the case is not the case. So, like *khuan2*, *naa5-caø* may be used in stating what should happen (i.e., when it is not happening), as shown in the following example (cf. example (564), above):

- (569) *cua3 qong3 nii4 naa5-caø nap1-thùù3*
 novice.monk CLF.HOLY DEM OBLIG.CF-IRR count-hold
ñaa2-phòò1
 abbot
 ‘This novice monk should respect (the) abbot(s).’ (entails that this novice monk is not respecting the abbot)

But *naa5-caø* is typically inappropriate for making more general statements about what generally should happen or be the case, since it requires that the target state of affairs does not hold (cf. example (565), above):

- (570) *cua3 naa5-caø nap1-thùù3 ñaa2-phòò1*
 novice.monk OBLIG.CF-IRR count-hold abbot
 ‘Novice monks should respect abbots.’ (Only when speaker wants to say ‘Novice monks don’t respect abbots and they should’.)

It is possible to use *naa5-caø* for a kind of speculative epistemic modality, by which the speaker asserts what they would be likely to conclude, given the available evidence:

- (571) *sii1 moong2 lèèw4, phen1 naa5-caø juu1 baan4*
 four o’clock PRF 3.P OBLIG.CF-IRR be.at home
 ‘It’s four o’clock already, he should be at home.’ (i.e., because he is normally home at four.)

saamaat4 – abilitive dynamic modal (ABLE)

The word *saa3maat4* (from Sanskrit *sāmārtha* ‘ability to or capacity for’; Monier-Williams 1899:1205) appears in combination with postverbal *daj4* ‘can’ (see section 9.1.1, above), and indeed almost never appears without it. Here are some examples:

- (572) ***saa3maat4*** *khaj3 faa3 qòòk5 daj4*
 ABLE open lid exit CAN
 ‘It’s possible for the lid to be opened.’

- (573) *bia4 ... tònng4 mii2 qaa3ñuq1 sònng3 pii3 khùn5 paj3*
 seedling OBLIG have age two year ascend go
kòòn1 saa3maat4 puuk5 daj4
 before ABLE plant CAN
 ‘The seedlings ... must have an age of two years or more before
 (they) can be planted.’

Here is a rare example of preverbal *saa3maat4* without accompanying postverbal *daj4*:

- (574) *haw2 kaø saa3maat4 jùùm3 ngen2 maa2*
 1.B T.LNK ABLE borrow money come
 ‘I’m able to borrow money.’

Saa3maat4 is not deverbal (it is never used as a verb) and does not have clausal head properties, such as, for example, accessibility for use as a yes-answer:

- (575) Q *laaw2 saa3maat4 vaw4 phaa2saa3 laaw2 daj4 bòd3*
 3SG.FA ABLE speak language Lao CAN QPLR
 ‘Can she speak Lao?’
 A1 *daj4*
 CAN
 ‘(Yes, she) can.’
 A2 ? *saa3maat4*
 ABLE
 (Yes, she is able to.)

Negation marks *saa3maat4*, not *daj4*:

- (576) *khòj5 khòd3 lùat4 caw4, qoo4 caw4 kaø bòø saa3maat4*
 1SG.P request blood 2SG.P INTJ 2SG.P T.LNK NEG ABLE
haj5 daj4
 give CAN
 ‘(If) I ask you for your blood, oh, you are unable to give it (to me).’
- (577) ... *naaj2-mòd3 bòø saa3maat4 pua3 daj4*
 CT.BOSS-doctor NEG ABLE treat CAN
 ‘...(if) the doctor is unable to treat (them)...’

The topic linker *kaø* may directly mark *daj4* in a *saa3maat4...daj4* expression:

- (578) *kham2-sap2 nùng1 hanø, man2 saa3maat4 tii3 pên3*
 mouthful-word one TPC.DIST 3.B ABLE strike COP
laaj3 khuam2 kaø daj4
 many meaning T.LNK CAN
 ‘One word, it can be interpreted as having many meanings.’

But this is incompatible with negation:

- (579) *man2 bòø saa3maat4 tii3 pên3 laaj3 khuam2 (*? kaø)*
 3.B NEG ABLE strike COP many meaning T.LNK
daj4
 CAN
 ‘...it cannot be interpreted as having many meanings.’

With the topic linker *kaø*, (579) would be marginally interpretable, if at all, as the complex and odd ‘...it’s okay for it not to be able to be interpreted as having many meanings’ (and no epistemic reading would be possible). In other words, the topic linker *kaø* would force a reading of the two instances of ‘can’ as belonging to two separate clauses.

I argue that the *saa3maat4...daj4* combination is identical in meaning to simple *daj4* ‘can’. The following examples are synonymous (example (581) is repeated from (442), above):

- (580) *phen1 bòø saa3maat4 vaw4 phaa2saa3 laaw2 daj4*
 3.P NEG ABLE speak language Lao CAN
 ‘She can’t speak Lao.’
- (581) *phen1 vaw4 phaa2saa3 laaw2 bòø daj4*
 3.P speak language Lao NEG CAN
 ‘She can’t speak Lao.’

The ‘inability’ described in example (580) may be due to the same range of background contextual explanations described for (442), above: physical limitations, lack of permission, and so on. While epistemic modality readings are marginally possible for each of these examples, neither seems to favor such a reading. The contribution of *saa3maat4* is not semantic but structural and pragmatic.

In terms of its structural role, *saa3maat4* often appears when the verb phrase under the scope of postverbphrasal ‘can’ is heavy or complex. The following examples show a complex serial and compound construction (582), a causative construction (583), and a distributive clause chain (584), explicitly bracketed by *saa3maat4* to the left, and *daj4* to the right:

- (582) *haw2 kaø saa3maat4 lop2-liik5 pot2 qòòk5 caak5*
 1.B T.LNK ABLE turn-escape liberate exit from
phaj2 hanø daj4
 danger TPC.DIST CAN

‘We are (thus) able to avoid the danger.’

- (583) *khaw3 saa3maat4 sòn3 haj5 haw2 khaw5-caj3 daj4 vaa1*
 3PL.B ABLE teach give 1.B enter-heart CAN COMP
qanø nii4 qaan1 cang1 daj3
 MC.INAN DEM read manner INDEF

‘They were able to teach us to understand how this was read.’

- (584) *saa3maat4 sùù4 khaw5-cii1 sùù4 khaj1 lèkaø sùù4 law5*
 ABLE buy bread buy egg C.LNK buy liquor
kin3 daj4
 consume CAN

‘(They were) able to buy bread and eggs, and buy liquor to drink.’

Saa3maat4 in these examples signposts the scope of ‘can’, by explicitly bracketing the complex predication coming under it.

9.1.7 Achievement marker

There is a unique slot for a marker of achievement or realization, *dajø*. This is derived from a verb *daj4* ‘obtain, acquire, succeed’ (cf. Enfield 2003c). In its achievement marker function, it is de-stressed, in effect cliticized to what follows it. This marker conveys the idea that some prior state of affairs has made it possible for the predicate state of affairs to be the case. Common translations of a predicate V marked with *dajø* include ‘did V’, ‘managed to V’, and ‘got to V’. The following example shows clearly the relation between marking with *dajø* and the idea that the state of affairs denoted by the marked predicate arises (or becomes possible) as an outcome of some previous state of affairs being the case. The speaker

is talking about lean times soon after the revolution of 1975, and states that at that time everyone had to grow vegetables for themselves:

- (585) *caw4 bə̀ə puuk5 phak2, caw4 kaə bə̀ə dajə kin3*
 2SG.P NEG plant vegetable 2SG.P T.LNK NEG ACHV eat
phak2
 vegetable
 ‘(If) you didn’t plant vegetables (yourself), you wouldn’t get to eat vegetables.’

In another example, *dajə* is employed for discourse-related emphasis on the realization of the state of affairs denoted by the predicate (cf. the function of English auxiliary *do* in *He did see them* versus *He saw them*):

- (586) *laaw2 dajə maə hən3 phə̀ə-luung2 phuə-nə̀ng1*
 3SG.FA ACHV DIR.ALL see CT.Fa-PeB MC.HUM-one
 ‘He did (come and) see one old man...’

In the following example, *dajə* occurs with negation:

- (587) *haw2 bə̀ə dajə kin3 khaw5 də̀j2*
 1.FA NEG ACHV eat rice FAC.NEWS
 ‘I didn’t (get to) eat, you know.’

While there is no formal marking of tense in Lao, the preverbal combination *bə̀ə-dajə* NEG-ACHV conveys a kind of simple ‘negative past’. That is, with negation, the notion of ‘achievement’ normally conveyed by *dajə* is relatively bleached.

9.1.8 Directional markers

The directional markers are de-stressed, cliticized forms of the verbs *paj3* ‘go’ and *maa2* ‘come’. As directionals, they are glossed as ‘ablative’ and ‘allative’, respectively, reflecting their directionality with reference to the clausal subject. In some cases, their function as post-negation aspectual-modals is transparently related to the deictic motion they express as full verbs:

- (588) *song1 saan3 pajø haa3 sii3hoo3*
 send message DIR.ABL seek S
 ‘Send a message to Siho.’
- (589) *buat5 pên3 phaql, maø buat5 juu1 vat1 kèng4-kòk5*
 ordain COP monk DIR.ALL ordain be.at temple K-K
 ‘(I) was ordained as a monk, (I) came and got ordained at Keng Kok Temple.’

In another example, a man describes the community dance evenings that would regularly take place in lowland urban areas in the early revolutionary period (1975 onwards). Soldiers would attend with full weaponry including loaded automatic weapons and grenade belts. Young village girls would be asked to dance with these soldiers:

- (590) *jaan4 laaj3, laaj3 kòòn1 vaa1 thii1 caø maø muan1*
 scared much much before COMP REL IRR DIR.ALL enjoy
 ‘(They were) very scared, more so than they (came and) enjoyed (the dancing).’

In cases like these, the directional markers are straightforwardly related to motion verbs embedded in serial verb constructions (cf. Chapter 16). We can see, however, that these constructions are grammaticized to a certain degree. In many examples, particularly those involving the allative directional *maø* (from *maa2* ‘come’), no motion of the subject need be involved. In certain cases, no movement is even plausible. In an example featuring the ablative directional *pajø*, the hero Sinxay meets his aunt Sumunthaa, but she does not recognize him. This is because:

- (591) *man2 pajø keet5 juu1 paa1 dêê4*
 3.B DIR.ABL born be.at forest FAC.FILLIN
 ‘He (went and got) born in the forest, you see.’

Sinxay can’t literally have ‘gone’ to the forest before being born.

Often with the allative directional *maø* the sense of motion is not motion of the subject argument itself, but rather DIRECTEDNESS of the action TOWARD the subject. For example:

- (592) *phen1 qaw3 pùm4 maø qaan1*
 3.P take book DIR.ALL read
 ‘She took a book and read (it).’

In this example, the directional marker does not refer to any motion on the part of the main subject. It refers to the self-directed motion of the action involved in reading (i.e., taking the book in hand and orienting it towards oneself in order to attend).

In another example, both directionals are used, yet where motion to and fro is not part of what is being predicated. The speaker is talking about a period in recent Lao history during which citizens were banned from access to foreign media. In order to get news from the outside world, many people would secretly listen to the radio. In expressing the idea ‘Citizens would listen to the radio’, this speaker uses both directionals—the ablative *pajø* marking ‘taking’ the radios and the allative *maø* marking ‘listening to’ them, helping to convey the furtive thither-directed procuring and hither-directed hiding of their radios:

- (593) *pasaa2son2 siø pajø qaw3 vithañuq1 maø fang2*
 citizen IRR DIR.ABL take radio DIR.ALL listen
 ‘Citizens would go and take radios to listen to.’

The directional markers play a special role in certain types of serial verb construction, such as those involved in the syntax of three-place predicates, as illustrated in examples (588), (592), and (593). See Chapter 15, section 15.2.1 for further discussion.

9.2 Other temporal expressions

This section notes a number of other structures used in specifying temporal features of events and temporal relations between events.

Temporal adjuncts may be formed using *tòðn3* ‘time/when’. These are usually placed before the clause they mark, in the extraclausal Left Position, as in (594). (See Haiman 1985:39ff on the expression of subordinate semantic relations through syntactic coordination.) They may also appear either finally or medially, as in the subsequent two examples.

- (594) *tòðn3 thamø-qit2, phuak4 khòðj5 juu1 dong3 nòq1*
 time at.first group 1SG.P be.at forest QPLR.AGREE
 ‘At first, we were living in the forest, right?’

- (595) *tamluat5 bə̀ø than2 dajø maa2, tòn3 nan4*
 police NEG ON.TIME ACHV come time DEM.NONPROX
 ‘The police had not yet arrived, (at) that time.’
- (596) *kham2 tòn3 nan4 baat5 nùng1*
 gold time DEM.NONPROX half.ounce one
phan2-sò̀ng3-lò̀j4 dèj2
 thousand-two-hundred FAC.NEWS
 ‘(The price of) gold at that time was 1200 per half ounce, you know.’

Tòn3 ‘time’ may be used to link two clauses. Usually the first clause is so marked, as in the first two examples below; but occasionally, as shown in the third example it is the second clause which is marked by *tòn3* ‘time/when’:

- (597) *tòn3 mùng2 hêt1 qanø-nan4, kuu3 juu1 bòn1*
 time 2SG.B do MC.INAN-DEM.NONPROX 1SG.B be.at place
qùn1
 other
 ‘When you did that, I was in another place.’
- (598) *tòn3 phò̀1 khò̀j5 taaj3 lèw4, khò̀j5 tat2.sin3-caj3 qềng3*
 time father 1SG.P die PRF 1SG.P decide-heart self
khò̀j5 paj3 mùang2-thaj2
 1SG.P go country-Thai
 ‘When my father was dead, I decided myself (that) I’d go to Thailand.’
- (599) *khò̀j5 hên3 tòn3 khò̀j5 mò̀1 siø hò̀t4 talaat5*
 1SG.P see time 1SG.P almost IRR reach market
naa3
 FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘I saw (it) when I had almost reached the market, you see.’

Tòn3 ‘time/when’ may also appear as a nominal head referring to a period of time, an era, or a period of the day (‘morning’, ‘afternoon’, ‘evening’):

(600) *haw2 khùt1 hòt4 tòn3 kèp2 kafêê2*
 1.FA think reach time harvest coffee
 ‘I miss the time (I was) harvesting coffee.’

(601) *phòq1 vaa1 tòn3 saw4 man2 lot1 laaj3*
 because COMP time morning 3.B vehicle many
 ‘Because in the morning there are lots of vehicles (on the road).’

Occurrence time (i.e., countable times as in ‘John sneezed three times’) does not use *tòn3*, but *thùa1* ‘instance’, as follows:

(602) *kuu3 bòdòk5 mùng2 laaj3 thùa1 lèw4*
 1SG.B tell 2SG.B many instance PRF
 ‘(I’ve) told (you) many times already.’

‘Now’ is expressed by *diaw3-nii4*, which morphologically includes *diaw3* ‘single, lone, same’ and *nii4* ‘this’. It appears clause-initially or clause-finally, although the former is preferred.

(603) *diaw3-nii4 ñang2 pên3 hiin3*
 NOW STILL COP stone
 ‘Now (that snake) is still stone.’

(604) *diaw3-nii4 khacaw4 kaø saang5 khòp4-khua2 met2 lèw4*
 NOW 3PL.P T.LNK build family all PRF
 ‘Now they have all got families.’

Kòòn1 ‘before’ and *lang3-caak5* ‘after’ function to locate two clauses in time relative to each other, and it is usually the first clause that is marked:

(605) *kòòn1 caø qèem4 caø ñang3 haw2 ñang2 dajø*
 before IRR put.on.walling IRR INDEF.INAN 1.FA STILL ACHV
hêt1 haan4 haj5 man2
 make platform give 3.B
 ‘Before we put the walls on and whatever, we still must make them some platforms.’

(606) *lang3-caak5 qaw3 saw3 fang3 lèw4, haw2 kaø tòdòk5*
 after take post bury PRF 1.FA T.LNK nail
khaang3
 crossbeam
 ‘After we plant the posts, then we nail on the crossbeams.’

In the following example, *kòòn1* ‘before’ takes a nominal complement *khaw3* ‘3PL.B’, but this is elliptical (as indicated by the translation):

- (607) *haw2 nii4 laø têñ4 qòòk5 kòòn1 khaw3*
 1.FA DEM PRF jump exit before 3PL.B
 ‘I jumped out (of the boat) before they (did).’

In the next examples, *kòòn1* ‘before’ is used adverbially (i.e., without an overt complement), and corresponds to English ‘first’:

- (608) *haw2 kaø beng1 juu1 ... khaw3 qaw3 ñang3 kòòn1*
 1.FA T.LNK look CONT ... 3PL.B take INDEF.INAN before
 ‘I was watching (them) ... (to see) what would they take first.’

- (609) *bòø lèèw4, met2 ngen2 kòòn1*
 NEG finish exhaust money before
 ‘(It’s) not finished, (I) ran out of money first.’

A similar adverbial function is observed for ‘after’, but in Lao this does not involve *lang3-caak5*. Rather, for the adverbial sense of ‘after’, where no overt complement appears, Lao speakers use a different construction *nam2-lang3*, literally ‘going after the back of’.

- (610) *pèè3 vaa1 khòòj5 keet5 nam2-lang3 dêê4, khòòj5*
 translate COMP 1SG.P born follow-back FAC.FILLIN 1SG.P
bòø huu4-cak2
 NEG know
 ‘I mean, I was born afterwards—I don’t know (about that).’

In narratives, *kòòn1* ‘before’ and *lang3-caak5* ‘after’ have no entailments as to any other relationships (such as causal or conditional) between events.

Finally, an expression *phòø-dii3*, an idiom from *phòò2* ‘enough’ and *dii3* ‘good’, acts as a clause linker meaning ‘as soon as’, ‘right when’, as shown in the following examples (modeled for comparison on examples (598) and (606), above):

- (611) ***phòø-dii3*** *phòø1 khòøj5 taaj3 lèèw4, khòøj5 tat2.sin3-caj3*
enough-good father 1SG.P die PRF 1SG.P decide-heart
qêêng3 khòøj5 paj3 mùang2-thaj2
self 1SG.P go country-Thai
'As soon as my father was dead, I decided myself (that) I'd go to Thailand.'
- (612) ***phòø-dii3*** *qaw3 saw3 fang3 lèèw4, haw2 kaø tòøk5*
enough-good take post bury PRF 1.FA T.LNK nail
khaang3
crossbeam
'As soon as we plant the posts, then we nail on the crossbeams.'

Chapter 10

Verbs and verb types

Words in the verb class express a range of concepts which in other languages (e.g., English) may be expressed in three distinct word classes: verb, adjective, and adverb.

The following examples show *vaj2* ‘fast’ as a main predicate (613), as a modifier in a noun phrase (614), and as an adverbial modifier of a main predicate (615):

- (613) *lot1 khan2 nii4 vaj2*
vehicle CLF DEM fast
‘This vehicle is fast.’
- (614) *lot1 vaj2 khan2 nii4 ngaam2*
vehicle fast CLF DEM beautiful
‘This fast vehicle is beautiful.’
- (615) *lot1 khan2 nii4 lèèn1 vaj2*
vehicle CLF DEM run fast
‘This vehicle goes fast.’

Grammatically, all verbs may take direct negation with the negator *bòø*, may be marked by the preverbal progressive marker *kamlang2* and the postverbal perfective marker *lèèw4* as well as other aspectual-model markers, and may freely function as direct modifiers in noun phrases. Minor sub-distinctions within this class may be established (e.g., accessibility to certain types of reduplication), and these correspond to distinctions more markedly grammaticalized in other languages (e.g., between property concept words and action/event words). Adverbs are not a distinct word class, but are simply verbs used in certain slots.

10.1 Characteristics of the verb class

The term verb may be used for members of the class of words accessible to a defined set of grammatical markings and processes associated with words denoting semantically prototypical actions/events (e.g., *tii3* ‘hit’,

lè̀n1 ‘run’, *haj5* ‘give’, *hèn3* ‘see’, *vaw4* ‘speak’). This category in Lao includes words denoting not only actions and events, but also words denoting property concepts which in some other languages are confined to a distinct adjective class (e.g., *suung3* ‘(be) tall’, *dii3* ‘(be) good’, *dè̀ng3* ‘(be) red’).

Canonical main verbs such as *tii3* ‘hit’, *vaw4* ‘say’, or *hèn3* ‘see’ in simple clauses have the following distinguishing properties, which they do not share with nominals:

-
- Verbs may be directly marked by aspectual-modal elements, including:
 - preverbal:
 - negator *bòø*
 - irrealis markers *siø* and *caø*
 - achievement marker *dajø*
 - progressive markers *kamlang2* and *phuam2*
 - postverbal:
 - perfect marker *lè̀w4*
 - Verbs are commonly used alone in affirmative responses to polar questions (‘yes-answers’)
 - Verbs may (in combination with their complements) form nominal modifiers in combination with the relativizer *thii1*
 - Verbs may be modified directly by ideophones
-

Figure 10.1. Distinguishing properties of Lao verbs

10.1.1 Nominals as predicates

Nominals can be used as verbless clause complements, as in the following example:

- (616) [*ñãø-thaan1 nan4*]_{NP1} [*khon2 mùang2 phiin2*]_{NP2}
 abbot DEM.NONPROX person district P
 ‘That abbot (was) a Phiin District person.’

However, no verbal trappings are available for clause complements of this kind. The following examples show that the noun phrase which

functions as a predicate in (616) (i.e., the noun phrase subscripted ‘NP2’) cannot take direct negation (617), irrealis marking (618), achievement marking (619), nor progressive marking (620), nor can it function as a modifier of a nominal linked by the relativizer *thii1* (621):

- (617) * *ñaaφ-thaan1 nan4* *bòφ khon2 mùang2 phiin2*
 abbot DEM.NONPROX NEG person district P
 (That abbot (was) not a Phiin District person.)
- (618) * *ñaaφ-thaan1 nan4* *siφ khon2 mùang2 phiin2*
 abbot DEM.NONPROX IRR person district P
 (That abbot (will be) a Phiin District person.)
- (619) * *ñaaφ-thaan1 nan4* *dajφ khon2 mùang2 phiin2*
 abbot DEM.NONPROX ACHV person district P
 (That abbot was a Phiin District person.)
- (620) * *ñaaφ-thaan1 nan4* *kamlang2 khon2 mùang2 phiin2*
 abbot DEM.NONPROX PROG person district P
 (That abbot (was) being a Phiin District person.)
- (621) * *ñaaφ-thaan1 thii1 khon2 mùang2 phiin2*
 abbot REL person district P
 (an abbot who (was) a Phiin District person)

10.1.2 Verb sub-classes

While all Lao verbs display the properties given above, they vary with respect to more subtle grammatical possibilities. This variation may be used as a basis for sub-categorization of the verb class, as illustrated in Figure 10.2.

A first division is between active and stative verbs. Unlike active verbs, stative verbs (a) do not normally take marking for progressive aspect, and (b) when marked with the postposed perfective *lèèw4*, entail their own truth at the moment of speech. For example, *mii2 ngen2 lèèw4* [have money PRF] means ‘(I) already have (the) money’ (entailing that I have it now), while *hên3 ngen2 lèèw4* [see money PRF] means ‘(I) have already seen (the) money’ (not entailing that I see it now). Semantically, active verbs entail ‘something happens’, while stative verbs

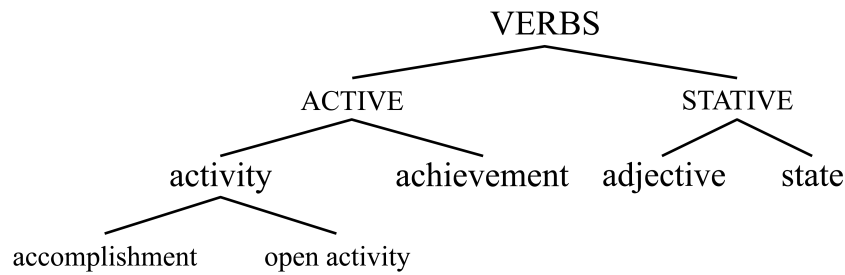


Figure 10.2. Taxonomy of verb sub-types

do not. Within the class of active verbs, a first distinction is between activities and achievements, where for example only the former may appear as a complement of *leem4* ‘begin to’. Activities may be further subdivided into accomplishments and open activities, where for example only the former can take *bòø lèèw4* [NEG PRF] as a complement (e.g., *hùan2 kuu3 puk2 bòø lèèw4* [house 1SG.B build NEG PRF] ‘My house has not finished being built’). The class of stative verbs is divided into adjective verbs and state verbs, with only adjective verbs being available for Type A reduplication. This and other differences are discussed in below sections.

Figure 10.2 is a true taxonomy. This means that any node is a more narrowly defined instance of any of the nodes to which it is connected by above-going lines.

Following examples illustrate the common behavior of the different verb sub-types. The examples used are *phop1* ‘meet’ (achievement), *puk2 hùan2* ‘build house’ (accomplishment), *ñaaŋg1* ‘walk’ (open activity), *mii2 pùm4* ‘have book’ (state), and *suung3* ‘tall’ (adjective).

First, all these verb sub-types may be directly marked (preverbally) by the irrealis markers *siø* and *caø*:

(622) *khòòj5 siø phop1 man2*
 1SG.P IRR meet 3.B
 ‘I will meet him.’

(623) *khòòj5 siø puk2 hùan2*
 1SG.P IRR build house
 ‘I will build a house.’

- (624) *khòòj5 siø ñaang1*
 1 SG.P IRR walk
 'I will walk.'
- (625) *khòòj5 siø mii2 pùm4*
 1 SG.P IRR have book
 'I will have a book.'
- (626) *khòòj5 siø suung3*
 1 SG.P IRR tall
 'I will be tall.'

All verbs may be directly marked (preverbally) by the negator *bòø*:

- (627) *khòòj5 bòø phop1 man2*
 1 SG.P NEG meet 3.B
 'I don't/won't meet him.'
- (628) *khòòj5 bòø puk2 hùan2*
 1 SG.P NEG build house
 'I don't/won't build a house.'
- (629) *khòòj5 boø ñaang1*
 1 SG.P NEG walk
 'I don't/won't walk.'
- (630) *khòòj5 bòø mii2 pùm4*
 1 SG.P NEG have book
 'I don't have a book.'
- (631) *khòòj5 bòø suung3*
 1 SG.P NEG tall
 I am not tall.'

The two stative verb sub-types group together in not giving future readings when appearing with the negation marker (630, 631).

All verbs may be directly marked (preverbally) by the achievement marker *dajø*:

- (632) *khòòj5 dajø phop1 man2*
 1 SG.P ACHV meet 3.B
 'I did/got to meet him.'

- (633) *khòòj5 dajø puk2 hùan2*
 1 SG.P ACHV build house
 ‘I did/got to build a house.’
- (634) *khòòj5 dajø ñaang1*
 1 SG.P ACHV walk
 ‘I did/got to walk.’
- (635) ? *khòòj5 dajø mii2 pùm4*
 1 SG.P ACHV have book
 ‘I did have a book.’
- (636) ? *khòòj5 dajø suung3*
 1 SG.P ACHV tall
 ‘I was/got to be tall.’

The use of the preverbal achievement marker *dajø* with stative verbs is pragmatically marked (635-636). Elicitation gets mostly negative responses, but these combinations are considered acceptable with inchoative readings and with negation. They certainly occur in spontaneous speech.

All verbs may be directly marked (preverbally) by the progressive marker *kamlang2*:

- (637) *khòòj5 kamlang2 phop1 man2*
 1 SG.P PROG meet 3.B
 ‘I am meeting him.’
- (638) *khòòj5 kamlang2 puk2 hùan2*
 1 SG.P PROG build house
 ‘I am building a house.’
- (639) *khòòj5 kamlang2 ñaang1*
 1 SG.P PROG walk
 ‘I am walking.’
- (640) ? *khòòj5 kamlang2 mii2 pùm4*
 1 SG.P PROG have book
 ‘I am having/getting (a) book(s).’
- (641) ? *khòòj5 kamlang2 suung3*
 1 SG.P PROG tall
 ‘I am being/getting tall.’

Again, this marking is unusual with stative verbs (640-641), unless some kind of gradability or inchoativization is construed (e.g., coming into possession of many books, getting tall).

All verbs may be used in combination with the postverbal perfect marker *lèèw4*:

- (642) *khòj5 phop1 man2 lèèw4*
 1 SG.P meet 3.B PRF
 ‘I met him already.’
- (643) *khòj5 puk2 hùan2 lèèw4*
 1 SG.P build house PRF
 ‘I built a/the house already.’
- (644) *khòj5 ñaang1 lèèw4*
 1 SG.P walk PRF
 ‘I have walked/did walk already.’
- (645) *khòj5 mii2 pùm4 lèèw4*
 1 SG.P have book PRF
 ‘I already have a book.’
- (646) *khòj5 suung3 lèèw4*
 1 SG.P tall PRF
 ‘I am already tall.’

The perfect marker *lèèw4* shows another contrast between stative and active verbs. When a stative verb combines with *lèèw4*, there is an entailment that ‘P is the case now’. This entailment does not hold with active verbs. In (642-646), both and only the examples featuring stative verbs entail that the verb is the case at the time of utterance. If a speaker utters (646), then he is tall at the time of speech; if he utters (645), then he has a book at the time of speech. In none of (642-644), however, does the combination ‘V-*lèèw4*’ entail ‘V now’.

All verbs may (in combination with their complements) form nominal modifiers in combination with the relativizer *thii1*:

- (647) *khon2 thii1 phop1 man2*
 person REL meet 3.B
 ‘the person who meets him’

- (648) *khon2 thii1 puk2 hùan2*
 person REL build house
 ‘the person who builds a house’
- (649) *khon2 thii1 ñaang1*
 person REL walk
 ‘the person who walks’
- (650) *khon2 thii1 mii2 pùm4*
 person REL have book
 ‘the person who has a book’
- (651) *khon2 thii1 suung3*
 person REL tall
 ‘the person who is tall’

All verbs may be used alone in affirmative responses to polar questions (i.e., as yes-answers), as illustrated in the following two examples:

- (652) Q: *caw4 phop1 man2 bòð3*
 2SG.P meet 3.B QPLR
 ‘Did/will you meet him?’
 A: *phop1*
 meet
 ‘(Yes, I did/will) meet (him).’
- (653) Q: *man2 suung3 bòð3*
 3.B tall QPLR
 ‘Is he tall?’
 A: *suung3*
 tall
 ‘(Yes, he is) tall.’

Many verbs may be nominalized using either of the nominalizers *kaan3* ‘work, activity’ or *khuam2* ‘sense’. These nominalizers have different meanings, *kaan3* appearing more often with activity verbs and *khuam2* appearing more often with adjectives:

- (654) a. *kaan3 khaa5* [activity kill] ‘killing’
 b. *kaan3 lùùm2* [activity forget] ‘forgetting’

- c. *kaan3 khañaaɰ3* [activity expand] ‘expansion’
 (655) a. *khuam2 dii3* [sense good] ‘goodness’
 b. *khuam2 dang3* [sense loud] ‘volume’
 c. *khuam2 ngaam2* [sense beautiful] ‘beauty’

These are tendencies only. Sometimes adjectives can appear with *kaan3* (e.g., *kaan3 dii3* [activity good] ‘an appropriate action’), and sometimes non-adjectives can appear with *khuam2* (e.g., *khuam2 fan3* [sense dream] ‘a dream’). Some verbs can appear with both (cf. Prasithratsint 2000:264 on Thai), and some with neither. And occasionally even nouns can appear with these nominalizers.

10.1.3 Nominals as noun modifiers

Nominals can be used to modify nominals, as in the following examples:¹

- (656) *saaj3 tholasap2*
 cable telephone
 ‘telephone cable’
 (657) *kèw4 nom2*
 bottle milk
 ‘milk bottle’

There are differences in grammatical behavior between nominals and verbs in modifier function. First, nominal modifiers can never be linked to their heads by the relativizer *thii1*:

- (658) **kèw4 thii1 nom2*
 bottle REL milk
 (milk bottle; i.e., ‘bottle which (is) milk’)

A second difference is that modification of nominals by verbs often involves the use of a modifier classifier (see Chapter 7, section 7.2). In the

¹Nationality/origin terms such as *ciin3* ‘China, Chinese’ and *laaw2* ‘Laos, Lao’ are nominals used in attributive function. They cannot be used in predicative function. These expressions are nominal, but are semi-defective in that they seldom appear by themselves as noun phrase heads. They usually occur as modifiers of class terms such as *mùang2* ‘nation’ or *khon2* ‘person’.

following, the (a) examples show a verb (stative and active, respectively) directly modifying a noun, the (b) examples show these same modifiers linked to their noun heads by the semantically general modifier classifier *qanø*:

- (659) a. *còðk5 ngaam2*
 cup beautiful
 ‘beautiful cup’
 b. *còðk5 qanø ngaam2*
 cup MC.INAN beautiful
 ‘the beautiful cup’
- (660) a. *còðk5 tok2*
 cup fall
 ‘fallen cup’ (‘cup which has fallen’)
 b. *còðk5 qanø tok2*
 cup MC.INAN fall
 ‘the fallen cup’ (‘the cup which has fallen’)

When the modifier is a nominal, however, use of a linking modifier classifier is not possible:

- (661) a. *còðk5 din3*
 cup earth
 ‘earthen cup’
 b. **còðk5 qanø din3*
 cup MC.INAN earth
 (the earthen cup)

10.2 Characteristics of the adjective sub-class of verbs

Adjectives have the defining properties of verbs, as described in the previous section. (They share none of the grammatical properties of nouns, cf. Chapter 1.) In addition, and unlike any other verb sub-types, adjectives show the properties listed in Figure 10.3.

Compare the grammatical behavior of the adjective *suung3* ‘tall’ with the active verb *lèn1* ‘run’. First, the active verb does not undergo Type A reduplication:

-
- Adjectives may undergo Type A reduplication (if monosyllabic)
 - Adjectives may be marked directly by *kua1* ‘more than’ in comparative constructions
 - Adjectives may take *jaak5* (elsewhere ‘want’) as a preverbal modal meaning ‘somewhat’
 - Adjectives may be intensified by postposed *khanaat5* ‘extent’ and *teep5* ‘rather’
-

Figure 10.3. Distinguishing properties of Lao adjectives

- (662) a. *khon2 sungø-suong3 mèn1 qaaj4 khòj5*
 person RDP.A-tall COP eBr 1SG.P
 ‘The tallish person is my brother.’
- b. **khon2 lènø-lèn1 mèn1 qaaj4 khòj5*
 person RDP.A-run COP eBr 1SG.P
 (The run-ing-ish person is my brother.)

Second, the active verb may not be marked directly by *kua1* ‘more than’ in a comparative construction:

- (663) a. *qaaj4 khòj5 suong3 kuaø qaaj4 caw4*
 eBr 1SG.P tall MORE.THAN eBr 2SG.P
 ‘My brother is taller than your brother.’
- b. **qaaj4 khòj5 lèn1 kuaø qaaj4 caw4*
 eBr 1SG.P run MORE.THAN eBr 2SG.P
 (My brother runs more than your brother.)

Third, the active verb does not give a ‘somewhat’ reading when it appears with the complement-taking verb *jaak5* (‘want’):

- (664) a. *qaaj4 khòj5 jaak5 suong3*
 eBr 1SG.P want tall
 i. ‘My brother wants to be tall.’
 ii. ‘My brother is somewhat tall.’
- b. *qaaj4 khòj5 jaak5 lèn1*
 eBr 1SG.P want run
 ‘My brother wants to run.’ (NOT: My brother somewhat runs.)

Fourth, the active verb cannot be modified by intensifiers *khanaat5* ‘extent’ and *teep5* ‘rather’:

- (665) a. *qaaj4 khòòj5 suung3 khanaat5/teep5*
 eBr 1SG.P tall extent/very
 ‘My brother is really tall.’
 b. **qaaj4 khòòj5 lèèn1 khanaat5/teep5*
 eBr 1SG.P run extent
 (My brother really runs.)

Some constructions are typically used with adjectives, but are not defining of the adjective class, since they may also be used with other types of verb in certain cases. The following examples illustrate two such constructions: the X-not-X ‘really X’ construction (666), and the X-*thèè4*-X-*vaal* [X-true-X-say] ‘really truly X’ construction (667):

- (666) a. *qaaj4 khòòj5 suung3 bòø suung3*
 eBr 1SG.P tall NEG tall
 ‘My brother is really tall.’
 b. *qaaj4 khòòj5 lèèn1 bòø lèèn1*
 eBr 1SG.P run NEG run
 ‘My brother really runs.’ (i.e., ‘runs intensively, all the time’)
- (667) a. *qaaj4 khòòj5 suung3 thèè4 suung3 vaal*
 eBr 1SG.P tall true tall say
 ‘My brother is really truly tall.’
 b. *qaaj4 khòòj5 lèèn1 thèè4 lèèn1 vaal*
 eBr 1SG.P run true run say
 ‘My brother really truly runs.’ (i.e., ‘runs intensively, all the time’)

The (b) examples in (666) and (667) are acceptable, but they are regarded by speakers as being unusual or extended uses of these constructions.

Lao adjectives perform the two major functions of adjectives cross-linguistically (see Dixon and Aikhenvald 2004), namely (1) making a statement of property, as the predicate of an intransitive clause, and (2) modifying a noun (in underived form) within a noun phrase. However, these properties are general properties of verbs in Lao, and are not exclusive to adjectives.

10.2.1 Semantic sub-classes

Lao adjectives cover most of the semantic classes proposed by Dixon (1982, 2004). The four core adjective semantic types are as follows:

DIMENSION – *ñaj1* ‘big’, *nòj4* ‘small’, *ñaw2* ‘long’, *san5* ‘short’, *naa3* ‘thick’ (and many more)

AGE – *thaw5* ‘old (of a person)’, *num1* ‘young’ (of a person), *kaw1* ‘old (of thing)’, *kèl1* ‘old (of fruit or other edible)’

VALUE – *dii3* ‘good’, *ngaam2* ‘beautiful’, *phèng2* ‘dear’, *cop2* ‘wholesome, fine’ (and a few more)

COLOR – *dèng3* ‘red’, *làng3* ‘yellow’, *khiaw3* ‘green/blue’, *khaaw3* ‘white’, *dam3* ‘black’ (5 terms only)

Other semantic types are as follows:²

PHYSICAL PROPERTY – *dip2* ‘green, raw’, *suk2* ‘ripe, cooked’, *naw1* ‘rotten’, *sot2* ‘fresh’, *lèem3* ‘sharp’, *khêm2* ‘salty’, *vaan3* ‘sweet’, *nak2* ‘heavy’, *ñaq1* ‘gritty’, *khun4* ‘opaque (of liquid)’, *lèw3* ‘sloppy’ (and many more: very large class)

HUMAN PROPENSITY – *kêng1* ‘adept’, *salaat5* ‘clever’, *ngool* ‘stupid’, *nguang1* ‘sleepy’ (and many more: large class)

SPEED – *vaj2* ‘fast’, *saa4* ‘slow’

DIFFICULTY – *ngaaj1* ‘easy’, *ñaak4* ‘difficult’

QUALIFICATION³ – *thè4* ‘real’, *cing3* ‘true’

QUANTIFICATION – *laaj3* ‘much’, *nòj5* ‘little, not much’

POSITION – *kaj3* ‘far’, *kaj4* ‘near’, *thii1* ‘close together’, *haang1* ‘far apart’

²SIMILARITY expressions and NUMBERS are not adjectives in Lao.

³The two terms shown here are defective in that they do not take direct preposed aspectual-modal marking (such as negation).

10.2.2 Structure of the noun phrase

It is difficult to make a definitive statement about relative ordering of modifiers within the noun phrase, but some generalizations are possible. For example, possessors appear further from the head than other types of modifiers:

- (668) a. [*khuaj2 dam3 phen1*]_{NP}
 buffalo black 3.P
 ‘his black buffalo’
 b. [*khuaj2 phen1*]_{NP} *dam3*
 buffalo 3.P black
 ‘His buffalo is black.’ (NOT: ‘his black buffalo’)

No clear generalizations seem possible for the relative ordering of multiple adjectives. One difficulty in making a generalization about adjective ordering is that noun phrases often have a non-configurational structure (Gil 1987). When multiple adjectives are used as modifiers of a single nominal head, often one or more of them is attached to its own modifier classifier, in a phrase syntactically separate from the head noun. Consider the following alternative descriptions of a scene in which a big black buffalo ate my rice:

- (669) a. *khuaj2 dam3 ñaj1 kin3 khaw5 khòj5*
 buffalo black big eat rice 1SG.P
 ‘A big black buffalo ate my rice.’
 b. *khuaj2 dam3 to∅ ñaj1 kin3 khaw5 khòj5*
 buffalo black MC.ANIM big eat rice 1SG.P
 ‘A black buffalo, a big one ate my rice.’
 c. *khuaj2 ñaj1 kin3 khaw5 khòj5 to∅ dam3*
 buffalo big eat rice 1SG.P MC.ANIM black
 ‘A big buffalo ate my rice, a black one.’

Examples (b) and (c) have an appositional feel, as conveyed by the English translations. Also note that presence of the classifier in the noun phrase suggests (but does not entail) definiteness of the referent (see Chapter 7).

Another point to note about modifier ordering is that while both adjectives and active verbs may be unmarked modifiers of nouns in noun phrases, they do not combine with each other readily:

- (670) a. *maa3 dam3*
 dog black
 ‘black dog’
 b. *maa3 haw1*
 dog bark
 ‘barking dog’
 c. **maa3 dam3 haw1*
 dog black bark
 (barking black dog)

10.2.3 Reduplication

This section describes three forms of reduplication. See also Chapter 12, section 12.4 for reduplicative patterns in echo-formation.

10.2.3.1 Type A Reduplication

In Type A reduplication, σ^α becomes $\sigma^\emptyset\text{-}\sigma^\alpha$, where σ^α takes full stress and bears lexically specified tone, while σ^\emptyset is unstressed, with no lexical tone and with neutralization of the usual length contrast in the vowel:

RULE, TYPE A RDP: $\sigma^\alpha \rightarrow \sigma^\emptyset\text{-}\sigma^\alpha$

- (671) *khon2 suung3*
 person tall
 ‘the tall person’
 (672) *khon2 sung \emptyset -suung3*
 person RDP.A-tall
 ‘the tallish person’

Semantically, Type A reduplication of P means ‘somewhat P’, ‘relatively P’. Example (672) need not refer to a very tall person, merely someone who may be described as ‘tall’ with reference to some group. Suppose a speaker is pointing someone out from among a group of people standing by, none of whom are especially tall in their own right. If the person being pointed out is slightly taller than the rest, then (672) is a good description. As a general description of a person, (672) would be interpreted to mean that they are rather tall in their own right, since the reference group would be the general set of all people, not some specific group.

Type A reduplication is normally used in attributive function (673) rather than predicative function, although the latter does occur (674) (with constraints; e.g., while irrealis marking is possible (675), negation is not (676)):

(673) *hùan2 sungø-suung3 mèn1 hùan2 phen1*
house RDP.A-high COP house 3.P

‘The tallish house is his house.’

(674) *hùan2 phen1 sungø-suung3*
house 3.P RDP.A-high

‘His house is tallish.’

(675) *hùan2 phen1 caø sungø-suung3*
house 3.P IRR RDP.A-high

‘His house will be tallish.’

(676) **hùan2 phen1 bøø sungø-suung3*
house 3.P NEG RDP.A-high

(His house is not tallish.)

Only the adjective sub-class allows Type A Reduplication. In addition, many adjectives also cannot occur with Type A reduplication due to their being non-monosyllabic (e.g., *salaat5* ‘clever’).

Note also the case of the postverbal aspectual-modal marker *lùajø-lùaj4* ‘regularly, all the time’, which has the structure of Type A reduplication, but where there is no input verb form *lùaj4*.

Occasionally, nominals are used in a Type A reduplication structure, as in the following example:

- (677) *juu1 theng2 phuø-phuu2 phunø*
 be.at top RDP.A-mountain TPC.FAR
 ‘far far away over in the mountains’

This is an extended use of a nominal in an adverbial function; i.e., ‘mountain’ as ‘in the mountains’. Here are two more examples:

- (678) *thùük5 bòn1 sinø-siin4*
 strike place RDP.A-meat
 ‘(It) struck (my rump) in the very meat.’
- (679) *man2 khaw5 mumø-mum2*
 3.B enter RDP.A-corner
 ‘It went in the very corner.’ (speaking of a goal in soccer)

10.2.3.2 Type B Reduplication

Type B reduplication takes a syllable σ^α and derives the structure $\sigma^{2+}-\sigma^\alpha$, where σ^{2+} is a stressed and lengthened version of σ^α with tone 2 overriding the original α tone:

RULE, TYPE B RDP: $\sigma^\alpha \rightarrow \sigma^{2+}-\sigma^\alpha$

Semantically, Type B reduplication of P means ‘REALLY P’, ‘very, extremely P’. Here are a couple of examples:

- (680) *phuø-nii4 ngaam2-ngaam2*
 MC.HUM-DEM RDP.B-beautiful
 ‘This person was REALLY beautiful.’
- (681) *man2 jaak5-paj2-jaak5-paj3*
 3.B RDP.B-want-go
 ‘He REALLY wanted to go.’

Type B reduplication is not restricted to adjectives, nor is it restricted to monosyllabic input.

10.2.3.3 *Iteration*

A third kind of reduplication or repetition involves simple iteration of a word or phrase to iconically represent an iterated series of objects or actions:

- (682) *tòng4 cat2 pên3 thèw3 pên thèw3*
 OBLIG arrange COP row COP row
 ‘(One) must arrange (them) in successive rows.’ (lit. ‘in rows, in rows’)
- (683) *qaw3 khiø-din3 kòng3 vaj4 kòng3 vaj4 kòng3 vaj4*
 take CT.SHIT-earth heap.up keep heap.up keep heap.up keep
 ‘(He) took earth and kept heaping it up.’ (lit. ‘heaped it up, heaped it up, heaped it up’)

The units that are iterated are pronounced with equal length and stress.

10.2.4 *Comparative and superlative expressions*

Comparative expressions involve a marker *kuaø* ‘more than’, derived from a verb *kua1* meaning ‘cross, surpass’ (cf. Ansaldo 1999).

- (684) *khòj5 suung3 kuaø caw4*
 1SG.P tall MORE.THAN 2SG.P
 ‘I am taller than you.’

No other verb class can appear in this construction, as the following examples demonstrate:⁴

- (685) * *khòj5 phop1 man2 kuaø caw4*
 1SG.P meet 3.B MORE.THAN 2SG.P
 (I meet him (more) than you.)

⁴Note, however, that in all these examples, insertion of the quantification adjective *laaj3* ‘much, very’ before the comparative particle *kua1* gives the required meaning in felicitous form.

- (686) * *khòðj5 puk2 hùan2 kuaø caw4*
 1SG.P build house MORE.THAN 2SG.P
 (I build houses (more) than you.)
- (687) * *khòðj5 ñaang1 kuaø caw4*
 1SG.P walk MORE.THAN 2SG.P
 (I walk (more) than you.)
- (688) * *khòðj5 mii2 pùm4 kuaø caw4*
 1SG.P have book MORE.THAN 2SG.P
 (I have books (more) than you.)

The comparative particle can be used in combination with *muu1* ‘peer, (member of) group’ to create a superlative expression, as in the following example:

- (689) *khòðj5 suung3 kuaø muu1*
 1SG.P tall MORE.THAN peer
 ‘I am the tallest (i.e., taller than the other members of the group).’

Another apparent superlative construction lacks any noun phrase referring to a standard, but instead involves the word *sut2* ‘extremity’ in a locative adjunct. It is often used not in a true superlative sense, but as merely strong emphasis (‘really tall’):

- (690) *khòðj5 suung3 thii1 sut2*
 1SG.P tall ORD extremity
 ‘I am the tallest.’ (or: ‘I am really tall.’)

These constructions only take verbs from the adjective sub-class.

10.2.5 Adverbial function of adjectives

Some adjectives can function as adverbial V2 complements, where these describe the quality or property of an action rather than a thing. The following example shows the human propensity adjective *kêng1* ‘adept’ in an adverbial function:

- (691) *man2 vaw4 kêng1*
 3.B speak adept
 ‘She’s good at talking.’ (‘She speaks well.’)

Also, adjectives can be used as depictive secondary predicates, predicating a secondary and temporally transient property of one of the participants of a main clause (see Chapter 17). The following example shows *dip2* ‘raw’ in such a function:

- (692) *man2 kin3 siin4 nan4 dip2*
 3.B eat meat DEM.NONPROX raw
 ‘He ate that meat raw.’

So-called subject depictives (see Chapter 17) are ordered differently, as shown by the position of *maw2* ‘intoxicated’ in the following example:

- (693) *man2 maw2 maa2 huan2*
 3.B drunk come house
 ‘He came home drunk.’

These adverbial functions cannot be performed by all adjectives (at least DIMENSION, AGE, and COLOR are excluded). Adverbial and depictive functions thus constitute a grammatical property which sub-divides the adjective class.

10.2.6 Collaborative event marking

A number of adjectives can appear with the collaborative marker *kan3* (see Chapter 13). These appear to be restricted to the semantic class of POSITION (e.g., *haang1* ‘spaced apart’, *thii1* ‘spaced close together’, *kaj4* ‘near’, *kaj3* ‘far’). Here is an example:

- (694) *khèèw5 khòj5 haang1 kan3*
 tooth 1SG.P spaced.apart COLL
 ‘My teeth are spaced apart.’

This is a property not only of a subset of adjectives, but also of some verbs, and other more complex expressions:

- (695) *nòng4 khòj5 tii3 kan3*
 yG 1SG.P hit COLL
 ‘My younger siblings hit each other.’

- (696) *khacaw4 hak1 kan3*
 3PL.P love COLL
 ‘They love each other.’
- (697) *khacaw4 pên3 qaaj4 nòng4 kan3*
 3PL.P COP eBr yG COLL
 ‘They are older brother and younger sibling to each other.’

See Chapter 13 for description of *kan3* and its functions.

10.2.7 Inchoativization using directional complements

There is variation within adjectives in how they are inchoativized. Four directional verbs—*khaw5* ‘enter’, *qòòk5* ‘exit’, *khùn5* ‘ascend’, and *long2* ‘descend’—can be used after an adjective to express the meaning that the adjective property becomes ‘more’:

- (698) *phêt1 khaw5*
 spicy enter
 ‘get spicier’
- (699) *ñaj1 qòòk5*
 big exit
 ‘enlarge’
- (700) *dii3 khùn5*
 good ascend
 ‘improve’
- (701) *nòj4 long2*
 small descend
 ‘shrink, reduce’

Many verbs can take only one of the directional verbs in such a construction.

- (702) *dii3 khùn5/*long2/*khaw5/*qòòk5*
 good ascend/descend/enter/exit
 ‘improve’

Other verbs can take more than one:

- (703) *baa4 khaw5/khùn5*
 crazy enter/ascend
 ‘get crazier’
- (704) *cèng4 qòdòk5/khùn5*
 clear exit/ascend
 ‘become clearer’

One might expect there to be some systematicity relating to the apparent parallelism within the system—i.e., given that enter/exit and ascend/descend are opposites, and that many adjectives come in opposite pairs. But while one says *naaw3 khaw5* [cold enter] for ‘get colder’, one cannot say **hòdn4 qòdòk5* [hot exit] for ‘get hotter’. Rather, one says *hòdn4 khùn5* [hot ascend] ‘get hotter’.

10.2.8 Verbs of state change as adjectives

A number of verbs show properties of both active verbs and adjectives. These include state-change verbs such as intransitive *tèèk5* ‘break, broken’ and (S=O) ambitransitive *phang2* ‘destroy, destroyed’. Such verbs can be functionally similar to adjectival participles in English, yet no morphological material marks any derivation:

- (705) *caan3 nii4 caø tèèk5*
 plate DEM IRR break
 ‘This plate will break.’
- (706) *caan3 tèèk5 mèn1 caan3 khòdj5*
 plate break COP plate 1SG.P
 ‘The broken plate is my plate.’

These are properties of any verb. However, verbs of this kind, in addition, show full adjective properties. They appear with Type A reduplication and in comparative constructions:

- (707) *caan3 tèkø-tèèk5 mèn1 caan3 khòdj5*
 plate RDP.A-break COP plate 1SG.P
 ‘The broken-ish plate is my plate.’

- (708) *caan3 khòðj5 tèèk5 kuaø* *caan3 caw4*
 plate 1SG.P break MORE.THAN plate 2SG.P
 ‘My plate is more broken than your plate.’

The bridging context which allows reanalysis of these as adjectives seems clear. As active verbs they predicate an event which entails a state change, where the resulting state is enduring. If the relevant event is understood as realized, such a verb can be equally regarded as predicating a past event (where the resultant state automatically now holds) or a present state (where a change-into-state event is assumed to have preceded).

Other state change verbs such as intransitive *taaj3* ‘die’ or (S=O) ambitransitive *peet5* ‘open’ do not display these adjective properties. It seems clear that these latter forms are excluded because they do not allow gradability, possibly a defining semantic component of adjectives in Lao.

10.2.9 Circadian time-period terms

Terms for time periods within the cycle of a day such as *kham1* ‘evening’, *saw4* ‘early morning’, *suaj3* ‘late morning’, *vên2* ‘daytime’ and *dek2* ‘late at night’ behave like adjectives (taking direct negation and Type A Reduplication), but show restricted possibilities for occurrence with nominal arguments. Mostly, they are used adverbially:

- (709) *tòðn3* *dek2*
 time.period late.at.night
 ‘the period late at night’
- (710) *tòðn3* *dekø-dek2*
 time.period RDP.A-late.at.night
 ‘the period late-ish at night’
- (711) *phen1 maa2 dek2*
 3.P come late.at.night
 ‘She came late at night.’

Not all circadian time-period terms behave in this way. The terms *vên2* ‘daytime’ and *saw4* ‘early morning’ may be Type A reduplicated, but require addition of *tèè1* ‘from’ in adverbial function:

- (712) *tòdn3* *sawø-saw4*
time.period RDP.A-early.morning
‘early-ish in the morning’
- (713) a. *phen1 maa2 tèè1 saw4*
3.P come from early.morning
‘She came in the early morning.’
- b. **phen1 maa2 saw4*
3.P come early.morning
(She came in the early morning.)

While *khùùn2* ‘night’ does occur as a modifier in the expression *tòdn3 khùùn2* [time.period night] ‘night time’, it cannot be used as an adverbial modifier (714), nor can it be Type A reduplicated (715):

- (714) **phen1 maa2 (tèè1) khùùn2*
3.P come from night
(She came at night.)
- (715) **tòdn3* *khùnø-khùùn2*
time.period RDP.A-night
(the night-ish period)

10.2.10 Color terms

There are two classes of words for colors. The class of primary color terms consists of five adjectives: *khaaw3* ‘white’, *dam3* ‘black’, *dèèng3* ‘red’, *khiaaw3* ‘blue/green’, and *lùang3* ‘yellow’. These behave like regular adjectives, taking direct negation, acting as direct nominal modifiers, appearing in comparative expressions, and allowing Type A reduplication. Secondary color terms are nominal, derived from nouns (e.g., *faa4* ‘sky; blue’, *bua3* ‘lotus; pink’, *namø-taan3* ‘sugar; brown’).⁵ These do

⁵The term *namø-taan3* literally means ‘water/juice of the toddy palm’. In former times (and still sometimes), Lao villagers would reduce the juice of the toddy palm seed and use the resulting brown lumps as sweetener. White cane sugar has long replaced this in most places in Laos, yet the term *namø-taan3* is used for the white substance. Thus, while the substance *namø-taan3* is white, the color *namø-taan3* is brown. This is a clear demonstration that the color term is not a (synchronically) transparent reference to a certain colored thing or substance, but is idiomatically specified.

not display any of the properties of predicative adjectives. They cannot function as direct modifiers of heads in noun phrases:

- (716) a. *lot1 dam3*
 vehicle black
 ‘black car’
 b. **lot1 faa4*
 vehicle blue
 ‘blue car’

They cannot be used alone as attributive predicates:

- (717) a. *lot1 khan2 nan4 bə̀ð dam3*
 vehicle CLF.VEHICLE DEM.NONPROX NEG black
 ‘That car is not black.’
 b. **lot1 khan2 nan4 bə̀ð faa4*
 vehicle CLF.VEHICLE DEM.NONPROX NEG blue
 (That car is not blue.)

A more complex structure (involving the copula *mè̀en1*) is required in order to express the meaning intended by (717b):

- (718) *lot1 khan2 nan4 bə̀ð mè̀en1 sii3 faa4*
 vehicle CLF.VEHICLE DEM.NONPROX NEG COP color blue
 ‘That car is not blue-colored.’

Finally, secondary color terms cannot be Type A reduplicated:

- (719) a. *lot1 damø-dam3 mè̀en1 lot1 khò̀j5*
 vehicle RDP.A-black COP vehicle 1SG.P
 ‘The blackish vehicle is mine.’
 b. **lot1 faø-faa4 mè̀en1 lot1 khò̀j5*
 vehicle RDP.A-blue COP vehicle 1SG.P
 (The blueish vehicle is mine.)

10.3 Derivation of adjectives

There are various patterns by which adjectival expressions can be derived.

10.3.1 Complex adjectives

10.3.1.1 Compounds involving noun and verb

Some types of complex adjective combine a verbal and a nominal element. Being bisyllabic, these do not enter into Type A reduplication. They are nevertheless adjectives as defined by their behavior in comparative constructions, with the modal *jaak5* ‘want/tends to’ and with the intensifiers *khanaat5* ‘extent’ and *teep5* ‘rather’.

A set of some hundreds of terms involve *caj3* ‘heart’, such as *caj3-dii3* ‘kind’ (lit. ‘good heart’) and *dii3-caj3* ‘glad’ (lit. ‘heart good’; cf. Diller and Juntanamalaga 1990 on the nearly identical Thai system). Sometimes the grammatical patterns reveal different grammaticalization with respect to becoming a simple adjective. For example, *man2 caj3-dii3* [3.B heart-good] can be paraphrased as ‘he is good-hearted’ or ‘his heart is good’, and accordingly negation can appear in two different slots:

- (720) a. *man2 caj3 dii3*
 3.B heart good
 ‘He’s good-hearted.’
- b. *man2 bə̀ø caj3 dii3*
 3.B NEG heart good
 ‘He’s not good-hearted.’
- c. *man2 caj3 bə̀ø dii3*
 3.B heart NEG good
 ‘He’s not good-hearted.’ (i.e., ‘His heart is not good.’)

On the other hand, while *man2 caj3-dam3* [3.B heart-black] can be paraphrased as ‘He is black-hearted’, it is odd paraphrased as ‘?his heart is black’, perhaps because it draws on a more tenuous metaphor. Accordingly, negation directly on the verb component *dam3* ‘black’ is not preferred:

- (721) a. *man2 caj3 dam3*
 3.B heart black
 ‘He’s black-hearted.’
 b. *man2 bə̀ə caj3 dam3*
 3.B NEG heart black
 ‘He’s not black-hearted.’
 c. ? *man2 caj3 bə̀ə dam3*
 3.B heart NEG black
 (He’s not black-hearted; or, His heart is not black.)

Other examples of compound adjectival expressions involving noun and verb include body-part-plus-quality combinations such as *haang3 kut2* ‘missing tail’ or *phom3 dè̀ng3* ‘red hair’. These appear as adjectival type predicates in the following examples:

- (722) *mè̀w2 caw4 caə haang3 kut2*
 cat 2SG.P IRR tail cut.off
 ‘Your cat will have a cut-off tail.’
 (723) *luuk4 man2 bə̀ə phom3 dè̀ng3*
 child 3.B NEG hair red
 ‘Her children are not red-haired.’

These body-part-plus-quality combinations show the full grammatical behavior of adjectives, as the following attested example shows, with *mên3 paak5* [stink mouth] in a comparative construction:

- (724) *phakə-hò̀m3 mên3 paak5 kuaə*
 CT.VEGEABLE-onion stink mouth MORE.THAN
phakə-thiam2
 CT.VEGEABLE-garlic
 ‘Onions are more mouth-stinking than garlic.’

10.3.1.2 *Synonym compounds*

Commonly, two or more adjectives are used together, in a pattern typical of the Lao tendency to elaborate parallelism (see Chapter 12). These often have specific idiomatic meanings:

- (725) a. *hang1-mii2* [wealthy-have] ‘rich’
 b. *ñaj1-kuang4* [big-wide] ‘expansive’
 c. *ñung5-ñaaak4* [knotted-difficult] ‘complicated’
 d. *dii3-ngaam2* [good-beautiful] ‘good, proper’
 e. *kêng1-kaa4-saa3maat4* [adept-daring-able] ‘brave, able’

Such elaborative compounding is not adjective-specific. Here are some examples of elaborative compounds consisting of nouns and verbs:

- (726) a. *sùu4-khaaj3* [buy-sell] ‘trade, engage in commerce’
 b. *khaa5-fan2-lan1-thèng2* [kill-slice-cut-stab] ‘annihilate violently’
 c. *kèw4-vèn3-ngen2-kham2* [gem-ring-silver-gold] ‘valuables’

10.3.2 Zero derivation

Sometimes a single verb has two meanings, one as an adjective, and one as another verb sub-type. For example, the verb *khaw5* ‘enter’ has a second meaning ‘sharp (for cutting)’. In this second meaning, *khaw5* behaves like a PHYSICAL PROPERTY adjective, and accordingly enters into adjective-specific grammatical behavior, such as the Type A reduplication illustrated in the following example:

- (727) *miit4 khawø-khaw5*
 knife RDP.A-sharp
 ‘a sharp-ish knife’

The bridging context for such a meaning shift is the co-presence of sharpness of a knife and its ‘entering’ whatever it cuts (e.g., a piece of meat).

Another example is the transitive verb *mii2* ‘have (something)’, whose second meaning is intransitive ‘wealthy’. These verb-adjective alternations do not show sufficient regularity to allow useful generalizations which would justify using the term ‘derivation’ as a productive grammatical process (cf. Enfield 2006d).

10.3.3 Derivational prefix *khi*ϕ-

The prefix *khi*ϕ- derived from *khi*5 ‘shit’ has a range of derivational functions, including derivation of adjectives (cf. Chapter 7, section 7.3.4).

- (728) *khi*ϕ-V → N
e.g., *khi*ϕ-*lak*1 ‘thief’ [*lak*1 ‘steal’]
- (729) *khi*ϕ-N → N
e.g., *khi*ϕ-*dang*3 ‘snot’ [*dang*3 ‘nose’]
- (730) *khi*ϕ-ADJ → ADJ
e.g., *khi*ϕ-*laaj*4 ‘ugly’ [*laaj*4 ‘awful’]
*khi*ϕ-*thii*1 ‘stingy’ [*thii*1 ‘closely spaced’]

Since these derived expressions are not monosyllabic, they generally do not enter into Type A reduplication. One exception is *khi*ϕ-*laj*ϕ-*laaj*4 ‘rather ugly’ (derived from *khi*ϕ-*laaj*4 ‘ugly’).

10.3.4 Derivational construction *pên*3-*taa*3-V ‘be-eye-V’

The ‘be-eye-V’ construction productively derives complex adjectives from verbs. It has the following structure:

- (731) X *pên*3-*taa*3-V ‘X be-eye-V’ = ‘X is such that one would V it (or regard it as V)’

Here are some examples:

- (732) *pên*3-*taa*3-*hak*1 ‘lovable’ [*hak*1 = v. transitive ‘love’]
- (733) *pên*3-*taa*3-*juu*1 ‘livable’ [*juu*1 = v. ambitransitive (S=A) ‘live somewhere’]
- (734) *pên*3-*taa*3-*jik*2 ‘pinchable’ (of small child) [*jik*2 = v. transitive ‘pinch’]

As a sub-type of verbs, adjectives may also appear in the ‘V’ slot in this construction. The result is a derived adjective:

- (735) *pên*3-*taa*3-*sèp*4 ‘delicious looking’ [*sèp*4 = ‘delicious’]

The following examples contrast the base and derived forms of the adjective *sèp*4 ‘delicious’:

- (736) a. *qahaan3 nii4 sèèp4*
 food DEM delicious
 ‘This food is delicious.’
 b. *qahaan3 nii4 pên3-taa3-sèèp4*
 food DEM be-eye-delicious
 ‘This food looks delicious’

The derived expression commonly appears with an adverbial function, as follows:

- (737) *laaw2 kin3 qahaan3 nii4 pên3-taa3-sèèp4*
 3SG.FA eat food DEM be-eye-delicious
 ‘He’s eating this food with gusto.’ (i.e., it looks like he’s finding it delicious)

10.3.5 Summary

There are a number of ways in which adjectives may be derived, including compounding, zero derivation (where the derivation is on a historical level), and dedicated adjective-deriving constructions. Another sense in which adjectives may be derived is through alternations in verbal argument structure, to which we now turn.

10.4 Some argument structure alternations

Many Lao verbs are S=O ambitransitive, appearing in both transitive and intransitive frames, where the intransitive subject (S) has the same semantic role as the transitive object (O). There are many intransitive uses of otherwise transitive verbs which are best translated into English by passive participles (i.e., can be used in the two primary adjective functions, predicative and attributive). Consider the (b) and (c) examples in the following:

- (738) a. *laaw2 cùùn3 paa3*
 3SG.FA fry fish
 ‘He’s frying fish.’

- b. *paa3 to∅ nan4 cùùn3*
 fish MC.ANIM DEM.NONPROX fry
 ‘That fish is fried.’
- c. *kuu3 jaak5 daj4 paa3 cùùn3*
 1SG.B want acquire fish fry
 ‘I want to get (some) fried fish.’

In such cases, however, the ‘participle adjective’ reading (as in (738b)) does not arise under bare negation.

- (739) *paa3 to∅ nan4 bò∅ cùùn3*
 fish MC.ANIM DEM.NONPROX NEG fry
 ‘That fish is not to be fried.’

One way to negate (738b) is to combine the negative marker with the achievement marker *daj∅*, as follows:

- (740) *paa3 to∅ nan4 bò∅ daj∅ cùùn3*
 fish MC.ANIM DEM.NONPROX NEG ACHV fry
 i. ‘That fish is not fried.’
 ii. ‘That fish is not to be fried.’

A simple adjective like *sèèp4* ‘delicious’ does not display this behavior:

- (741) *paa3 to∅ nan4 bò∅ sèèp4*
 fish MC.ANIM DEM.NONPROX NEG delicious
 ‘That fish is not delicious.’
- (742) *paa3 to∅ nan4 bò∅ daj∅ sèèp4*
 fish MC.ANIM DEM.NONPROX NEG ACHV delicious
 ‘That fish is NOT delicious.’

The marked status of the use of *bò∅-daj∅-* [NEG-ACHV] in negating a simple adjective like *sèèp4* ‘delicious’, illustrated in (742), is an important difference between the two types of verbal modifiers, arising from differences in internal logical-aspectual semantics. The semantic structure of *cùùn3* ‘fry’ includes reference to a causing agent, while that of *sèèp4* ‘delicious’ does not. This distinction singles out verbs with stative meanings, including predicates like *mii2 pùm4* ‘have a book’.

10.5 Summary

Table 26 lists some relevant properties of verbs and verb marking, distinguishing between sub-categories, as discussed throughout this chapter.

Table 26. Some properties distinguishing verb sub-types

	Properties (see key)	Noun (e.g. <i>maa3</i> 'dog')	V. achievement (e.g. <i>hên3</i> 'see')	V. accomplishment (e.g. <i>tam1</i> 'weave')	V. activity (e.g. <i>lèn1</i> 'run')	V. state (e.g. <i>huu4</i> 'know')	V. adjective (e.g. <i>dii3</i> 'good')
Verb-only properties	A	-	+	+	+	+	+
	B	-	+	+	+	+	+
Stative-only properties	C	n/a	-	-	-	+	+
	D	n/a	-	-	-	+	+
Adjective-only	E	-	-	-	-	-	+
	F	-	-	-	-	-	+
	G	-	-	-	-	-	+
	H	-	-	-	-	-	+

Key to properties:

- A As NP modifier, linked by *thii1*
- B As predicate, directly preceded by negator *bòø*
- C V with perfective marker, entails 'V now'
- D Negation does not give future reading
- E Type A reduplication
- F Intensification with *khanaat5* 'really very'
- G Comparative in frame NP1 __ *kua1* NP2
- H Superlative in frame NP1 __ *thii1 sut2*

Chapter 11

Basic clausal syntax

11.1 Argument structure

As a language of the isolating type (Sapir 1921:126), Lao entirely lacks explicit morphological marking of grammatical relations or other formal linking of predicates and arguments, whether this marking be on clausal heads (agreement) or dependents (case-marking). The Lao data show that the informational problem of disambiguating role and reference of arguments hardly needs a formal solution. That is, there need be no formal alternative to case-marking, in languages which lack case. Where case-marking simply distinguishes who from whom, it is for the most part dispensable, thanks to the richness of pragmatics. For more expressive functions of case-marking, where features of transitivity are manipulated for expressive or information-structural effect,¹ Lao finds constructional means to treat certain arguments in special ways, thereby explicitly marking non-redundant semantic information in case-like ways.

11.1.1 Some terminological distinctions

For purposes of the discussion below, I make the following terminological distinctions. A participant in an event is any entity which can be thought of as directly involved in that event. Any verb will specify some minimum number of participants in the event which it predicates, such that the event it denotes cannot be imagined with fewer participants. For

¹I distinguish here between disambiguating versus expressive functions of core case marking. Disambiguating functions serve the resolution of referential ambiguities in communication, most importantly helping hearers to track protagonists through discourse, and to map event and discourse participants onto distinct semantic roles or grammatical relations. Disambiguating functions of core case distinguish who from whom, and little more. Expressive functions of core case, by contrast, signal distinctions in conceptual representation or construal of events, marking constructions which may signal special distinctions in aspect, agentivity, responsibility, involvement, and effect. Expressive case functions tend to be optional, as distinct from the typically obligatory nature of disambiguating case-marking.

example, *sleep* specifies at least one participant, *forget* at least two, and *show* at least three. An argument, by contrast, is a syntactic entity, a clause-level reference to a participant which is fully referential and trackable in the discourse, freely expandable and modifiable, and occupying a grammatical slot (cf. Goldberg 1995: 43). Arguments are a subset of participants. Thus, while the event denoted by the verb *paint* involves no less than four participants (a painter, some paint, an instrument such as a brush, and a thing to which the paint is applied), the number of arguments encoded in a description of this event may be just two (*I painted the house*).

11.1.2 Pragmatically oriented grammar

As defined by its isolating morphological profile, Lao lacks both case and its functional cousin, agreement. Lao is like Mandarin, Thai, Vietnamese and Riau Indonesian in exemplifying an extreme of pragmatically-oriented grammar (cf. Gil 2005a). With argument-predicate relations marked neither on heads nor dependents, how to tell who from whom? A widely presumed answer is that hearers of languages like Lao are forced to rely on strict constituent order to maintain informational coherence in predicate-argument relations. This claim is, however, weak at best, since extensive ellipsis and movement create widespread surface ambiguity, and without compromising communication. Accordingly, for Mandarin, Li and Thompson (1981:26) state that ‘no basic word order can be established’. Similarly, on Riau Indonesian, Gil (2005b) shows that there are ‘no distinctions between major syntactic categories’. Gil argues that observed word order patterns in the language are epiphenomenal (cf. also LaPolla 1993). With this in mind, consider the Lao A/S-V-O constituent order pattern, perhaps the closest to a pragmatically unmarked pattern: ²

²By unmarked I mean that speakers may report an impression that the S/A-V-O pattern is somehow basic in status. A consultant will likely supply the S/A-V-O pattern when asked to compose sentences of the variety *The farmer kills the duckling*, i.e., decontextualized structures of the sort that seldom actually occur (Du Bois 1987). The impression of basicness to this word order arises not from an asemantic structural default, but from the normal discourse asymmetry inherent in argument structure. One argument will, all things being equal, be higher on a scale of animacy, agency, topicality, than the other (cf. Comrie 1989:127 on this as ‘natural information flow’; cf. Hopper and Thompson 1980, Langacker 1987, LaPolla 1993, Croft 2003).

(743) NP_A V NP_O

kuu3 jaan4 mùng2
1 SG.B afraid 2 SG.B

‘I was afraid of you.’

(744) NP_A V NP_O

phuø pên3 mia2 khòòng3 thaaw4 nan4 hên3
MC.HUM COP wife of young.man DEM.NONPROX see
qavaj2ñavaq1 khòòng3 faaj1 coon3
organ of side bandit

‘That young man’s wife saw the bandit’s genitals.’

(745) NP_S V

saam3 khon2 taaj3
three person die

‘Three people died.’

Departures from the A/S-V-O pattern are common. Movement, for example, may see a subject argument in a post-final position (examples (746) and (747), where the back slash represents the onset of a prosodic mark-off, with lowered amplitude and pitch), or an object argument in initial position (example (748), where the forward slash represents the syntactic border between a left-positioned topic and a grammatical subject). Importantly, while it is formally apparent in these examples that something has been moved into an extracausal position, there is no information about the semantic/functional role of the moved argument.

(746) V NP_S

taaj3 lèw4 \ phòò1 hanø
die PRF father TPC.DIST

‘(He)’d be dead, the father.’

(747) V NP_O NP_A

qaw3 mia2 \ haw2 niø
take wife 1.FA TPC

‘Took a wife, I (did).’

(748) NP_O NP_A V

lot1 / haw2 laø bðø mii2
 vehicle 1.FA PRF NEG have

‘A car, I didn’t have.’

Another reason that surface strings might not show canonical constituent order patterns is ellipsis. Arguments may be freely ellipsed when definite or otherwise contextually retrievable, leaving literally zero material for the mapping of arguments onto predicates, and no coherent way of determining constituent order. This is the most important challenge to a claim that without case or agreement, word order is crucial for maintaining role and reference relations:

(749) *ñaaaw2*

long

‘(It was) long.’

(750) *lùùm2*

forget

‘(I have) forgotten (it).’

(751) *hên3*

see

‘(I) saw (it).’

The referential resolution of ellipsis in Lao is in general completely open to pragmatic interpretation since there are few strict grammatical constraints on the interpretation of unexpressed nominal material. Consider the following example of ‘gapping’ (modeled after a Thai example in Foley and Van Valin 1984:194):

(752) *tam3 khuaj2 taaj3*

crash.into buffalo die

i. ‘(She) crashed into a buffalo and died.’

ii. ‘(She) crashed into a buffalo and (it) died.’

iii. ‘(She) crashed into a buffalo and (the car) died (i.e., stalled).’

The only case of strict referential control of a zero element is in same-subject readings of ‘want’ complements (see Chapter 19):

- (753) *man2 jaak5 khaa5*
 3.B want kill
 ‘She wants to kill (it).’

This kind of control is not found in looser types of complementation:

- (754) *man2 fan3 vaa1 khaa5*
 3.B dream COMP kill
 ‘She_i dreamt (that) she_{i/j} killed it_{i/j/k}.’

Because of this syntactic control constraint in ‘want’ complements, it is necessary to explicitly mark switch-reference in such constructions with a dummy causative in *haj5* ‘give’ (cf. Chapter 18):

- (755) a. *man2 jaak2 paj3*
 3.B want go
 ‘She_i wants $\emptyset_{i/*j}$ to go.’
 b. *man2 jaak2 haj5 paj3*
 3.B want give go
 ‘She_i wants $\emptyset_{*i/j}$ to go.’ (i.e., ‘She wants him/her/them to go.’)

When we combine ellipsis with movement, further structural ambiguity arises (as pointed out for Mandarin by Chao 1968; cf. Gil 2005a):³

- (756) Surface sequence: **NP V_{bivalent}**

Structural analysis 1: **NP_O V_{bivalent}** (NP_A ellipsed)

Structural analysis 2: **NP_A V_{bivalent}** (NP_O ellipsed)

E.g., with bivalent verb *qaw3* ‘to take’:

³For clarity of presentation, I do not include in the example structure’s schematic representation the various particles which appear in the actual examples. In neither case does the presence of the particle bear upon the mapping of arguments to one or another semantic, grammatical, or discourse function.

phuak4 juu1 nam2 thaang2 kaø qaw3
 group be.at accompany road T.LNK take

i. ‘Those_i along the road, (they)_j took Ø_i.’ (actual reading in text source)

ii. ‘Those along the road took (them).’ (possible reading)

(757) Surface sequence: **NP V_{bivalent} NP**

Structural analysis 1: **NP_A V_{bivalent} NP_O** (NP_O postposed)⁴

Structural analysis 2: **NP_O V_{bivalent} NP_A** (NP_A postposed)

E.g., with bivalent verb *mak1* ‘to like’:

tamluat5 / mak1 dêj2 \ phuø-saaw3 tòøn3
 police like FAC.NEWS MC.HUM-girls time
nan4
 DEM.NONPROX

i. ‘Police_i, (they)_j liked (them)_i you know, girls_j back then.’ (actual reading in text source) [i.e., girls liked police]

ii. ‘Police liked (them) you know, girls back then.’ [i.e., police liked girls]

Such patterns of variability in constituent order are readily analyzed as arising from movement and ellipsis, though note that these are merely descriptive: nothing in the form of these examples serves to disambiguate. That these ubiquitous relaxations of the word order patterns co-exist with a total lack of morphological marking of semantic roles or grammatical relations might suggest chaos. But in real contexts of usage, Lao speakers have no difficulty in communicating.

The conclusion is that Lao and other radically isolating languages (Gil 2005a, Enfield 2005b) demonstrate that the merely disambiguating functions of case are so redundant as to be almost entirely dispensable. When core referential information is not symbolically encoded in grammar, potential ambiguities in role and reference relations are readily resolved by

⁴We are justified in saying that the noun phrase is postposed, since it appears after the sentence-final particle *dêj2*, and thus in the prosodically marked off, extracausal Right Position. But its postpositioned status has no bearing upon a hearer’s interpretation of its semantic role or grammatical relation.

features of context, if indeed they need to be resolved. Within ‘context’ we may include, on the one hand, selectional restrictions of verb-argument semantics (e.g., if I give you a predicate ‘eat< $x_{\text{eater}}, y_{\text{eaten}}$ >’ and two arguments ‘John’ and ‘an apple’, chances are you will correctly guess the argument-role mapping), and, on the other hand, the pragmatic constraints of expectation supplied by any given active discourse world (and following informational principles of topic continuity, etc.). With these semantic and pragmatic devices alone, speakers of Lao can readily distinguish who from whom in the absence of the kind of unambiguous marking which morphological case might otherwise provide. The surface ambiguities just outlined are normally unproblematic when there is a full discourse context. Importantly, however, the same surface strings which are easily understood *in situ* may, if taken out of context, be impossible to interpret with referential certainty.⁵

11.1.3 Argument-predicate relations: some patterns

I have stressed a lack of dependable formal marking of predicate-argument relations, but this does not imply a lack of systematicity in the mapping of arguments to predicate roles and functions. There are underlying classes of argument structure pattern which constrain the possibilities. The key patterns turn on distinctions in the semantics of verbs—i.e., patterns of argument symmetry and aspectual structure inherent to the semantics of distinct (classes of) verbs.

11.1.3.1 *Monovalent predicates*

For monovalent (single-argument) predicates, disambiguating who from whom is not an issue. There are, however, a range of different possible conceptual or semantic mappings of the relation of argument to verb for

⁵A good example is (757), above. I presented an audio recording of this utterance alone, out of context, to a number of Lao speakers, and asked them to explain their interpretation of the sentence. In all cases, they understood the utterance to have the opposite mapping of actor and undergoer to what was intended by the speaker in the original context—that is, without the original discourse context, all hearers assumed the initial noun phrase to be in A function.

monovalent predicates, and hearers must be able to determine which from among a number of possible roles an argument may have. Here are some basic types of relation between a predicate and its single argument:

- (758) *Active monovalent relation* (single argument S = agent/theme)
 Meaning: ‘S does V’; includes typical active monovalents (e.g., *caam3* ‘sneeze’, *lèn1* ‘run’, *san1* ‘shake’).
- (759) *Inchoative-stative monovalent relation* (S = theme)
 Expresses the meaning ‘S enters into or is in state V’; typical stative property concept monovalents (e.g., *laaj2* ‘striped’, *hòn4* ‘hot’, *dii3* ‘good’); inchoative reading is encouraged by irrealis or progressive marking.
- (760) *Resultant state monovalent relation* (S = patient/theme)
 Telic agent-controlled verbs with patient/theme as subject and where agent is unexpressed and indefinite/nonretrievable (e.g., *kaang3* ‘to be hoisted’, *pia3* ‘to be platted’, *tom4* ‘to be boiled’).

Verbs encoding these three types of argument-verb relation differ in grammatical behavior, notably in terms of permissible alternations. For example, for (758), no transitive alternation is possible; for (759), a caused state alternation is possible (see below); for (760), negation requires *dajø*, a transitive alternation is possible (see below). Of more direct relevance to case-marking as a device for dealing with referential ambiguities are patterns of relation between two arguments and a single predicate. We turn now to those.

11.1.3.2 *Symmetric and other non-oriented bivalent predicates*

When a bivalent predicate is symmetric, in the sense that its two arguments are involved in the event in the same way and to the same degree, there is (perhaps trivially) the possibility to allow either argument in either position, without (truth-conditionally) affecting predicate-argument mapping. Take verbs of likeness: *John resembles Bill* entails *Bill resembles John* (while *John scratches Bill* does not entail *Bill scratches John*). There are also asymmetric predicates like *khaat5* ‘to lack (something)’ and *têm3* ‘to be full (of something)’ which show similar variability. This is because, despite being asymmetric, they are non-oriented, that is they do not show an obvious direction of figure-ground asymmetry (as distinct, say, from

the inherent orientation more prototypical active verbs such as ‘hit’; Langacker 1987:209ff, Comrie 1989, Croft 1991:184ff). Diller (1997) has pointed this out for Thai, and the same kinds of examples work in Lao too (reminiscent of English case alternations like *the garden is swarming with bees* versus *Bees are swarming in the garden*; Levin 1993, Levin and Rappaport Hovav 2005, among many others). Importantly, the Lao cases are distinct from ‘swarm’ type examples because the alternations do not involve any kind of morphological marking, as non-core or otherwise, on arguments. With non-oriented predicates of this kind, a single truth-conditional situation may equally well be describable by expressions of opposite constituent ordering (761a, b; 762a, b), or a single expression may have two very different truth-conditional interpretations (763):

- (761) a. *còðk5 tèm3 law5*
cup full liquor
‘The cup is filled (with) liquor.’
b. *law5 tèm3 còðk5*
liquor full cup
‘Liquor fills the cup.’
- (762) a. *sàa4 nii4 tit3 namø-mùk2*
shirt DEM attach CT.LIQUID-ink
‘This shirt has got ink on it.’
b. *namø-mùk2 tit2 sàa4 nii4*
CT.LIQUID-ink attach shirt DEM
‘Ink has got on this shirt.’
- (763) *man2 bang3 hùan2*
3.B block.from.view house
i. ‘He’s blocked from view by the house’.
ii. ‘He’s blocking the house from view.’

Alternations such as those illustrated in (761-763) are conditioned primarily by information structural considerations. They are responsive to dimensions of focus, topic, presupposition, as roughly captured in the different English translations. These are good illustrations of the lack of relation between any available form of explicit coding (e.g., constituent order) and any particular type of semantic role (e.g., theme, location).

11.1.3.3 *Asymmetric bivalent predicates*

There is greater variety in asymmetric bivalent relations, which map two arguments onto a predicate where the argument asymmetry has a straightforward directionality:

- (764) *Transitive relation* (A=agent/effector, O=patient/theme)
Expresses the meaning ‘A does V to O (which causes O to be in certain state)’: e.g., *tom4* ‘boil’, *pia3* ‘plat’, *khaa5* ‘kill’, *puk2* ‘waken’.
- (765) *Experiencer subject relation* (A=experiencer, O=theme)
Expresses the meaning ‘A has the experience of V as a result of the stimulus O’, includes ‘applied stimulus’ expressions: e.g., *sèèp4* ‘(find something) delicious’, *nak2* ‘(find something) heavy’, *tùùnl* ‘be startled (by something)’. There is an animacy constraint on A.
- (766) *Caused state relation* (A=effector, O=theme)
Expresses the meaning ‘O comes to be in state V because of A’, includes ‘caused state’ expressions: e.g., *laaj2* ‘((cause to) become) striped’, *dam3* ‘((cause to) become) black’, *hòòn4* ‘((cause to) become) hot’. Usually not agentive, although there are exceptions; e.g., *qunl* ‘(to) warm (something up)’.
- (767) *Applied effector relation* (A=theme, O=effector)
Expresses the meaning ‘A is in state V because of O’: e.g., *vaan3* ‘be sweet (because of something, e.g., sugar)’, *phêt2* ‘be spicy (because of something; e.g., chili)’, *taaj3* ‘die (because of something; e.g., sunlight)’.

These patterns are interrelated in various ways. While a few verbs are relatively restricted in their argument structure (e.g., strictly monovalent *tèèk5* ‘to be broken, to break [intr.]’ and *fof2* ‘to be boiling’), most verbs are versatile. To take one example, the verb *nak2* ‘to be heavy’ appears in four of the expression types listed above, one exception being the transitive relation:

- (768) *kapaw3 nii4 nak2*
bag DEM heavy
‘This bag is heavy.’ (Inchoative-stative monovalent)

- (769) *khòj5 nak2 kapaw3 nii4*
 1SG.P heavy bag DEM
 ‘I find this bag heavy.’ (Experiencer subject)
- (770) *kapaw3 nii4 nak2 law5*
 bag DEM heavy liquor
 ‘The bag is heavy from the liquor (inside it).’ (Applied effector)
- (771) *law5 nii4 nak2 kapaw3*
 liquor DEM heavy bag
 ‘This liquor makes the bag heavy.’ (Caused state)

With the ever-present possibility of ellipsis, multiple interpretations become more likely. Thus, *khòj5 nak2* [1SG.P heavy] could be a monovalent expression meaning ‘I’m heavy’ or an experiencer subject expression meaning ‘I’m finding (it) heavy’ (i.e., where the object argument is ellipsed). Only context will tell.

A further confounding parameter for referential interpretation is ambivalence, that is the possibility of a predicate entering into either a monovalent or a bivalent relation. The correct referential analysis (i.e., the one intended by the speaker) is only resolved by consulting the discourse record of a given usage:

- (772) Surface sequence: **NP V_{ambivalent}**

Structural analysis 1: **NP_S V**

Structural analysis 2: **NP_A V** (NP_O ellipsed)

Structural analysis 3: **NP_O V** (NP_A ellipsed)

- a. *paa3 kin3 lèw4*
 fish eat PRF
 i. ‘The fish has been eaten.’
 ii. ‘The fish has eaten (it).’
 iii. ‘The fish, (they) have eaten.’ (cf. Chao 1968:75)
- b. *khèw5 bòø than2 mii2*
 tooth NEG be.on.time have/there.is
 i. ‘There were not yet any teeth.’
 ii. ‘The teeth didn’t yet have (it).’
 iii. ‘Teeth, (it) didn’t yet have.’ (reading in source text)

11.1.4 Expressive case functions: construal in event representation by marked construction

We have so far mostly been concerned with the disambiguating function of core case-marking—i.e., the function of linking arguments to roles or indices. We now consider kinds of expressive functions which case-marking might perform, that is where special treatment of one or another argument serves to manipulate semantic distinctions in the construal of event structure (e.g., more versus less complete, aspectually), and participant involvement (e.g., more versus less involved, more versus less responsible). These kinds of distinction relate to transitivity in the sense of Hopper and Thompson (1980).

A key example is the handling-despatch construction (see Chapter 15), illustrated in (773b) as an alternative rendition of (773a).

- (773) a. *man2 thim5 pùm4*
 3.B discard book
 ‘He discards the book.’ (Transitive construction)
- b. *man2 qaw3 pùm4 thim5*
 3.B take book discard
 ‘He takes the book (and) discards (it).’ (Handling-despatch construction)

Both (773a) and (773b) involve the same two arguments (‘he’, ‘book’), and the same bivalent transitive verb (‘discard’). The difference is that in (773b), the undergoer is expressed as a direct complement of an added verb of manipulation, with at least two effects. The first effect of this extra verb is to construe the event as bifurcated, breaking it down into two phases: coming into control of the undergoer followed by despatch of the undergoer. In (773a), by contrast, the actor’s prior control over the undergoer is presupposed. The second effect is to change the relative constituent order of the undergoer and the main content verb. In the marked construction, the undergoer is brought forward (if expressed; cf. (774), below), and the verb goes to a clause-final position.⁶

⁶Much has been made of the possible long-term historical effects of such a construction taking hold in Sinitic languages such as Mandarin (e.g., the creation of object case-marking, and associated change of word order from SVO to SOV; Li and Thompson 1981:26, 463ff).

It has been said in the Sinitic context that the added element which hosts the undergoer (here the verb ‘take’) is equivalent to a case marker, explicitly marking the semantic role of the undergoer (e.g., theme). In Lao it cannot be regarded as a case marker, for at least two reasons. First, the element is not an affix or other bound or dependent morpheme type. The item *qaw3* ‘take’ is a regular verb with regular verb trappings. For instance, it may ellipse its arguments if they are contextually retrievable, thus appearing with no dependent material whatsoever, as in this recasting of (773b):

- (774) *qaw3 thim5*
 take discard
 ‘(He) takes (it and) discards (it).’

Second, ‘object marking’ by means of the handling-despatch construction is not obligatory. It is a marked alternative to a single-verb transitive construction, whether this be an AVO structure as in (773a), above, or some version of it (with movement and/or ellipsis), as in the following:

- (775) a. *pùm4, man2 thim5*
 book 3.B discard
 ‘The book, he discards.’
 b. *thim5*
 discard
 ‘(He) discards (it).’ (or: ‘(It) is discarded.’)

If the function of the handling-despatch construction is at all comparable to that of case marking, it is an expressive function, not a disambiguating function.

The handling-despatch construction represents one possibility in an isolating language such as Lao to achieve an equivalent of one type of case-marking function, that is by singling out an argument for some sort of special treatment, as a way of manipulating the understood construal of the event predicated, where the relevant parameters of meaning typically relate to some or other of the ensemble of transitivity features (Hopper and Thompson 1980), including definiteness and control.

11.1.5 Remark

The formal organization of predicate-argument relations in this radically isolating language illustrates that the disambiguating functions of core case-marking need not be marked at all. In lieu of such case-marking, or any other unequivocal form of argument-role marking (agreement marking, unambiguous interpretation of word order patterns), reference is well handled by the sheer pragmatics of context (to the extent that reference needs resolving at all). The key source of information may be in the linguistic context (a hearer's constrained expectations about role and reference given selectional restrictions of predicates), or may be in the discourse or situational context (given the facts of particular discourse trajectories on particular occasions of language use). Grammarians of such languages have noted these problems, for example Thompson (1987:220) writing on Vietnamese: 'the familiar dichotomy of English verbs between those which "take objects" and those which do not is absent'. Or as Gil puts it, writing on Riau Indonesian, languages of this kind are 'without distinct construction-specific semantic rules, compositional semantics relying instead on the association operator, which says that the meaning of a composite expression is associated with the meanings of its constituents in an underspecified fashion' (Gil 2005a:1). Core grammatical relations are open to construal according to context. In actual language usage, rampant argument-role-reference ambiguity seldom poses communicative problems.

11.2 Copula verbs

There are two copula verbs, *pên3* and *mèn1*. (See Chapter 10, section 10.1.1 for discussion of verbless copula-type complement constructions.) The two are interchangeable in some contexts, but they also show some differences in syntactic behavior.

The verb *pên3* has a number of roles. It acts as a postverbal acquired abilitative aspectual-modal, meaning 'know how' (Chapter 9); it introduces depictive secondary predicate complements (Chapter 17); it occurs in a number of idiomatic expressions (e.g., 'why?'; Chapter 5). In its role as a copula verb, *pên3* serves to make predications about the role, identity, or capabilities of the clausal subject. In the following examples,

pên3 takes nominal complements which specify the social role or identity of the subject argument:

- (776) *kheej2 pên3 mia2 khòng3 ñak1-kumphán2*
 EXP COP wife of ogre-K
 ‘(She) had been the wife of Kumphán.’
- (777) *phen1 pên3 phuø-ñaj1*
 3.P COP MC.HUM-big
 ‘He was an adult.’
- (778) *bòø huu4 vaa1 siø pên3 khon2 laaw2-lum1 lùù3 khon2*
 NEG know COMP IRR COP person Lao-below or person
laaw2-suung3
 Lao-high
 ‘(I) don’t know if (they) were Lowland Lao or Upland Lao people.’
- (779) *khaw3 pên3 nakø-hian2*
 3PL.B COP CT.AGT-student
 ‘They were students.’

This copula is often used in a kind of light verb construction where a verbal predicate is first nominalized and then is expressed as a complement of the copula. To illustrate, consider the following example, whose main verb is *kin3* ‘eat’:

- (780) *laaw2 bòø kin3 siin4*
 3SG.FA NEG eat meat
 ‘He doesn’t eat meat.’

The predicate of (780) can be nominalized by acting as a relative clause modifier of the nominal head *khon2* ‘person’:

- (781) *khon2 bòø kin3 siin4*
 person NEG eat meat
 ‘a person who doesn’t eat meat’

The complex noun phrase in (781) can then be used as a complement of the copula verb *pên3*:

- (782) *laaw2 pên3 [khon2 bòø kin3 siin4]*
 3SG.FA COP person NEG eat meat
 ‘He is a person who doesn’t eat meat.’

The difference between (780) and (782) is subtle. Example (780) simply makes a predication about the subject, while (782) serves to categorize the subject as a certain type of person (cf. Wierzbicka 1988:463ff).

This light verb type construction is a common strategy in predicating a property or capability of the subject, not only concerning people, as in (783), but of things and places, as in (784-786):

- (783) *siang2 nanø pên3 [khon2 mii2 pan3ñaa2 kuang4]*
 S TPC.NONPROX COP person have intelligence broad
 ‘Siang was a person with broad intelligence.’
- (784) *cot2-maaj3 qanø-nan4 pên3 [cot2-maaj3*
 letter MC.INAN-DEM.NONPROX COP letter
khòòng3 naaj2-baan4]
 of boss-village
 ‘That letter was a letter from the village chief.’
- (785) *pên3 [mùang2 thii1 mii2 khuam2 qudom3-som3buun3]*
 COP city REL have NZR complete-perfect
 ‘(It) was a city which had perfection.’
- (786) *phañaa2 mùang2 thavaa2lavadii3 kaø pên3 phuø mii2*
 king city T T.LNK COP MC.HUM have
nisaj3-caj3-khòò2 kuang4-khuang3
 disposition wide-cross
 ‘The king of the city of Thavaalavadii was a person with a generous disposition.’

Pên3 may be used in introducing complements which ask or specify HOW something is:

- (787) *mùù4 nan4, man2 pên3 cang1-daj3, muan1 bòò3*
 day DEM.NONPROX 3.B COP way-INDEF fun QPLR
 ‘That day, how was it, was it fun?’

While the copula verb *pên3* typically introduces complements which predicate the properties or statuses of subjects, thereby categorizing them,

mèèn1 is more associated with making predications as to what can be said to be true about the subject. In line with this, *mèèn1* can mean ‘to be so, to be the case’, as in the common complex tag question phrase *mèèn1 bòð3* [BE.SO QPLR] ‘Is it so?’:

- (788) *laaw2 bòð kin3 siin4, mèèn1 bòð3*
 3SG.FA NEG eat meat BE.SO QPLR
 ‘He doesn’t eat meat, right?’

The following examples show *mèèn1* as a copula, where its complement is concerned with what is true or not true about the subject. From an epic narrative myth, the main protagonists are blocked by a mountain which has suddenly appeared in the way. One of the characters reveals that it is in fact a giant snake that has transformed itself:

- (789) *man2 bòð mèèn1 phuu2 dêj2*
 3.B NEG COP mountain FAC.NEWS
 ‘(It’s) not a mountain, you know.’

In another mythical tale, the king’s sister has been saved from imprisonment. The king is mistaken as to the identity of those who freed her. As he is about to give a reward to the wrong people, the king’s sister says:

- (790) *bòð mèèn1 khon2 qaw3 nòòng4 maa2 dêj2*
 NEG COP person take yZ come FAC.NEWS
 ‘(These) are not the people who brought me (here), you know.’

As a copula, *mèèn1* is used in asking what something is. For example, seeing an unfamiliar object, a speaker asks:

- (791) *qanø-nii4 mèèn1 ñang3*
 MC.INAN-DEM COP INDEF.INAN
 ‘What’s this thing?’

This doesn’t work with *pên3*, as the combination *pên3 ñang3* has a specific meaning: ‘what’s wrong (with it/you/him)?’:

- (792) *qanø-nii4 pên3 ñang3*
 MC.INAN-DEM COP INDEF.INAN
 ‘What’s wrong with this thing?’

- (793) *caw4 pên3 ñang3*
 2SG.P COP INDEF.INAN
 ‘What’s wrong with you?’

This collocation is commonly heard in the following standard response to an apology or expression of gratitude (equivalent to English *That’s all right* or *No problem*):

- (794) *bòø pên3 ñang3*
 NEG COP INDEF.INAN
 ‘There’s nothing wrong.’ (‘No problem’; ‘It’s all right.’)

The copula *mèèn1* can link two clauses, expressing identity between them in some sense, as in this slogan from the Lao Ministry of Education:

- (795) *hian2 nang3sùù3 mèèn1 hak1 saat4*
 study writing COP love nation
 ‘To study is to be patriotic.’

Mèèn1 may also function as a linker of an external topic to an associated clausal predicate:

- (796) *phuak4 hoong2-hian2 mat1thañom2 tangø-taang1*
 group hall-study secondary RDP.A-different
nanø mèèn1 qaa3mêê2likaa3 pên3 khon2 saang5
 TPC.NONPROX COP America COP person build
 ‘Those various secondary schools, (it) was (that) America built them.’

In another function, *mèèn1* takes a clausal complement to combine with the weak obligative modal *khùù2-siø* ‘probably’, as in the following examples:

- (797) *khùù2-siø mèèn1 phèè4 din3-faa4-qaa3kaat5*
 OBLIG.WEAK-IRR BE.SO suffer.defeat earth-sky-air
 ‘It is probably the case that (he) was allergic to the weather.’
- (798) *khùù2-siø mèèn1 khaw3 bòø huu4-cak2 kan3*
 OBLIG.WEAK-IRR BE.SO 3PL.B NEG know COLL
 ‘It is probably the case that they don’t know each other.’

11.3 Some illustrative basic event types

Following sections discuss the syntax of verbs expressing some of the most basic event types: ‘happen’, ‘do/make’, ‘die’, and ‘live’ (cf. Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002). These serve as key illustrations of basic clause-level syntactic patterns.

11.3.1 *keet5-khùn5* ‘happen’

‘Happen’ is expressed by the formally bimorphemic expression *keet5-khùn5*, consisting of *keet5* ‘be born’ and *khùn5* ‘ascend’. As ‘be born’, *keet5* is ambitransitive, where S=O (Dixon 1991:286ff), while *khùn5* ‘ascend’ is ambitransitive, where S=A.

- (799) a. *mèø-paa4 keet5 juu1 phuu2-dòj3*
 CT.Mo-Pa.eZ born be.at mountains
 ‘Aunty was born in the mountains.’
- b. *can3thaa2 mèø-khaw4 keet5 luuk4 pêñ3 sat2*
 C CT.Mo-rule born child COP animal
 ‘Chantha the Queen gave birth to children in animal form.’
- (800) a. *ñon2, man2 khùn5 sua1-moong2 nùng1*
 plane 3.B ascend hour one
 ‘The plane, it went up for one hour.’
- b. *lèw4 phaa2-kanø khùn5*
 PRF together-COLL ascend
 ‘And so together (they) went up (the riverbank).’

In the following example, *keet5* ‘be born’, and *khùn5* ‘ascend’ appear in a compound meaning ‘appear’, ‘be manifest’:

- (801) *lèw4 vaa1 bun3 nanø siø keet5-khùn5 pêñ3 khaw5*
 PRF say merit TPC.NONPROX IRR born-ascend COP rice
pêñ3 paa3 pêñ3 ngen2 pêñ3 kham2 lèw4
 COP fish COP money COP gold PRF
 ‘And so (they) say that the merit will be manifest as rice and fish and money and gold.’

More commonly, the meaning of this combination is ‘happen’:

- (802) *khaw3 khian3 paj3 vaa1 sadèng3 khuam2 sia3-caj3*
 3PL.B write go COMP show NZR lost-heart
ñang3 tòd1 hêêt5-kaan3 thii1 keet5-khùn5
 INDEF.INAN connect incident REL happen
 ‘They wrote to (them), expressing their sadness and whatever at
 the incident which (had) happened.’

Sometimes *keet5* alone does this job in initial position:

- (803) *man2 lèen1 tat2 naa5 khòj5, kùap5 keet5 qubatihêêt5 mùù4*
 3.B run cut front 1SG.P ALMOST born accident day
nan4
 DEM.NONPROX
 ‘He cut across in front of me, an accident almost occurred that
 day.’

The following example shows a similar construction, in which *khùn5* ‘ascend’ appears, but comes after the object of *keet5* ‘born’:

- (804) *kaø leej2 keet5 kaan3 tòd1-suu5 kan3 khùn5*
 T.LNK NO.ADO born NZR connect-fight COLL arise
 ‘And so there occurred fighting (between them).’

11.3.2 *Hêt1* ‘do’

‘Do’ is expressed by an ambitransitive (S=A) verb *hêt1*:

- (805) *haw2 siø hêt1 cang-daj3 baat5-niø*
 1.FA IRR do way-INDEF THZR
 ‘What are we going to do?’
- (806) *thaa5-haak5 vaa1 haw2 pajø hêt1 ñang3 qanaa*
 if COMP 1.FA DIR.ABL do INDEF.INAN HES
phit2 tòd1 qanø hiit4-khòng2 khòng3 khacaw4
 wrong connect HES traditions of 3PL.P
 ‘If we go and do anything—um—wrong against—um—their tra-
 ditions...’

Hêt1 has a number of other functions as well. As a main verb it may also mean ‘make’, as in (807). As a main complement-taking predicate, *hêt1* has a causative meaning ‘make (something happen)’, as in (808) (cf. Chapter 18). It can also mean ‘perform/act as’, as in (809).

- (807) *haw2 hêt1 patuu3 saj1*
 1.FA make door put
 ‘We make a door to put in (there).’
- (808) *baang3 thua1 kaø hêt1 kèew4 tèk5, phen1 kaø haaj4*
 some occasion T.LNK make glass break 3.P T.LNK angry
 ‘Sometimes I break a glass (and) so she will be angry.’
- (809) *too3 kheej2 hêt1 toø-talok2*
 2SG.FA EXP do MC.ANIM-comedian
 ‘You’ve (once) performed (as) a comedian.’

Optional undergoer arguments of *keet5-khùn5* ‘happen’ and *hêt1* ‘do’ are expressed as post-verbal obliques, marked either by the verb *saj1* ‘put’ or the linker *kap2* ‘with’. First, *saj1* ‘put’ is used as a non-core argument marker only for an animate undergoer of ‘do’, as in the following example:

- (810) *man2 hêt1 ñang3 saj1 mùng2*
 3.B do INDEF.INAN put 2SG.B
 ‘What did he do to you?’

The linker *kap2*, which marks other kinds of undergoers, has more widespread usage. It can function as a simple coordinative nominal linker ‘and, with’, as in (811), and to mark the object argument of reciprocal verbs such as *suu5* ‘fight’ and *soo3* ‘confer’ (cf. Chapter 13).

- (811) *sihoo3 kap2 sangthòng2 mùa2 haa3 mèl juul paal*
 S with S go seek mother be.at forest
phun4
 DEM.FAR
 ‘Siho and Sangthong went back to see (their) mother in the far away forest.’
- (812) *man2 paj3 suu5 kap2 manut1 naa3*
 3.B go fight with humans FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘He went and fought with humans, you must understand.’

For *keet5-khùn5* ‘happen’, any kind of undergoer argument is marked by *kap2* ‘with’:

- (813) *mii2 ñang3 keet5-khùn5 kap2 phuø-nii4*
 there.is INDEF.INAN happen with MC.HUM-DEM
 ‘What happened to this person?’

However, in expressions involving ‘do’, *kap2* as an oblique marker of an undergoer is ambiguous, also allowing comitative and instrumental readings:

- (814) *mùng2 hêt1 ñang3 kap2 khon2 nii4*
 2SG.B do INDEF.INAN with person DEM
 i. ‘What did you do to this person?’
 ii. ‘What did you do with this person?’

This ambiguity can be avoided by using *saj1* ‘put’ to mark animate undergoers of ‘do’, and *nam2* ‘accompany’ to mark comitative arguments. Comitative complements of *hêt1* ‘do’ may be marked by *nam2* ‘accompany, lead along, go after, retrieve’. The next example shows *nam2* as a main verb ‘go after’:

- (815) *phaj3 nam2-qaw3 nòng4 maa2 haj5 siø mòðp4*
 INDEF.HUM go.after-take yG come give IRR present
mùang2 haj5 loot4
 kingdom give NO.HES
 ‘Whoever brings my sister to (me), (I) will hand over the kingdom (to them) right away.’

The following examples show the comitative function of *nam2*:

- (816) *khùu2 vaw4 nam2 phuø-saaw3 naa3*
 like speak with MC.HUM-unmarried.girl FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘(You talk) like (you’re) talking with an unmarried girl, you must understand.’
- (817) *bòø haj5 hêt1 viak4 nam2 muul*
 NEG give do work with peers
 ‘(They) are not allowed to work with others.’

- (818) *khòj5 bòø paj3 nam2 caw4*
 1SG.P NEG go with 2SG.P
 ‘I’m not going with you.’

Instrumental complements of *hêt1* ‘do’ may be marked by *duaj4* ‘with’:

- (819) *kuu3 hêt1 qanø-nii4 duaj4 miit4*
 1SG.B do MC.INAN-DEM with knife
 ‘I did this with a knife.’
- (820) *khan2 mung2 duaj4 sang3kasii3 niø qaat5 siø hêt1 suung3*
 if roof with corrugated.iron TPC SPEC IRR do high
dèè1 caak5 phùùn4
 a.little from floor
 ‘If (we) roof (the chicken coop) with corrugated iron, we might make it high off the floor.’

Instruments may also be expressed in a handling-despatch construction using *saj4* ‘use’ or *qaw3* ‘take’ in V1 position (see Chapter 15):

- (821) *kuu3 saj4 miit4 paat5*
 1SG.B use knife slice
 ‘I used a knife to slice (it).’
- (822) *kuu3 qaw3 miit4 paat5*
 1SG.B take knife slice
 ‘I took a knife and sliced (it).’

11.3.3 *taaj3* ‘die’

The Lao word for ‘die’ is *taaj3*:

- (823) *luuk4-nòng4 man2 kaø taaj3 met2*
 C-yG 3.B T.LNK die all
 ‘His underlings all died.’
- (824) *khan2 san4 lèèw4 tòng4 taaj3*
 if thus PRF must die
 ‘If that’s the case (i.e., if one had to fight), then (one would) surely die.’

- (825) *khít1 vaa1 man2 taaj3 lèw4*
 think COMP 3.B die PRF
 ‘(I) think he’s already died.’
- (826) *caw4 ñang2 bòø than2 taaj3 paan3 nii4 vaa3*
 2SG.P STILL NEG YET die extent DEM QPLR.INFER
 ‘Haven’t you died yet?!’

As the following examples show, dying happens in a place, and thus expressions with *taaj3* ‘die’ may refer to location by asking ‘where?’, or by including locative adjuncts:

- (827) *man2 taaj3 juu1 saj3, nam2 haa3 mèè4*
 3.B die be.at INDEF.PLACE go.after seek IMP.UNIMPD
 ‘Where has he died? Go and look for him!’
- (828) *khít1 theng3 phua3 kaw1 niø dèè1, thii1 taaj3 juu1 nii4*
 think reach husband old TPC a.little REL die be.at DEM
 ‘(She) thought about (her) old husband, (the one) who died here.’

Dying happens at a particular time, as specified in a temporal adjunct headed by *tòn3* ‘time period, when’ (cf. Chapter 9, section 9.2):

- (829) *man2 taaj3 tòdn3 daj3*
 3.B die time INDEF
 ‘When did he die?’
- (830) *man2 taaj3 tòdn3 haa5 moong5*
 3.B die time five hour
 ‘He died at five o’clock.’

11.3.4 *juu1* ‘live’

The Lao word for ‘live’ is *juu1*, which also means ‘to be at (some place)’:

- (831) *phuø-daj3 dii3, phuø-nan4 juu1*
 MC.HUM-INDEF good MC.HUM-DEM.NONPROX be.at
 ‘Whoever was good (in that fight), that one would live.’

- (832) *luuk4 qeej4, tang4-tèè1 nii4 mùa2 naa5 caw4 dajø pên3*
 child VOC from DEM return ahead 2SG.P ACHV COP
kam1phaa4 juu1 tua3 diaw3 lèèw4
 orphan be.at body single PRF
 ‘Child, from this (time) on, you’ll become an orphan, living on your own.’
- (833) *bòø hên3, juu1 bòø daj4*
 NEG see be.at NEG CAN
 ‘(If he) didn’t see (his former wife), (he) couldn’t live.’

Juu1 as ‘live’ can be modified by adverbials, providing descriptions of living in a certain way, for example living ‘well’ or living ‘cool’:

- (834) *phen1 juu1 dii3*
 3.P be.at good
 ‘She lives well.’
- (835) *pên3 phaña2 nang1-khaw4 haj5 mùang2-baan4 juu1 jên3*
 COP lord sit-rule give city-village be.at cool
 ‘(He) was the lord, ruling, enabling the (people of the) city to live peacefully.’

Naturally, one may live ‘in a place’, as shown by these examples in which *juu1* ‘live’ takes a location as direct object:

- (836) *tòn3 pot2-pòj1 lèèw4 khòj5 juu1 viang2can3*
 time liberate PRF 1SG.P be.at V
 ‘When the liberation was complete I was living in Vientiane.’
- (837) *qee4 hùan2 phen1 kaj3 dêè4, qee4 phen1 bòø juu1*
 INTJ house 3.P far FAC.FILLIN INTJ 3.P NEG be.at
kaang3 dòk5
 middle FAC.RESIST
 ‘Yeah, his house was far, you know, he didn’t live in the centre.’

Another valency option for *juu1* ‘live’ involves living with someone. The oblique argument is marked by the coverb *nam2* ‘with, accompany’, as in the following example:

- (838) *tèè1 vaa1 phòò1-mèè1 kaø bðø ñòòm2 paj3 nam2 luuk4*
 but COMP father-mother T.LNK NEG yield go with child
phuø-nan4 phuø-hang1 phuø-mii2
 MC.HUM-DEM.NONPROX MC.HUM-rich MC.HUM-have
hanø maa2 juu1 nam2 phuø-thuk1
 TPC.DIST come be.at with MC.HUM-miserable
phuø-ñaak4 phii4
 MC.HUM-difficult DEM.PROX
 ‘But the parents won’t go with that child, the rich one, the wealthy one, (they’ll) come and live with the miserable and poor ones over here.’

Juu1 (‘live, be at (a place)’) may also predicate existence in a location. Example (839), with a place in O function, is not about ‘living’ but about being in a location. In example (840), it is not clear from the context whether ‘living together’ or ‘being together (at that place)’ is intended:

- (839) *tèè1 saphòq2 sin3saj2, juu1 naj2 thòòng4, bðø than2*
 but specifically S be.at inside belly NEG YET
dajø keet5 thùal
 ACHV be.born YET
 ‘But as for Sinxay, (he) was in (his mother’s) belly, (he) wasn’t born yet.’
- (840) *juu1 hùan2 nan4 mii2 phòø-thaw5 dèè1 lèkaø*
 be.at house DEM.NONPROX there.is CT.Fa-old PCL C.LNK
mii2 laan3 dèè1 juu1 nam2 kan3
 there.is grandchild PCL be.at together COLL
 ‘At that house there was an old man, and there was a grandchild, there together.’

The context does not tell us whether the two characters actually live together, or just happen to be in the house together on this occasion. Further, when the subject is inanimate, and the oblique location is a person, the same construction sees *juu1* as a locative verb, with *nam2* required to mark the ‘person location’:

- (841) *tam3laa2 juu1 nam2 kuu3 phii4*
 recipe be.at with 1SG.B DEM.PROX
 ‘The recipe’s here with me.’

In a further locative function, *juu1* is used as a secondary verb or verb-preposition, marking the location of action expressed in a main clause as head of a locative adjunct:

(842) *kaj1 nòòn2 ngòòj2 juu1 naj2 han5*
chicken lie roost be.at inside DEM.DIST

‘The chickens roost in there.’

(843) *caø saw2 juu1 saj1 baat5-niø*
IRR stop be.at INDEF.PLACE THZR

‘Now, where shall (we) stop?’

Chapter 12

Expressive forms

There are several types of grammatical structure whose key functions are expressive, both in meaning and in their special phonological properties. A native metalinguistic term *toongl-toojl* covers most of these, capturing a range of phenomena associated with alliterative, sound symbolic, and poetic expression. This chapter describes expressive structures under the headings ideophones, onomatopoeia, four-syllable rhyming expressions, echo formation, and interjections.

12.1 Ideophones

The term ideophone is roughly equivalent to the term expressive, as well as other terms mimetic and psychomime.¹ Here are some examples of Lao ideophones:

- (844)
- a. *qujl-lujl* — fat, tubby (e.g., of a chubby baby)
 - b. *thii1-lii1* — running madly, not interested in anything but getting to the destination
 - c. *qòòt5-sòòt5* — of a place, completely silent, not a sound
 - d. *qeet5-teet5* — of a place, completely vacant, nobody/nothing to be seen
 - e. *ciim1-piim1* — of people or things, to be faintly visible in the far distance
 - f. *kuu1-suu1* — of a person bowing forward, with the head bowed
 - g. *cuun1-phuun1* — heaped up in a pile

Ideophones in Lao have the following properties:

- Ideophones show distinctive phonological structure, usually consisting of two rhyming syllables, equally stressed, and with the

¹For *ideophone* see Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz (2000), inter alia; for *expressive*, see Diffloth (1972, 1976), Kruspe (2004), Burenhult (2005); for *mimetic*, see Kita (2000); for *psychomime*, see Hasada (2001).

same tone, usually a level or falling tone (e.g., *còn1-phòn1, qùù4-khùù4, qêêk4-lêêk4*).² This means that they are to some extent definable as a class by their form alone (rather than just by distribution).

- Ideophones have affecto-imagistic meaning (Diffloth 1972, 1976, Kita 2000). Their meanings convey vivid access to a speaker's sensory experience and are reported to cause visceral responses in the listener. Ideophones invoke images of 'being there', giving the speaker a way of providing hearers with heightened access to a narrated event.
- Ideophones are sound symbolic in that native speakers have a strong sense that their phonological form is non-arbitrarily related to their meaning.³
- Ideophones are like verbs in being predicators, but they show heavily constrained morphosyntactic behavior. They cannot take the usual verb trappings such as direct negation or other aspectual-modal markers. They cannot function as relative clauses or direct nominal modifiers in noun phrases.

Previous work on Lao ideophones includes Crisfield (1978), Chapman (1994), and Wayland (1996). Crisfield (1978) includes a glossary of over

²While most ideophones have this rhyming structure, there are occasional cases which are simple repetitions (e.g., *maw4-maw4* 'glossy, sparkling') and others which consist of a single syllable (e.g., *thùng1* 'of a bad smell, to instantly hit at full strength'). Note also that minor syllables do not count for the purpose of determining rhyme (e.g., *sameng4-keng4* 'bald across the whole dome').

³Discussions of sound symbolism are complicated by inconsistent use of terminology. I use the term *iconic* to describe a relation between a sign and its object where that relation is caused by the sign and object having 'a quality in common' (Peirce 1955; cf. Kockelman 2005). Strict iconicity in linguistic reference requires that there be a direct or straightforward resemblance between phonological form and referent, or at least to some feature of the referent, such that the sign-object relation is predictable from the sign alone. This is vanishingly rare in language. Unlike onomatopoeic words (see below), ideophones are not iconic in this sense. In language, sign-object relations are typically not transparent, and it is only after an arbitrary mapping is learnt that we attribute any formal sign-object resemblance. I use the term *sound symbolism* to refer more generally to any situation in which speakers attribute a non-arbitrary form-meaning relation, but where meaning cannot be predicted from form alone. Both sound symbolism and iconicity involve non-arbitrary or *motivated* form-meaning mapping.

500 terms (many of which are onomatopoeic rather than ideophones in the narrower sense defined here).

Ideophones are not used alone as whole utterances or as independent predicates, but can only occur as verb modifiers. The ideophone is normally placed immediately after a verb phrase, as in the following example:

- (845) *mia2 laaw2 tia4 tøk1-pøk1*
 wife 3SG.FA short IDEO
 ‘His wife is short in a SQUAT, COMICAL (*tøk1-pøk1*) way.’

In another example, the main verb phrase is more complex. The ideophone must come at the very end:

- (846) *laaw2 vaw4 siang3 khù2 khon2 laaw2 qòj4-tòj4*
 3SG.FA speak voice like person Lao IDEO
 ‘She (e.g., a foreigner learning Lao) speaks with an accent like a Lao person’s EXACTLY (*qòj4-tòj4*).’
- (847) * *laaw2 vaw4 qòj4-tòj4 siang3 khù2 khon2 laaw2*
 3SG.FA speak IDEO voice like person Lao
 (She speaks EXACTLY (*qòj4-tòj4*) with an accent like a Lao person’s.)
- (848) * *laaw2 vaw4 siang3 khù2 qòj4-tòj4 khon2 laaw2*
 3SG.FA speak voice like IDEO person Lao
 (She speaks with an accent like EXACTLY (*qòj4-tòj4*) a Lao person’s.)

When an ideophone is to be used independently of any particular main predicate, it may occur in a light verb type construction using *hêt1* ‘do/make’ as a host verb. Typically, the verb *juu1* ‘be.at, continuous’ also appears in this construction, in final position. Compare the following example with (845), above:

- (849) *mia2 laaw2 hêt1 tøk1-pøk1 juu1*
 wife 3SG.FA do IDEO CONT
 ‘His wife is being SQUAT, COMICAL (*tøk1-pøk1*).’

This light verb type construction is only open to ideophones which relate to some kind of controlled behavior (including posture), rather than

a state or property. Accordingly, (846) cannot be re-phrased using the *hêt1 ... juu1* construction:

- (850) * *laaw2 hêt1 qòòj4-tòj4 juu1*
 3SG.FA do IDEO CONT
 (She is being EXACTLY (*qòòj4-tòj4*).

There are semantic restrictions on the co-occurrence of ideophones and the main predicate verbs they modify. For example, *tòk1-pòk1* ‘comically squat’ can occur with verbs of compatible meaning such as *tia4* ‘short’, *tam1* ‘low’, and *mon2* ‘round’, but not, say, *suung3* ‘tall’, or *ñaaaw2* ‘long’. Other ideophones appear exclusively with one particular verb. For example, some ideophones refer to specific shades or textures of color: *cùùng1-khùùng1* denotes a deep, pure red, and as such can only occur with the verb *dèng3* ‘red’. Similarly, *pii4-pii4* ‘jet (black)’ can only occur with *dam3* ‘black’.

Ideophones often provide a set of distinctions within a narrow semantic space (see Crisfield 1978 for extensive lists):

- (851) Relating to the size of a hole or perforation⁴
- a. *cing1-ping1* — tiny hole (too small to put a finger in)
 - b. *còng4-pòng4* — small hole (big enough to put a finger in; e.g., of a lettuce, with holes in it from snails)
 - c. *coong1-poong1* — large hole (big enough to put hand in)
 - d. *caang4-paang4* — huge hole (big enough to fit head through)
- (852) Relating to the condition of a person’s hair
- a. *keng4-ceng4* — of messed up hair, uncombed, not flat, going this way and that
 - b. *phùk1-vùk1* — of hair bent from being slept on
 - c. *khuk1-ñuk1* — of curly, flowing, hair
- (853) Relating to the color white
- a. *còn1-phòn1* — completely white, e.g., of hair that has gone totally grey

⁴This is one case in which some kind of iconicity may be argued to pertain: there is a possible diagrammatic correspondence between the scale of vowel height from high to low (and thus openness of the vocal cavity) and the scale of size denoted. See Crisfield (1978) for discussion.

- b. *pen4-ven4* — white, of face or body, pale, ‘like too much powder applied’
- (854) Relating to posture
- a. *sêê1-lêê1* — of someone standing, stooped over ‘all alone, no-one talking to them’
- b. *qêêk1-lêêk4* — of someone lying down, ‘body bent, lazily, not doing anything’

Different ideophones occur with different frequencies. The more frequent they are, the more speakers tend to agree as to their meaning. Less frequent ideophones are often not familiar to all speakers, and are considered a realm of expertise in the domain of literature or poetry. A set of examples comes from a tale told by a senior abbot in Vientiane. In the story, an assistant to the king is selecting from among the kingdom’s bald for the most promising competitor in an inter-kingdom head-butting contest. In listing types of bald men, the speaker supplies different ideophones, along with definitions of how each pattern of baldness looks, with occasional remarks on the corresponding personality of each type. Part of the humor, and of the story-teller’s skill, is the use of these ideophones:

- (855) Relating to patterns of baldness
- a. *khim1-mim1* — ‘frog sitting by the pond’; i.e., with a patch of hair low on the forehead
- b. *qùù2-khùù2* — ‘a swidden in the middle of the jungle’; i.e., a clear patch on top of the cranium, with hair around it
- c. *sameng4-keng4* — ‘bald across the whole dome’; said not to be appropriate for civil service
- d. *samook4-khook4* — ‘bald, with fuzz all over, and a protruding forehead and back of head’; said to be easily offended

It is also possible to coin ideophones on the fly. In such cases, the grammatical context and the rhyming phonological structure of the coined form will signal that it is an ideophone, while the discourse context will help to convey the intended meaning. In such cases, the experience-heightening effect of having used an ideophone is more important than recovery of a precise intended meaning. It may be that the specific phonological form helps to motivate certain interpretations through some manner of primary or secondary iconicity.

12.2 Onomatopoeia

A number of open class lexical items are onomatopoeic, with phonological forms which can be readily seen to bear a direct resemblance to a sound which is associated with their referent. Some of these are animal names, where the phonological form of the word resembles the call made by the animal: e.g., *mèèw2* ‘cat’, *bèè4* ‘goat’, *kaa3* ‘crow’ (and many other bird names). Another type of onomatopoeic word refers to or imitates a type of call or sound that an animal makes. For example, ducks go *kaap5*, dogs go *vaw5*, roosters go *qook5 qiqook5 qook5*. A few other terms are imitative in a secondary sense. Rather than their sound imitating the referent, the articulatory action involving in pronouncing the word imitates or constitutes the referent. For example, a verb meaning ‘to open the mouth wide’ is *qaa4* (whose pronunciation requires opening the mouth wide); a verb meaning ‘to press the lips together’ is *mim1* (whose pronunciation requires pressing the lips together).

12.3 Four-syllable rhyming expressions

The four-syllable rhyming expression is a semi-productive structure, based on a template which allows creative coining of new examples on the fly. There are hundreds of stored, idiomatic four-syllable expressions. Four-syllable rhyming expressions are common in colloquial speech, while at the same time having a poetic, literary quality. There is considerable individual variation in their frequency of use, in the size of speakers’ active vocabularies, and particularly in the degree to which people use the structures creatively to come up with novel rhyming expressions.

A four-syllable rhyming expression should meet at least the following criteria: (1) it has four full, stressed syllables, (2) it has a coherent overall meaning, and (3) syllables 2 and 3 rhyme (i.e., the vowel and final consonant should be the same, while the initial consonant should not). Lexical tone is not involved in defining a rhyming pattern.

Here is a straightforward illustrative example, a complex verb phrase consisting of two simple V-N verb phrases, roughly synonymous in meaning:

- (856) *kép2 phak2 hak2 nòò1*
 collect vegetables snap.off shoots
 ‘to gather edible vegetables and shoots’ (i.e., ‘to go out gathering’)

In another case, an unusual ordering of words is in the service of getting the rhyming syllables into the right place:

- (857) *qòòk5 mèè1 phèè1 luuk4*
 exit mother disseminate child
 ‘to breed, multiply’

In the context of childbirth, *qòòk5* ‘exit’ means ‘to issue, to give birth’. Normally, *mèè1* ‘mother’ is the subject of this verb, with *luuk4* ‘child’ its object. The unusual order in (857) serves to bring the rhyming syllables *mèè1* and *phèè1* into positions 2 and 3.

While there should always be four stressed syllables, there may be fewer than four words. In an example, the disyllabic word *qaa3haan3* ‘food’ counts as two syllables, the first syllable *qaa3* rhyming with the prior word *paa3* ‘fish’:

- (858) *khaw5 paa3 qaa3haan3*
 rice fish food
 ‘foodstuffs’

Or a word may have more than one syllable, where an unstressed, minor syllable does not count (in this case, the minor syllable *pa-* in *padit2* ‘invent’):

- (859) *nèèw2 khit1 padit2 saang5*
 way think invent build
 ‘ingenuity’

Or there may be more than four words, where some are unstressed minor-syllabic words such as aspectual-modal markers (in this case, the negative marker *bòø*):

- (860) *naa5 bòø dèèng3, hèèng2 bòø tèm3*
 face NEG red strength NEG full
 ‘(Her) face is not red, (her) strength not full.’ (i.e., ‘(She) looks unwell, pallid, weak.’)

Sometimes, in the service of a rhyming structure, one of the syllables (typically the third) is a nonsense, euphonic syllable. The following example features the syllable *ngot1*, which appears only in this particular four-syllable rhyming expression, rhyming with *sot2* ‘fresh’ (and likely taking its initial consonant *ng-* from the subsequent word *ngaam2* ‘to look good’):

- (861) *khiaw3 sot2 ngot1 ngaam2*
 green fresh EUPH beautiful
 ‘luscious, fresh and green’ (e.g., of the Lao countryside in the rainy season)

Conventionalized four-syllable rhyming expressions number many hundreds, and will no doubt one day be coded in large dictionaries, of the kind familiar in Chinese literature and linguistics.

12.4 Echo formation

Echo formation typically involves four syllables, but is simpler in structure than the four-syllable rhyming expressions just described. The idea is to take a V-N sequence and repeat it, substituting the N in the repeated phrase with something semantically related (usually, a synonym or antonym). The result is that the first and third syllables are the same verb, and the second and fourth syllables are semantically related nouns. Compare the following two examples:

- (862) *man2 pajø sùù4 song5*
 3.B DIR.ABL buy trousers
 ‘He (went and) bought trousers.’
- (863) *man2 pajø sùù4 song5 sùù4 sùà4*
 3.B DIR.ABL buy trousers buy shirt
 ‘He (went and) bought clothes (lit. trousers and shirt).’

Example (862) is a simple statement in which we take the O *song5* ‘trousers’ to refer to nothing other than its conventional referent, ‘trousers’. The semantic effect of the echo formative in (863) is to put *song5* ‘trousers’ together with *sùà4* ‘shirt’, broadening the reference of both expressions,

beyond the literal conjunctive reading ‘trousers and shirts’ and to a generalized notion of ‘clothes’, i.e., things of the kind that trousers and shirts are prototypical examples.

Consider another, similar case. Lao has no single word for ‘parent’, and uses the collocation *phò̀d1-mè̀è1* ‘father-mother’ instead. This collocation may fill a single noun phrase slot, as in the following example:

- (864) *bò̀ø dajø b̀̀òk5 phò̀d1-mè̀è1*
 NEG ACHV tell father-mother
 ‘(They) hadn’t told (their) parents.’

An echo-formative version of this example repeats the verb *b̀̀òk5* ‘tell’ and splits the collocation *phò̀d1-mè̀è1* ‘father-mother’ into two. The following example illustrates this (and this is how it appeared as originally spoken in the recorded text):

- (865) *bò̀ø dajø b̀̀òk5 phò̀d1 b̀̀òk5 mè̀è1*
 NEG ACHV tell father tell mother
 ‘(They) hadn’t told (their) parents.’

In another kind of case, the echo-formative is simply picked from the same semantic field as the source word, and brings about the echo-formative effect without contributing significantly to the final meaning of the whole expression. For example, *huu3* ‘ear’ and *taa3* ‘eye’ are often related as echo-formatives:

- (866) *bakø-nii4, vaw4 b̀̀ø khaw5 huu3 khaw5 taa3*
 M.B-DEM speak NEG enter ear enter eye
 ‘This bloke, (you) speak and (he) doesn’t listen.’

The echo-formative can also be an antonym. For example, *lang3* ‘back’ is often used as an echo-formative for *naa5* ‘face/front’:

- (867) *kuu3 b̀̀ø hèn3 naa5 hèn3 lang3 man2*
 1SG.B NEG see face see back 3.B
 ‘I haven’t seen him at all.’ (lit. ‘...haven’t seen his face or his back.’)

Another example was overheard toward the end of a traditional Lao dinner. Some of the people who had crowded around a small tray table

were getting restless and shifting their seating positions, shifting back from the table, and then forward again:⁵

- (868) *thòj3 qòk5 thòj3 khaw5*
 reverse exit reverse enter
 ‘(People are) pulling away and pushing in.’

Here, the verb *thòj3* ‘to reverse, to go backwards’ properly co-occurs with the directional complement *qòk5* ‘exit, out’. When repeated in the echo formation construction, it ends up with the otherwise semantically incompatible complement *khaw5* ‘enter’. In the context of the overall construction, however, there is no oddity.

In other cases, a particular echo-formative is purely conventional and cannot be taken literally, as in the following example:

- (869) *puuk5 phak2 puuk5 mii1*
 plant greens plant noodles
 ‘to plant greens and other garden products’

In (869), *mii1* ‘noodles’ cannot refer to noodles. Its meaning here is determined by the whole structure as an idiom.

A number of high frequency nouns have conventional, dedicated echo-formatives for use in these structures. For example, the echo-formative for *vat1* ‘temple’ is *vaal*:

- (870) *phen1 kaø khaw5 vat1 khaw5 vaal juu1*
 3.P T.LNK enter temple enter temple.ECHO be.at
vaa3
 QPLR.INFER
 ‘So, he goes to the temple and carries out religious practices?’

In another case, there are two conventional echo-formatives for a single noun, *nam4* ‘water’: *naj2* (elsewhere meaning ‘inside’ or ‘seed’) and *thaa1* (elsewhere meaning ‘river edge, dock’), as in the following two examples:

⁵This is also an example where the echo-substituted word is not a noun but V2 in a manner-path-direction construction (see Chapter 16, section 16.1). In common with the other examples in this section, the echoed word is a structural complement of the verb which is repeated.

- (871) *kin3 nam4 kin3 naj2*
 consume water consume water.ECHO
 ‘to have something to drink’
- (872) *qaap5 nam4 qaap5 thaa1*
 bathe water bathe water.ECHO
 ‘to bathe and perform one’s ablutions’

Finally, there is a generic, default echo-formative strategy, where the complement element of the repeated phrase is substituted with the indefinite inanimate pronoun *ñang3* ‘something, what, whatever’. For example, (863) and (869) above, might be expressed as follows:

- (873) *man2 pajø sùù4 song5 sùù4 ñang3*
 3.B DIR.ABL buy trousers buy INDEF.INAN
 ‘He (went and) bought trousers and so forth.’
- (874) *puuk5 phak2 puuk5 ñang3*
 plant greens plant INDEF.INAN
 ‘to plant greens and the like’

In cases where the target form is bisyllabic (i.e., consists of two fully stressed syllables), only the target form need be repeated in order to bring the resulting expression to four syllables. For instance, the regular word for ‘document’ is *nang3sùù3*, and its conventional echo-formative is *nang3sian5* (which by convention in this case appears first):

- (875) *khòj5 tòng4-dajø sên4 nang3sian5 nang3sùù3*
 1SG.P OBLIG-ACHV sign document.ECHO document
 ‘I had to sign documents and such.’

12.4.1 Echo formative reduplication

There is a morphologically productive strategy by which echo-formatives are derived through alliterative reduplication. For words with back vowels, an echo-formative is derived by replacing the vowel with a front vowel at the same height. For instance, a derived echo-formative for *khuq1* ‘bucket’ would be *khiq1*; for *loong1* ‘coffin’ would be *lêng1*; for *còðk5* ‘cup’ would be *cèèk5*; for *kua3* ‘salt’ would be *kia3*. For target

words with non-back vowels, an echo-formative is derived by replacing the vowel with schwa (e.g., *peek5* for *piik5* ‘wing’, *pet2* for *pêt2* ‘duck’, *leem3* for *lèem3* ‘spike’). The new echo-formative is a substitute for the source form, in the pattern described above. For example:

- (876) *bòø mii2 còðk5 mii2 cèèk5*
 NEG there.is cup there.is cup.ECHO
 ‘There aren’t any cups or whatever.’
- (877) *khaw3 pajø liang4 pêt2 liang4 pet2*
 3PL.B DIR.ABL raise duck raise duck.ECHO
 ‘They’ve gone to raise ducks and whatever.’

It is also generally possible to derive an echo-formative by replacing the rhyme of the source word with *-ððk5* and using the derived form as the first of the pair. For example, we might derive *thòðk5* from *thuaj5* ‘bowl’, as in the following example:

- (878) *kuu3 siø pajø laang4 thòðk5 laang4 thuaj5 kòðn1*
 1SG.B IRR DIR.ABL wash bowl.ECHO wash bowl PCL
 ‘I’m just going to go and wash the dishes and stuff.’

12.5 Interjections

Interjections like English *yuck*, *wow*, or *uh-huh* are words that may stand alone as full utterances, and which prototypically function to draw attention simultaneously to (a) something in the speech situation (e.g., something yucky or amazing), and (b) a speaker’s internal state or stance toward this thing (e.g., a feeling of disgust or surprise; see Goffman 1978, Ameka 1992, Kockelman 2003). Depending on context, an interjection may be used with more emphasis on the attention-directing function, or more emphasis on the stance-characterizing function. The use of interjections is associated with informal discourse settings. They are seldom used in formal or non-interactive contexts (e.g., speeches or written texts). Characterizing their meaning requires a careful balance of stable semantic content and contingent pragmatic import (cf. Wilkins 1992, Wierzbicka 1992, Kockelman 2003). I list here some common interjections, with notes on typically appropriate uses. They are divided into three groups: environment-oriented, discourse-oriented, and animal-oriented.

12.5.1 Environment-oriented

Interjections under this rubric typically occur as responses to objects or events in the physical environment:

qèèq2 – a response to something physically disgusting (cf. *yuck*). This may be a response cry upon encountering something revolting such as a turd in one's way, or food that has gone rotten. This interjection is often used in speech directed to children, as a way of either drawing their attention to something disgusting which they should be aware of (e.g., they are about to step in something nasty), or as a way of characterizing some referent in the environment as disgusting, when the child may not yet be aware that this is how they ought to respond (e.g., when a child puts something dirty in its mouth).

paal thoø – a response to something amazing, unexpected, or hard to believe (cf. *wow*, *gosh*). This may be something which one directly witnesses, such as an unusually big fish someone has just caught, or it may be a response to a description of such a thing. The word *taaj3*, which literally means 'to die', has a similar function when used as an interjection.

quj2/quj3 – a response to something which is surprising and spooky or slightly shocking, and which causes some immediate concern. It may be a response to having just discovered that someone has broken into your house and you are not sure yet whether they have stolen anything; or just realizing that your wallet is not where you thought it was, but you are not sure yet whether it is really lost.

quj4 – a response to pain or a fright (cf. *ouch*).

huaj5 – a response to something unexpected, slightly annoying or inconvenient. For example, someone has agreed to drive you somewhere and after departing you are informed that your driver will take a long detour on the way. *Huaj5* signals that you have just become aware of this inconvenience, and emphasizes your dissatisfaction.

vaaj5 – expresses disappointment or disapproval at something someone has just done. For instance, children are playing around a bucket of water

in the house, and you have already warned them to move away, and after ignoring your warning they spill the bucket in the house; *vaaj5* captures the idea that someone has gone too far, that something bad has been done and can't be reversed.

qaw2 – a response to a situation that looks dangerous and could go wrong at any second. For example, a child is crawling too close to the edge of a high balcony in a house and nobody is near enough to protect it. This interjection has a kind of progressive aspect, conveying an ongoing urgency to avert some danger or misfortune. It is typically repeated over and over while the referent situation continues (*qaw2, qaw2, qaw2*). It often acts as an imperative for someone to do something so as to avert disaster (e.g., for someone to run over and grab the child before it falls off the balcony).

nan5 – a response to a situation in which something happens that you have warned would happen. It is similar to *vaaj5*, and applicable to many of the same situations, but while *vaaj5* bemoans the undesired outcome of some action or event, *nan5* has an accusing tone of 'Didn't I warn this would happen?!'. This interjection is presumably related to the nonproximal demonstrative *nan4* 'there'. (Interjections of similar meaning include *nèè5* and *nèè3*.)

12.5.2 Discourse-oriented

Interjections under this rubric are oriented to the discourse itself, either one's own communicative actions (usually speech), or those of another. Discourse-oriented interjections often occur as the first element of quoted speech, as if to index the conversational context of the quoted utterance.

gee5/mm5 – a conversational continuer, this interjection responds to a turn at talk from another and conveys a sense of satisfaction (e.g., agreement, alignment, or at least adequate comprehension) with what the other has just said, along with the idea that one is not going to take up the next turn oneself. The meaning is then something like 'I acknowledge and rat-

ify what you have said, I don't have anything to add to it right now'.⁶ Note also that these interjections may be used in response to a polar question to mean 'yes'. (See Chapter 23 for examples.)

caaw4 – a formal, polite version of *qee5/mm5*, just described. (Note also *dooj3* with a very similar function.)

vaa3 – a news receipt marker, this interjection responds to a statement or communicative action and registers that what the speaker has just heard is new. In addition, it prompts the other to elaborate. It may be compared to expressions like *Oh, really?*, *Gee, is that so?*, *Do tell*. See Chapter 4 for a description of *vaa3* as a sentence-final particle, with related meaning.

mbòq1 – a skeptical news receipt marker, a contraction of *mèèn1 bòdò3* [BE.SO QPLR] 'Is it so?'. This interjection conveys a sense of doubt as to the truth of what has just been said by the other. It challenges the other to defend what they have just said. It may be compared to expressions like *Is that a fact?* said in a skeptical tone. A stylistic alternative of similar meaning is *mèèn1 sambòq1*, a contraction of *mèèn1 san4 bòdò3* [BE.SO thus QPLR] 'Is it so?'.⁶

nòq1 – an agreeing response to an assessment or evaluation (the same as its sentence-final particle function, but here parasitic on what another has just said).

qoo5 – a news receipt which expresses disappointment or concern.

qee3 – a news receipt which indicates that the speaker has just now understood what a speaker has been trying to say ('Oh, I get it now.').

qooj4 – a response which prefaces some kind of rejection of, or resistance to, another's statement or action. It may be a preface to sheer disagreement, or may just resist some aspect of what has just been said. For example, one old man gives the other some herbal medicine, telling him it is such-and-such; when his addressee suggests it is something else, the

⁶Compare English *uh-huh*, whose function is essentially to pass up the opportunity to take up the next turn at talk, and to pass up the opportunity to initiate repair on what was just said (Schegloff 1982).

first uses the interjection *qooj4* in launching his defense ‘I know what I’m talking about!’.

nan4-laq1 – a response to a statement by another which the speaker had already tried to convey earlier (cf. *That’s what I mean, You’ve got it*). For example, I am giving you route directions, when I mention *High Street* you look puzzled and ask ‘You mean the street where John’s Studio is?’; in response to this proposed referent which I had tried to convey, I say *nan4-laq1* ‘That’s it’. *Nan4* is a nonproximal demonstrative (see Chapter 6).

qanø/qaal/qanaa1 – markers of hesitation during speech, for example to signal that a person cannot think of a word or is unsure how to say what they want to say. Using these interjections is a way of signaling one’s intention to retain the floor, while being temporarily delayed in speech production (cf. English *um/uh*). As interjections, these are not responses to another’s speech, but to some perturbation in one’s own speech or mental process of speech formulation or production.

qaw2 – this interjection instigates closure of a conversation (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). For example, two people pass each other on a path, going in different directions. They pause, and chat briefly. At a certain moment, after a short stretch of conversation, there is a moment of silence heralding the lack of anything more to say, and the likely trajectory toward closure of the conversation. Here, the interjection *qaw2* says ‘Okay, we’ve said what’s to be said, now let’s launch into a closure of the interaction’.

12.5.3 Animal-oriented

A number of interjections are used in giving instructions to domestic animals (Table 27).

Table 27. Animal-oriented interjections

Animal	'Go thither'	'Come hither'
Cattle	<i>huj1/huj5</i> or alveolar click	<i>hee2</i> or <i>qaawq5</i>
Chicken	<i>soo4</i> or rounded [j:]	<i>kuk2</i> (falsetto)
Pig	(no form)	<i>cuuj1</i> (falsetto)
Dog	<i>sêêq2</i>	<i>qèèq5</i> or <i>qèèk5</i>
Cat	<i>mèèw5</i> (breathy)	<i>mòng1</i>

In most cases, there are two distinct interjections: a 'go thither' form, for making the animal move off (e.g., chasing a chicken or dog which is trying to get at food in the house, or getting a recalcitrant buffalo to move on), and a 'come hither' form, for calling the animal to come (typically, when one is going to feed it). The 'come hither' forms are usually repeated, over and over (e.g., as *cuuj1-cuuj1-cuuj1-cuuj1-cuuj1* for calling pigs to come).

Chapter 13

Non-canonical transitive events

This chapter deals with the grammatical expression of two types of non-canonical transitive event: (1) reciprocal and related types of event (where actor and undergoer roles each map onto multiple participants) and (2) reflexive and related types of event (where actor and undergoer roles map onto a single participant).

13.1 Collaborative and reciprocal event marking

The key resource for describing the kinds of events included under the reciprocal rubric (cf. Frajzyngier and Curl 1999a) is the particle *kan3*.¹ I refer to it as a collaborative marker (glossed ‘COLL’), since its meaning is more general than reciprocal. *Kan3* is an independent word and does not belong in a larger form class. It typically appears immediately after a verb (though there are some occasions in which it may appear after a noun, for example when the noun is incorporated; cf. examples (882), (899), below).

While English has reciprocal readings of objectless strings like *John and Mary met (Ø) at the park* and *They kissed (Ø)*, these zero objects in Lao are taken to be definite, tracked arguments. Example (879) is interpreted as having an ellipsed, definite object argument whose referent is not (included in) the plural subject *khacaw4*:

- (879) *khacaw4 cuup5/phop1*
3PL.P kiss/meet
‘They kissed/met (him/her/them).’
NOT: ‘They kissed/met each other.’

¹There is a complex variant *sung1 kan3 lèq1 kan3*, made up of *sung1*, a relative marker, and two instances of *kan3*, in coordination marked by *lèq1* ‘and’ (see example (923), below). It is a stylistically high form of expression, suitable for writing and for more formal speech as in traditional narratives. There is a homonym, the verb *kan3* ‘hold back, constrain, resist, block’. In Thai, there is an intimate third person pronoun *kan* (presumably cognate).

For the reciprocal reading, *kan3* is required:

- (880) *khacaw4 cuup5/phop1 kan3*
 3PL.P kiss/meet COLL
 ‘They kissed/met each other.’

The marker *kan3* conveys a general idea that an activity is done by multiple individuals together, covering not only actions done TO each other but also those done WITH each other, and even entirely asymmetrical actions (where one of the participants does not correspond to the actor role of the verb at all), as long as the people involved are consensually or otherwise rightfully playing their part in the activity as a whole. There are two main types of *kan3* construction: Type 1 and Type 2.

13.1.1 Type 1 *kan3* construction

The most common type of *kan3* construction involves (a) a single subject argument whose meaning is plural (either inherently plural like the plural pronoun *khacaw4* in example (879), or a compound of more than one noun conjoined by *kap2* ‘with’ as in example (881)), (b) a main verb, and (c) *kan3* in immediate postverbal position:

- (881) *dèng3 kap2 sèng3 hèn3/vaw4/tii3/khaa5 kan3*
 D with S see/speak/hit/kill COLL
 ‘Deng and Seng saw/spoke-to/hit/killed each other.’

If an incorporated object of the verb is expressed (usually a body part such as *naa5* ‘face’ in the following example, see also example (899), below),² it comes in the immediate postverbal slot, with *kan3* following:

- (882) *dèng3 kap2 sèng3 hèn3 naa5 kan3*
 D with S see face COLL
 ‘Deng and Seng saw each other’s faces.’

Of the four example verbs shown in the Type 1 construction in (881), *vaw4* ‘speak’ is intransitive and does not allow another human participant as a direct complement in a transitive construction (cf. (879), above):

²On the status of the postverbal body part term as incorporated and thus distinct from a regular, full object noun phrase, see Chapter 15 and Enfield (2006c:195).

(883) *dèng3 hèn3/khaa5/tii3 sèng3*

D see/kill/hit S

‘Deng saw/killed/hit Seng.’

(884) **dèng3 vaw4 sèng3*

D speak S

(Deng spoke Seng.)

For *vaw4* ‘speak’ in a regular two-place expression, the second argument is obliquely marked by *kap2* ‘with’:

(885) *dèng3 vaw4 kap2 sèng3*

D speak with S

‘Deng spoke with Seng.’

13.1.2 Type 2 *kan3* construction

A second type of *kan3* construction features separation of otherwise conjoined subject arguments, where the second of the two—marked by *kap2* ‘with’, as in the subject of example (881), above—is moved into a postposed, peripheral position. The key difference between the two types of *kan3* construction is the separation of the noun phrase conjuncts. The verb remains marked by *kan3*:

(886) *dèng3 vaw4/tii3 kan3 kap2 sèng3*

D speak/hit COLL with S

‘Deng spoke-to/fought each other with Seng.’

(887) **dèng3 hèn3/khaa5 kan3 kap2 sèng3*

D see/kill COLL with S

(Deng saw/killed each other with Seng.)

Most discussion in this chapter concerns the more common Type 1 construction. The Type 2 construction is treated separately, in section 13.1.4, below. It is more restricted in scope, partly because it does not allow most transitive verbs. Those verbs that may occur in the Type 2 construction can all also occur in the Type 1 construction (compare *vaw4* ‘speak’ and *tii3* ‘hit, fight (with)’ in examples (881) and (886)). More significantly, the alternation between the two constructions is associated with different information structure construals (see section 13.1.4, below).

13.1.3 Semantic range of Type 1 construction

The particle *kan3* has a strikingly wide range of use over situation types. This is revealed both by observation of its range of occurrence in natural texts, and by its liberal use across video stimulus materials developed for comparative field research (Evans et al, forthcoming). It is typical for a grammatical resource which may describe a canonical reciprocal event to also be extended to refer to other types of event which are not literally reciprocal in a strong sense, but which relax certain defining components (cf. Langendoen 1978, Dalrymple et al 1998). For the purpose of organizing the data, I use the following informal categories of event type associated with the use of *kan3*:

- (888)
- a. Strict reciprocity (e.g., *They hugged each other, They gave each other diamonds*): where for some multiple of participants, all map onto both actor and undergoer roles of the predicate (with logical variations depending on quantitative and temporal relations between multiplied events, etc.).
 - b. Loose reciprocity (e.g., *The dogs ate each other, The plates were stacked on top of each other*): where for some multiple of participants, multiple participants map onto the actor role and multiple participants map onto the undergoer role, but strict reciprocity does not apply.
 - c. Collective action (e.g., *They celebrated together, They ate dinner together*): where for some multiple of participants, all map onto the same role of the predicate.
 - d. Complementary (yet asymmetric) action (e.g., *She gave him a watch, One of them is a clone of the other*): where for some multiple of participants, some participant maps onto one role, and the other maps onto a complementary role. The respective roles are not the same, but they properly complement each other to make the event complete.

In the rest of this section, I describe the range of application of the Type 1 *kan3* construction. (For the more restricted Type 2 *kan3* construction, and the ‘I V you, You V me’ construction, see section 13.1.4 and section 13.2.2, below.) To give an idea of how broad the extension of *kan3* is, in three speakers’ descriptions of a set of 65 reciprocal event stimulus clips (Evans et al, forthcoming), there was only one clip whose

target event was unanimously described without using *kan3*. In this clip, three people who are sitting side by side watch a fourth person walk by. For only a few other clips did one or more speakers omit *kan3* from the description. For example, in describing a scene in which one actor walks along and bumps into another, one speaker omitted *kan3*. The others described it as ‘people bumping into each other’ (although they acknowledged later that only one actor bumps into the other; i.e., they would not break the event down into two events, A bumped B and B bumped A).

13.1.3.1 Strict reciprocity

The *kan3* marker may be used for describing situations which are strictly reciprocal, in the sense defined in (888a), above. Here are two examples:³

- (889) *qaw3 hua3 laan4 son2 kan3*
 take head bald butt COLL
 ‘(They’d) butt each other with (their) bald heads.’
- (890) *jaan4 pajø phop1 kan3 kòòn1*
 afraid DIR.ABL meet COLL before
 ‘(We’re) afraid (they’ll) meet each other before (the appointed time).’

Kan3 is also applicable where the reciprocated actions are separated in time. The following text example refers to two schools whose students would occasionally make visits to the other school. That is, at one time, students of School A would visit School B, and at another time, students of School B would visit School A:

- (891) *nakø-hian2 tòò1 nakø-hian2 naø, pajø*
 CT.AGT-study connect CT.AGT-study TPC.PERIPH DIR.ABL
jaam3 kan3
 visit COLL
 ‘Student to student, (they’d) go (and) visit each other.’

³These cases are types of multi-verb constructions (see Part V), which act effectively like single verbs for the purposes of the syntax of *kan3*. That is, *kan3* is placed immediately after the whole verb complex.

Verbs of interpersonal communication and social relations are expressed using *kan3*, as in the following examples:

- (892) *ngùk1 hua3 saj1 kan3 lèkaø lèèw4*
 toss.head head put COLL C.LNK PRF
 ‘(We’d) toss our heads towards each other, and that’d be it.’
- (893) *tèè1 vaa1 mii2 ñang3 kaø lom2 kan3 paj3 daj4*
 but COMP there.is INDEF.INAN T.LNK talk COLL go CAN
juu1
 FAC.WEAK
 ‘But whatever the (problems), (we) could talk (to) each other (about them), more or less.’
- (894) *man2 mak1 duu3-thuuk5 kan3 lùang1 saa3sanaa3*
 3.B tend look.down.on COLL concerning religion
 ‘They tend to look down on each other concerning religion.’
- (895) *hêt1 siaw1 kan3*
 make best.friend COLL
 ‘(We) became best friends (with) each other.’

Verbs of exchange encode a reciprocation of transfer. If *She and John exchanged diamonds*, then she transferred diamonds to John and John transferred diamonds to her.⁴ Events of this kind of reciprocal exchange such as the compound *lèèk4-pian1* in the following example, are expressed using *kan3*:

- (896) *khaa5 maa2 lèkaø maø lèèk4-pian1 kan3*
 kill come C.LNK DIR.ALL exchange-change COLL
 ‘(We’d) kill (the cattle) and then (we and the other villagers would) exchange (the food) with each other.’

⁴Verbs of exchange are therefore distinct from verbs of unidirectional transfer such as *haj5* ‘give’ in example (917), below, which encode a one-way event. If *She gave John diamonds*, only she corresponds to the actor role of the predicate ‘give’. Unlike in *They exchanged diamonds*, it doesn’t mean that John gave her diamonds in return.

13.1.3.2 Loose reciprocity

Events which are loosely reciprocal in the sense defined in (888b), above, are readily described with *kan3*, as in these examples:

(897) *phuak4 daj3 kaø hum4 kan3 qaw3 vaj4 bəø fang2*
 group INDEF T.LNK cover COLL take keep NEG listen
 ‘They were all on top of each other, unrestrainable.’

(898) *bəðk5 haj5 huu4 kan3 thua1 thang2 mùang2*
 tell give know COLL all whole city
 ‘(They) told each other all across the city.’

The following example was shouted by an adult to a group of children playing boisterously with long sharp sticks. The speaker warns that someone could get their eye pierced. Despite the asymmetry of the event described, *kan3* is used. The speaker is not saying that A will pierce B’s eye and B will pierce A’s eye. He is conveying that it doesn’t matter which of the multiple participants would be actor and which would be undergoer, it could be any of them:

(899) *lavang2 suat5 taa3 kan3 dee4*
 watch.out pierce eye COLL FAC.ONRCD
 ‘Watch out for piercing each other’s eyes, y’hear!’

A ‘chaining’ type reciprocal relation (cf. *They followed each other in to the room*) may also be described by *kan3*:

(900) *saam3 sop2 lian2 kan3*
 three corpse be.in.a.row COLL
 ‘(I saw) three corpses (lying) in a row.’

In a sub-category of this type, the subject is a singular noun, and the use of *kan3* coerces a plural reading of the subject participant, where multiple PARTS OF the participant are in the loose reciprocal relationship:

(901) *sùak4 kòng3 kan3*
 string heaped COLL
 ‘The string is heaped on itself.’ (Describing a mess of twine)

13.1.3.3 *Collective action*

Kan3 may convey the sense that each participant performs a denoted action in the same way, quite distinct from any sense of reciprocity (as per (888c), above):

- (902) *khacaw4 saldòng3 kan3*
 3PL.P celebrate COLL
 ‘They celebrated (together).’
- (903) *phanan2 kan3 kaø lêkø-lêk1 nòjø-nòj4*
 gamble COLL T.LNK RDP.A-little RDP.A-small
 ‘(They) gamble (with each other) a little here and there.’
- (904) *pan3 kan3 kin3*
 divide COLL eat
 ‘(They) divide (the goat meat amongst each other) to eat.’
- (905) *hoom2 ngen2 kan3*
 assemble money COLL
 ‘(They’d) pool (their) money together.’

Similarly, *kan3* marks togetherness in spatial-temporal orientation:

- (906) *kaj1 phùùn4-mùang2, man2 ñèè5 kan3 kaø daj4*
 chicken traditional 3.B stuff COLL T.LNK CAN
 ‘Free range chickens, it’s okay for them to be stuffed in together (in their pens).’
- (907) *mii2 thahaan3 laaw2 thahaan3 falang1 pon3 kan3*
 there.is soldier Lao soldier French mix COLL
 ‘There were Lao soldiers (and) French soldiers mixed together.’
- (908) *taw4-hoom2 kan3*
 converge-assemble COLL
 ‘(They) assembled (together).’
- (909) *phuak4 qaaj4 pòk2 qaaj4 ñang3 nang1 kan3*
 group eBr P eBr INDEF sit COLL
 ‘(Brother) Pok and company sat together.’

Relatedly, a verb marked by *kan3* can serve as an adverbial adjunct referring to actions or qualities being somehow the same, done equally, at the same time, or together:

- (910) *ñòòn4 man2 khaj1 phòòm4 kan3*
 because 3.B lay.eggs be.simultaneous COLL
 ‘(It’s) because they lay eggs at the same time.’
- (911) *haj5 dùng3 khêng1 samee3 kan3*
 give pull be.tight be.equal COLL
 ‘Pull (the ropes) equally tight.’

Similar adverbial expressions with *kan3* can appear in preverbal position:⁵

- (912) *phaa2 kan3 khùn5*
 lead.along COLL ascend
 ‘(They) went up (the bank) together.’ (lit. ‘led each other up’)
- (913) *khaw3 ñaat4 kan3 kin3 khaw5*
 3PL.B snatch COLL eat rice
 ‘They fought with each other to eat the meal.’

In the following examples, *kan3* denotes a kind of general applicability of the predicate’s meaning across a collective of individuals:

- (914) *bòø phòò2 kan3 kin3*
 NEG be.enough COLL eat
 ‘(The food is) not enough (for everyone) to eat.’
- (915) *khòòng3 man2 niñom2 kan3 nèèw2 nan4*
 owing.to 3.B be.popular COLL manner DEM.NONPROX
dêj2
 FAC.NEWS
 ‘Since that sort of thing was popular (with everyone), you know.’
- (916) *kaan3 nap1 khanèèn2, caø nap1 kan3 bèèp5 nan4*
 NZR count score IRR count COLL manner DEM.NONPROX
 ‘(In the Lao sport *katòò*), regarding the counting of scores, (everyone) counts like that.’

⁵These cases are not distinct *kan3* constructions, but incorporate V-*kan3* units in adverbial functions; see Chapter 21, section 21.2.1.

13.1.3.4 *Complementary (yet asymmetric) action*

So far we have encountered descriptions of events in which multiple participants (or some coerced equivalent, such as the multiple parts of a single participant; example (901), above) are participating in the event in the same way (e.g., corresponding to the same semantic roles). By contrast, in the next class of cases, *kan3* is used in situations where participants participate in a single event in unlike yet complementary ways (as per (888d), above). Consider the following description of a simple transfer scene, a video clip in which one actor gives another actor a watch:

- (917) *qaw3 moong2 haj5 kan3*
 take watch give COLL
 ‘(They’re) giving “each other” a watch.’

Only one actor gives. The other only receives. While the receiver does in a sense do something which rightfully contributes to the event as a whole (i.e., accept the object by taking it in hand), the two participants play distinct roles with respect to the predicate *haj5* ‘give’. What this *kan3*-marked description of an unequivocally asymmetrical event seems to have in common with the categories examined so far is that it conveys the idea that the participants are taking part together in the event. Giving is an event type which lends itself well to this construal, since it implies a standard complementary action: receiving.

One way of putting it is that together the two actors engage in a joint activity of giving a watch—the ‘together’ notion licensing a *kan3* construction in describing the scene.

Following are examples where *kan3* is used in description of scenes in which a true reciprocal meaning is clearly not intended, nor is the idea that the participants each perform the same action or contribute to the event in the same way. Rather, in these cases, they together take part in an event defined by the action of a single participant, where the other’s contribution is complementary.

First is an example from a description of an accident on a wide country road in which a truck flattens a motorcycle (and the motorcycle does not flatten the truck in any sense):

- (918) *khaw3 kaø ñang2 pajø jiap5 kan3 daj4*
 3PL.B T.LNK STILL DIR.ABL flatten COLL CAN
 ‘(The road was 15 metres wide, and yet) they were still able to flatten each other.’

In another example, the single defining action is telling a story. This activity is rightfully complemented by a consenting listening audience:

- (919) *haw2 caø ñok1 qaw3 nithaan2 siang2-miang5 maø law1*
 1.FA IRR raise take tale S DIR.ALL tell
kan3
 COLL
 ‘I’m going to offer the story of Siang Miang to tell each other.’

Another example describes a scene in which a movie actor is extracting another’s sore tooth with pliers, and the two are rolling around, tussling. While the action is distinctly asymmetrical, the tooth-pulling activity rightfully involves a consenting jaw:

- (920) *lok1 khèèw5 kan3*
 pull.out tooth COLL
 ‘(They’re) pulling each other’s teeth out.’

In another example, one evening in Vientiane, I telephone B’s house, trying to locate a friend A, who is visiting the city, and who I know was dining with B that evening. A third person answers the phone. I ask for A, and am told he has already left. Then I ask for B, and elicit this:

- (921) *khacaw4 paj3 song1 kan3*
 3PL.P go send.home COLL
 ‘They’re sending each other home.’

While the predicated action *song1* ‘to send somebody (home)’ is clearly asymmetrical (only one sends the other home) the two are equally collaborating in the overall event.

In another example, a Lao speaker is watching a movie in which one of the characters has been cloned. Having missed the beginning of the film, and puzzled for a while as to why the same actor is playing two characters on the screen at the same time, the speaker realizes what is going on and says:

- (922) *qoo4 khacaw4 khloon2 kan3*
 INTJ 3PL.P to.clone COLL
 ‘Oh, they’re clones of each other.’

One is the real character, the other is the clone. They are not literally clones of each other. Yet they are in a rightfully complementary relationship.

Finally, a cow is accosted by a tiger, and agrees for the tiger to eat it, but asks that it first be allowed to go home and bid farewell to its calf. Its resignation to the inevitability of being eaten is accompanied with this remark:

- (923) *sua3 kap2 ngua2 man2 pên3 qaahaan3 sùng1 kan3 lèq1 kan3*
 tiger with cow 3.B COP food REL COLL and COLL
 ‘The tiger and the cow are food for each other.’

The relation predicated here is portrayed as rightful, the way of the world. The cow and the tiger are in a symbiotic relationship defined by the cow’s being food for the tiger. In a sense, they each play an equal part.

13.1.4 Information structure of Type 2 construction

The Type 2 *kan3* construction is less common in texts than Type 1, and significantly, was never once produced as a description of video stimulus materials (despite *kan3* being used in describing all but one of the clips, see Evans et al, forthcoming). This is due to an information structure difference between the constructions. In the Type 1 construction, the relevant participants are packaged into a single noun phrase either as an inherently plural noun or pronoun (including coerced plurals such as the multiple-parts reading of ‘string’ in example (901), above), or a conjunct noun phrase. Irrespective of internal complexity of the subject argument, in the Type 1 *kan3* construction the members of this set of participants are expressed as a single information-structural unit. Members of the set therefore share a single discourse status (given/presupposed, focused/new, topical, etc.). This type of information packaging is suitable for description of short video clips, which run for just a few seconds, and which are devoid of any contextually framing trajectory or narrative. Each clip was designed such that nothing in the event, beyond any inherent asymmetry of respective roles in the action taking place, encourages

differential treatment of the participants with respect to discourse-level information structure. The video clips never elicited the Type 2 construction because the Type 2 construction codes the participants in separate noun phrases and thereby construes the participants as distinct from each other in information status terms (e.g., with respect to reference-tracking).

In text examples of the Type 2 *kan3* construction, half are in descriptions of events of interpersonal communication:

- (924) *phit2 kan3 jaang1 ñaj1 kap2 cêk2*
 disagree COLL way big with Chinaman
 ‘(He) had a big disagreement with the Chinaman.’
- (925) *haw2 kaø vaw4 kan3 kap2 phòø-baan4*
 1.FA T.LNK speak COLL with Fa-village
 ‘So I spoke with the village chief.’

Other examples of the Type 2 *kan3* construction involved *khùù2* ‘to be like’, expressing the notion of ‘like’, ‘same as’:

- (926) *còq2 ngaa2 saj1 khùù2 kan3 kap2 tum4-paa3-khaaw3*
 insert tusk put be.like COLL with basket.trap-fish-white
 ‘Tusks are inserted (in this type of trap) like (in a) “white fish basket trap”.’
- (927) *suung3 khùù2 kan3 kap2 naaj2*
 tall be.like COLL with boss
 ‘(She’s) tall like (her) boss.’

In each case, the subject (i.e., the noun phrase that appears before the verb) is a distinct, tracked participant in the discourse. Its reference is accessible, old, topical information relative to the other participant.

13.1.5 Contrasting Type 1 and Type 2 constructions

There is one essential difference between the Type 1 and Type 2 *kan3* constructions: Type 1 refers to multiple participants with a single, continuous noun phrase, while Type 2 splits them up. In this way, Type 1 treats the participants as a single unit for information structure purposes (e.g., focus, reference-tracking), while Type 2 treats them as distinct units. The

need for this information-structural distinctness arises naturally in discourse, where a distinct narrative trajectory can impose differential values for otherwise equivalently involved entities.

13.2 Strict reciprocity

The previous section established that the *kan3* construction does not entail reciprocity. Its meaning is more general, covering a broader range of events, yet compatible with reciprocal events. Reciprocal events are aptly described by the *kan3* construction because they fit the general description of being events in which multiple participants map onto multiple roles in the event (and mostly, when each argument maps onto the actor role of the predicate, though not necessarily onto an undergoer role). When it is necessary to unequivocally depict the event as strictly reciprocal there are a couple of ways to do this. Both ways involve the combination of a *kan3* construction with another type of construction.

13.2.1 *Suu1* NP *suu1* VP construction

The following examples illustrate the *suu1* NP *suu1* VP construction, meaning ‘Each and every NP VP-ed’:

- (928) *suu1 khon2 suu1 maw2*
 each person each intoxicated
 ‘Each and every person was drunk.’
- (929) *suu1 hùan2 suu1 mii2 nam4-saang5*
 each house each have water-well
 ‘Each and every house has a water well.’

This construction can combine with the Type 1 *kan3* construction to unequivocally express strictly reciprocal events. Thus, a video clip in which two actors hug each other (A hugs B and B hugs A) can be described with a simple Type 1 *kan3* construction (*kòdòt5 kan3* ‘hug COLL’), and can also be combined with the *suu1* NP *suu1* VP construction:

- (930) *suu1 khon2 suu1 kòòt5 kan3*
 each person each hug COLL
 ‘Each person hugged each other.’

The meaning of the combination of these constructions, illustrated in (930), is that for the set of actors, each acts upon the other in the way specified in the predicate. That is, each participant maps onto both the actor and undergoer roles of the predicate (regardless of whether the events are simultaneous or sequential). While examples like a video clip in which A hugs B but B doesn’t hug A may be described with a simple *kan3* expression (i.e., *kòòt5 kan3* ‘hug COLL’), the combined expression with *suu1* in (930) would be inapplicable. The *kan3*-plus-*suu1* construction cannot be used for any of the many less-than-strictly-reciprocal events to which *kan3* alone may readily apply (see sections 13.1.3.2-13.1.3.4, above).⁶

13.2.2 ‘I V you, You V me’ construction

In describing strictly reciprocal events, speakers may add to a simple *kan3* construction an explicit spelling-out of the reciprocal relation, using 1st and 2nd person pronouns (though where these do not necessarily refer to speech-act participants). Here is a description of a scene in which A hits B and B hits A (sequentiality or simultaneity is irrelevant to the expression’s applicability):

- (931) *khacaw4 tii3 kan3 — khòòj5 tii3 caw4, caw4 tii3 khòòj5*
 3PL.P hit COLL 1SG.P hit 2SG.P 2SG.P hit 1SG.P
 ‘They hit each other—I hit you, you hit me.’

As noted already, some scenes which are not strictly reciprocal can nevertheless be described using a *kan3* construction, as in the following description of an asymmetrical scene in which one actor is delousing the hair of another:

⁶To be clear, it is the COMBINATION of the *suu1* construction and the *kan3* construction that narrows the reading to strict reciprocity. It is not that the *suu1* construction is used when *kan3* has a more strictly reciprocal meaning, since *kan3* is general with respect to symmetry of action, and is compatible with both stricter and looser senses of reciprocal eventhood.

- (932) *khacaw4 haa3 haw3 haj5 kan3*
 3PL.P seek louse give COLL
 ‘They’re seeking lice for each other.’

If the ‘I V you, You V me’ construction were added here, it could not describe the same event, but would only felicitously describe an event in which A delouses B’s hair AND B delouses A’s hair.

The next example describes a clip in which each acts upon the other, but it cannot describe a clip in which one participant is passive:

- (933) *khacaw4 haa3 haw3 haj5 kan3, khòj5 haa3 haw3 haj5 caw4,*
 3PL.P seek louse give COLL 1SG.P seek louse give 2SG.P
caw4 haa3 haw3 haj5 khòj5
 2SG.P seek louse give 1SG.P
 ‘They’re seeking lice for each other, you seek lice for me, I seek lice for you.’

The ‘I V you, You V me’ construction is a dedicated strategy for expressing strictly reciprocal event relations. Its meaning is not derived from simple composition of distinct parts. This is clear from the fact that the pronouns meaning ‘I’ and ‘you’ do not necessarily refer to speech event participants, as they normally would.

13.2.3 Remark

The particle *kan3* is a standard tool for describing reciprocal events, but it is not a dedicated marker of reciprocity. Events which may be felicitously described by *kan3* feature a multiplicity of participants acting together in some event, possibly by acting equally upon each other as in strictly reciprocal type events, possibly by doing the same action or being in the same state together (collectively or at the same time), or even just by participating in an event in which participants are equally committed or rightfully co-participating, despite a distinct asymmetry. These are not separate meanings of *kan3*, rather the meaning of *kan3* is general across these types of event. When it is necessary to be more specific and encode an event as strictly reciprocal, Lao speakers can do this by using further resources in combination with a *kan3* construction.

13.3 Reflexive and logophoric expressions

Reflexive type events are non-canonical in that a single referent fills multiple, distinct semantic roles (Frajzyngier and Curl 1999b, Geniusienie 1987, Kemmer 1993). For example, if a woman cuts herself with a knife, she is both agent and patient. If she sees herself in a mirror, she is both perceiver and theme. If she sells her own house, she is both agent, and possessor of the theme.

Two grammatical elements for reflexive expressions are *too3* ‘body, self’ (with variants *ton3* and *tua3*) and *qêêng3* ‘self’. In other contexts, *too3* is a noun referring to the body of an animate such as a person or animal. It is also used as a classifier in various functions (e.g., as a modifier classifier for animates; see Chapter 7).

Qêêng3 may occur by itself post-verbally as a kind of emphatic marker (parallel in function to emphatic uses of reflexive pronouns in the English translations):

- (934) *haw2 maø khit1 qêêng3*
 1.FA DIR.ALL think self
 ‘It was my own idea.’ (i.e., ‘I thought (of it) myself.’)
- (935) *man2 mian4 qêêng3*
 3.B clean.up self
 ‘She cleaned (it) up herself.’
- (936) *phen1 paj3 qêêng3*
 3.P go self
 ‘She went herself (i.e., under her own steam).’

The idea conveyed by *qêêng3* is that she did it without help. The notion that she did it ALONE is expressed by replacing *qêêng3* with the expression *phuø-diaw3* ‘MC.HUM-single’ (cf. (935-936)):

- (937) *man2 mian4 phuø-diaw3*
 3.B clean.up MC.HUM-single
 ‘She cleaned (it) up alone.’
- (938) *phen1 paj3 phuø-diaw3*
 3.P go MC.HUM-single
 ‘She went alone.’

In reflexive expressions, *too3* and *qêêng3* are used together, with *too3* phonologically dependent (as *toφ-*). If a single referent fills both a subject and a non-subject role, *toφ-qêêng* will occur in the relevant non-subject slot, as in the following examples:

- (939) *phen1_i paat5 mùù2 toφ-qêêng3_i*
 3.P slice hand REFL
 ‘She cut her (own) hand.’
- (940) *phen1_i hên3 toφ-qêêng3_i naj2 vèèn2*
 3.P see REFL in mirror
 ‘She saw herself in the mirror.’
- (941) *phen1_i khaaj3 hùan2 toφ-qêêng3_i*
 3.P sell house REFL
 ‘She sold her own house.’
- (942) *phòφ-tuu4_i kaφ leej2 saj4 pan3ñaa2 khòòng3*
 CT.Fa.PaPa T.LNK NO.ADO use intelligence of
toφ-qêêng3_i
 REFL
 ‘So I (i.e., grandfather) went ahead and used my own intelligence.’

It is also possible to use *caw4-khòòng3* ‘owner’ in the same position and function as *toφ-qêêng3* in these examples. This is more common in cases of acting upon the self, as in this re-phrasing of (939):

- (943) *phen1_i paat5 mùù2 caw4-khòòng3_i*
 3.P slice hand owner
 ‘She cut her (own) hand.’ (lit. ‘She cut the owner’s hand.’)

With certain middle-type verbs, such as verbs of grooming, reflexively oriented action does not require explicit marking with a reflexive pronoun:

- (944) *phen1 thèè3 nuat5*
 3.P shave facial.hair
 ‘He shaved (himself).’
- (945) *phen1 qaap5 nam4*
 3.P bathe water
 ‘He bathed (himself).’

In these two examples, there is an explicitly expressed object argument. Since Lao uses zero anaphora, omission of the object arguments in (944-945) would signal that their objects are definite, and known from context, as implied by the translation of this example (cf. (944)):

- (946) *phen1 thèè3*
 3.P shave
 'He shaved it.'

Toø-qêêng3 may occasionally be used as a first person pronoun, though this is not common:

- (947) *toø-qêêng3 caø tai2 lèp1-mùù2*
 REFL IRR cut.off claw-hand
 'I myself will cut my (his/her) fingernails.'

Toø-qêêng3 may also be used in embedded clauses as a logophoric pronoun, to signal co-reference with a main subject:⁷

- (948) *phen1 bððk5 vaa1 toø-qêêng3 caø paj3*
 3.P tell COMP REFL IRR go
 'She_i said that she_i would go.'
- (949) *phen1 bððk5 vaa1 phen1 caø paj3*
 3.P tell comp 3.P IRR go
 'She_i said that she_{i/j} would go.'

⁷Co-reference is not necessarily entailed in (948), since *toø-qêêng3* may be read as a pronoun meaning 'I' (as illustrated in (947)), giving the reading 'She said that I myself would be going'. This reading is less likely, however.

Part V

Multi-verb constructions

Chapter 14

Preliminary remarks on multi-verb constructions

Almost every problem in Lao clausal grammar demands an understanding of the range of possible relationships between verbs or verb phrases in unmarked sequences. Part of the genius of the language is its scope for creative embedding of such structures to give long surface strings of up to six or more verbs, of the following kind:

- (950) *caw4 lòng2 qaw3 paj3 hêt1 kin3 beng1 mèt4*
2SG.P try.out take go make eat look IMP.UNIMPD
'You go ahead and take (them) and try cooking (them) to eat!'

This chapter previews some basic features of multi-verb clausal grammar, and remaining chapters in this part present sub-types in more detail. In referring to multi-verb constructions, I restrict this in general to sequences which normally form prosodically integrated units. The term serial verb construction has been used in a range of ways in the literature (cf. Lord 1993, Durie 1997, Aikhenvald and Dixon 2006), and may be too narrowly suggestive of certain specific types of construction which form only a subset of the broader set of expressions described in this part.

This preliminary chapter sets the scene for chapters to follow, by presenting some of the key behavioral properties of clause-level morphosyntax which will allow us to distinguish between types of multi-verb construction.

Lao speakers do not use case-marking or agreement morphology, and seldom explicitly mark relationships of subordination (e.g., as speakers of other languages might do by non-finite verb forms or the like). There are few simple ways to work out which element is the head in compounds or complex predicates, and in addition there are ambiguities with respect to the distinction between coordinate and subordinate relationships between verb phrases which appear in surface sequence. Figuring out how various verbs are related in various kinds of unmarked multi-verb sequences dominates the task of describing Lao grammar. In this chapter, we consider some phenomena helpful in devising tests for discovering these relations.

In the rest of the chapter, I outline headship properties as defined by the following aspects of grammatical behavior:

1. Grammatical features of canonical main verbs
2. Clause separability
3. Yes-answers
4. Ellipsisibility of object complements (in main and relative clauses)
5. Insertability of left aspectual-modal marking
6. Insertability of the topic linker *kaø*

These are the topics of the following sub-sections.

In assessing the respective roles of different verbs in multi-verb sequences, the question arises as to whether either of the two (or more) verbs is more or less accessible than the other to the normal grammatical features of main verbs. As discussed in Chapters 9 and 10, above, the class of verbs consists of words which may take: (a) direct negation with *bøø*, (b) direct irrealis marking with *siø*, (c) marking of achievement with *dajø*, (d) marking of perfect aspect with postverbal *lèw4*, among other types of aspectual-modal marking. Another property of verbs is that they may be used as nominal attributives in noun phrases (comparable to adjectives, gerundive attributives and relative clauses in other languages; cf. *khon2 suung3* [person tall] ‘tall person’, *khon2 lèn1* [person run] ‘running person’, *khon2 paj3* [person go] ‘person (who) goes’), and in this role may be linked overtly to the modified noun by the relativizer *thi1*. Verbs in secondary or subordinate function often are not accessible to some or all of these properties.

14.1 Clause separability of multi-verb constructions

A multi-verb construction shows clause separability if it can be paraphrased with insertion of overt marking which forces a reading of the verbs as belonging to independent clauses, and where this causes no significant change in the basic semantic relationship between those verbs (although certain pragmatic effects may arise).

One way to clause-separate a multi-verb construction is to insert between verbs a marked pause, or an adverbial expression such as *lang3 caak5 nan4* ‘after that’, *nòk4 caak5 nan4* ‘apart from that; as well as that’, *phua1* ‘in order to’, or *lùù3 vaa1* ‘or’. Another is to insert the clause linker *lèkaø* ‘and then’, a reduced form of the perfect marker *lèw4* in

combination with the VP-marking topic linker *kaø*. In general (although not exclusively), the perfect marker *lèw4* marks the previous clause, and the topic linker *kaø* refers to the coming clause, whose subject being coreferential with that of the previous clause, and being tracked across these clauses, is naturally ellipsed. The result is that *lèkaø* routinely signals (but does not entail) consecutivity and subject coreferentiality between conjoined clauses. Other functions of *lèkaø* include distributive enumeration of actions which are not necessarily performed consecutively.¹ While these various ways of clause-separating multiple verbs in a single construction alter the semantic content of the original string, what is important for clause-separability as a grammatical test is whether or not the insertion upsets the basic semantic relation between verbs.

The sequence ‘return come study’ in (951a)—not subordinating, apart from iconic temporal sequence—is clause-separable, as shown by the acceptability, with negligible change in semantic relationship between V1 and V2, of (951b) and (951c):

- (951) a. *kap2-khùùn2 maa2 pathêêt4 hian2 tòd1*
 go.back-return come country study continue
 ‘(They) came back to (their) country to continue (their) studies.’
- b. *kap2-khùùn2 maa2 pathêêt4 phùà1 hian2 tòd1*
 go.back-return come country in.order.to study continue
 ‘(They) came back to (their) country in order to continue (their) studies.’ (=951a))
- c. *kap2-khùùn2 maa2 pathêêt4 lèkaø hian2 tòd1*
 go.back-return come country C.LNK study continue
 ‘(They) came back to (their) country and (they) continued (their) studies.’ (=951a))

By contrast, (952a)—a subordinating complement construction—is non clause-separable, as shown by the significant change of semantic relationship between V1 and V2 in the clause-separated permutations (952b) and (952c):

¹There are other linkers which seem at first glance similar to *lèkaø* (such as *laø*, *lèw4*, and *loot4*), but which play subtly different functions in linking clauses in discourse.

- (952) a. *phuak4 khòj5 hên3 man2 ñing2 baan4*
 group 1SG.P see 3.B shoot village
 ‘We saw them bomb the village.’
- b. *phuak4 khòj5 hên3 man2, nòk4 caak5 nan4*
 group 1SG.P see 3.P out from DEM.NONPROX
man2 ñing2 baan4
 3.B shoot village
 ‘We saw them—as well as that, they bombed the village.’
 (≠(952a))
- c. *phuak4 khòj5 hên3 man2 lèkaø ñing2 baan4*
 group 1SG.P see 3.B C.LNK shoot village
 ‘We saw them and then bombed the village.’ (≠(952a))

Clause separability as a grammatical test reveals differences in relationships between verbs in multi-verb constructions. Verb combinations involving relationships of subordination are not clause separable.

14.2 Yes-answerhood

Polar questions are formed by taking a declarative sentence and adding one of a set of interrogative sentence-final particles, the most semantically general being *bòj3* (see Chapter 4):

- (953) Q *caw4 siø paj3 talaat5 bòj3*
 2SG.P IRR go market QPLR
 ‘Will you go to the market?’

One way of yes-answering a polar question is to use an affirmative particle such as the very polite *dooj3*, the standard polite *caaw4*, or the informal *qee4/qee5* (see Chapter 12, section 12.5.2). Another common method of affirmative answer is to repeat some portion of the question, typically the main verb alone:

- (954) A *(khòj5) (siø) paj3 (talaat5) (* bòj3)*
 1SG.P IRR go market QPLR
 ‘(Yes, I will) go (to the market).’

So as a yes-answer to (953), *paj3* ‘go’ could appear alone or in combination with any of the other elements in the question (apart from the interrogative particle itself). The important thing here with respect to the yes-answer as a test for main-verbhood is that in answering (953) by means of repetition of some portion of the question, the main verb *paj3* ‘go’ is necessary and sufficient as a yes-answer. Also importantly, preverbal aspectual-modal markers such as irrealis *si* \emptyset , achievement marker *daj* \emptyset , and directional particles can never appear alone, let alone as yes-answers.

The following complement construction shows the verb *suup5* ‘suck, smoke’ subordinate to the main complement-taking predicate *haam5* ‘to forbid’:

- (955) *khaw3 haam5 suup5*
 3PL.B forbid smoke
 ‘They forbid (people) to smoke (it).’

A question is formed by adding the interrogative particle *bòò3*:

- (956) *khaw3 haam5 suup5 bòò3*
 3PL.B forbid smoke QPLR
 ‘Do they forbid (people) to smoke (it)?’

Only the matrix verb *haam5* ‘forbid’ can appear alone as a yes-answer:

- (957) *haam5*
 forbid
 ‘(Yes, they) forbid (people to smoke it).’

On the other hand, in the case of ‘want’ complement constructions, the usual yes-answer includes both the matrix verb *jaak5* ‘want’ and its complement verb together:

- (958) Q *caw4 jaak5 paj3 bòò3*
 2SG.P want go QPLR
 ‘Do you want to go?’
 Ai *jaak5 paj3*
 want go
 ‘(Yes, I) want to go.’

However, it is also possible to answer the question using either the main verb *jaak5* ‘want’ alone;

Aii *jaak5*
want
‘(Yes, I) want (to go).’

or the complement verb alone:

Aiii *paj3*
go
‘(Yes, I want to) go.’ (or: ‘(Yes, I’ll) go.’)

The difference between these two replies is that (958Aiii) is arguably not a straight answer to (958Q) (i.e., in that it does not directly respond to the sentence-meaning of the question—cf. English *I’ll go* as an answer to *Do you want to go?*).

Other complement-taking predicates which are borderline between full complement-taking verbs and preverbal aspectual-modal markers similarly show varying yes-answer properties. An example is the experiential marker *kheej2* ‘accustomed to, have ever’, which allows V1, V2, or V1-V2 as yes-answers to a question ‘V1-V2?’, but differs from *jaak5* ‘want’ in that the preferred yes-answer is V1 alone (rather than V1-V2):

- (959) Q *caw4 kheej2 paj3 bòò3*
2SG.P EXP go QPLR
‘Have you ever been?’
- Ai *kheej2*
EXP
‘(Yes, I have) ever (been).’ (preferred)
- Aii *kheej2 paj3*
EXP go
‘(Yes, I have) ever been.’
- Aiii *paj3*
go
‘(Yes, I have ever) been.’ (or ‘(Yes, I) go.’)

Again, it is arguable whether *paj3* ‘go’ in (959Aiii) is a straight answer (i.e., a direct response to the sentence-meaning of the original question). Otherwise, it is unclear what the communicative difference between these responses is.

In contrast, for right-headed adverbial complement constructions (see Chapter 21), yes-answer status is unequivocally with V2:

- (960) Q *caw4 paj3 viang2can3 muan1 b003*
 2SG.P go V fun QPLR
 ‘Did you have fun going to Vientiane?’
 Ai *muan1*
 fun
 ‘(Yes, I had) fun.’
 Aii **paj3*
 go
 ((Yes, I) went.)
- (961) Q *faaj1 viang2can3 sanaq1 dii3 b003*
 side V win good QPLR
 ‘(Would it be) good (if) the Vientiane side won?’
 Ai *dii3*
 good
 ‘(Yes, it would be) good.’
 Aii **sanaq1*
 win
 ((Yes, it would) win.)

Compare these with cases in which the verbs in sequence are coordinated or compounded—as in the synonym compound (962), or the left-marking adverbial compound (963)—and cannot be separated in a minimal straight yes-answer:

- (962) Q *man2 nii3-paq2 naang2 qan0-nii4 b003*
 3.B flee-abandon young.woman MC.INAN-DEM QPLR
 ‘Did he abandon that young woman?’
 A *nii3-paq2*
 flee-abandon
 ‘(Yes, he) abandoned (her).’

- (963) Q *lak1-khaam5 saaj2-dèèn3 bòð3*
 steal-cross border QPLR
 ‘(Did they) secretly cross the border?’
 A *lak1-khaam5*
 steal-cross
 ‘(Yes, they) secretly crossed (it).’

In sum, three types of yes-answer behavior can be determined for a given V1-V2 combination:

Table 28. Three types of yes-answer preference for a V1-V2 sequence

Preferred yes-answer	V1	V2	V1-V2
Examples	Cognitive complements ‘see’, ‘forget’, ‘hear’, and phase complements such as ‘begin’ and ‘cease’	Complement structures with adverbials or resultatives in V2 position	Verb compounds (coordinative and adverbial)

14.3 Ellipsisibility of object complements

14.3.1 Ellipsisibility in main clauses

Ellipsis of arguments is common. Any main verb in a simple clause can be expressed without accompanying phonological material referring to its arguments:

- (964) *mùng2 kin3 maak5 nii4 tèè1 kuu3 bòð kin3 Ø*
 2SG.B eat fruit DEM but 1SG.B NEG eat
 ‘You eat this fruit, but I don’t eat (it).’

Also, many (but not all) verb-prepositions—i.e., verbs marking non-core participants—may ellipsis their complements, as does *nam2* ‘accompany, with’, in the following example:

- (965) *mùng2 paj3, kuu3 jaak5 paj3 nam2 Ø*
 2SG.B go 1SG.B want go accompany
 ‘(If) you go, I want to go with (you).’

It is less clear whether the verb phrase or sentence complements of complement-taking main verbs can in general be ellipsed, and in many cases it would seem unusual or impossible:

- (966) *?? mùng2 jaak5 paj3 tèè1 kuu3 bə̀ø jaak5 Ø*
 2SG.B want go but 1SG.B NEG want
 ‘(You want to go, but I don’t want to.)’

Main complement-taking predicates cannot normally be ellipsed. The following example does not mean ‘You want to go, but I don’t want to’ (i.e., where *jaak5* ‘want’ is ellipsed from the second clause):

- (967) *mùng2 jaak5 paj3 tèè1 kuu3 bə̀ø paj3*
 2SG.B want go but 1SG.B NEG go
 ‘You want to go, but I’m not going.’

Moreover, the effect cannot be achieved by removing the whole verb complex (i.e., *jaak5 paj3* ‘want to go’) under identity with that of the previous clause:

- (968) ** mùng2 jaak5 paj3 tèè1 kuu3 bə̀ø*
 2SG.B want go but 1SG.B NEG
 (You want to go but I not.)
- (969) ** mùng2 jaak5 paj3 tèè1 bə̀ø kuu3*
 2SG.B want go but NEG 1SG.B
 (You want to go but not me.)

14.3.2 Ellipsibility in relativization

An exception to the general rule that any noun phrase can be ellipsed under contextual retrievability is the requirement that in a relative clause some phonological material corresponding to the argument being relativized upon must appear (i.e., as the nominal modified by the relative

clause).² Consider the following examples, showing a simple transitive clause in (970a), and in (970b) this clause relativized, in object function, with the erstwhile subject as head (using *khon2* ‘person’):

- (970) a. *qiø-dam3 mak1 bakø-dèng3*
 F.B-D like M.B-D
 ‘Dam likes Deng.’
- b. *kuu3 hên3 khon2 mak1 bakø-dèng3*
 1SG.B see person like M.B-D
 ‘I saw the person who likes Deng.’
- c. **kuu3 hên3 mak1 bakø-dèng3*
 1SG.B see like M.B-D
 (I saw who likes Deng.)

These examples, showing that a relative clause cannot appear without an explicit nominal head to modify, involve a simple transitive verb *mak1* ‘like’. Now consider relative clauses derived from clauses containing multi-verb constructions. The question arises as to whether one or the other verb can be ellipsed. The possibilities are different for different construction types.

For example, the following head-final adverbial construction includes the verb *muan1* ‘enjoyable’ in V2 position:

- (971) *laaw2 lin5 kitaa3 muan1*
 3SG.FA play guitar enjoyable
 ‘She plays guitar nicely (i.e., her playing sounds good).’

While the adverbial V2 *muan1* ‘enjoyable’ is head for yes-answer purposes, it cannot stand alone in a relative clause and retain its adverbial function. Instead, if it appears alone (as in (972b, 973b), below), it is taken for a main verb in itself:

²Occasional exceptions are noted, but these are not really relative clauses, rather sentences in Left or Right Position, with ellipsed subjects. I heard and noted the following example (Oudom Xay, September 1999): *tok2 vangø-kii4-niø, caw4 kêp2 lèw4 vaa3* [fall just.now, 2SG.P collect PRF QPLR.INFER] ‘Did you pick up (the thing that) fell just now?’, in which the string *tok2 vangø-kii4-niø* ‘fell just now’ could be mistaken for a relative clause with no head noun being modified. However, unlike a regular (headed) relative clause, it cannot appear with this meaning in a core argument slot: **caw4 kêp2 tok2 vangø-kii4-niø lèw4 vaa3* (Did you collect what fell just now?). A more faithful translation of the original example would be ‘(It) fell just now, did you pick (it) up?’.

- (972) a. *khòj5 hên3 [khon2 lin5 kitaa3 muan1]*
 1 SG.P see person play guitar enjoyable
 ‘I saw the person who plays guitar nicely.’
 b. *khòj5 hên3 [khon2 muan1]*
 1 SG.P see person enjoyable
 ‘I saw the enjoyable person.’ (not entailed by (972a))
- (973) a. *khòj5 hên3 [kitaa3 lin5 muan1]*
 1 SG.P see guitar play enjoyable
 ‘I saw the guitar that is enjoyable to play.’
 b. *khòj5 hên3 [kitaa3 muan1]*
 1 SG.P see guitar enjoyable
 ‘I saw the enjoyable guitar.’ (not entailed by (973a))

In contrast, V2 complements of left-headed complement-taking predicates such as *haam5* ‘forbid’ or *huu4* ‘know’ are optional in relative clauses:

- (974) a. *khòj5 hên3 khon2 haam5 suup5 jaa3*
 1 SG.P see person forbid smoke medicine
 ‘I saw the person who forbade (you) to smoke.’
 b. *khòj5 hên3 khon2 haam5*
 1 SG.P see person forbid
 ‘I saw the person who forbade (you).’ (entailed by (974a))
- (975) a. *khòj5 hên3 khon2 huu4 vaa1 caw4 juu1 han5*
 1 SG.P see person know COMP 2SG.P be.at DEM.DIST
 ‘I saw the person who knows you were there.’
 b. *khòj5 hên3 khon2 huu4*
 1 SG.P see person know
 ‘I saw the person who knows.’ (entailed by (975a))

In sum, while a relative clause must attach to a nominal head, there is a logical possibility in the case of multi-verb constructions that one of the verbs can be omitted. Left- and right-headed V1-V2 structures behave differently with respect to this possibility, due to the contrasting status of V1, and V2, respectively, as clausal head.

14.4 Insertability of preverbal aspectual-modal marking

Some aspectual-modal markers appear immediately before the verb, a fact that allows for distinction between types of multi-verb construction. In a V1-V2 sequence, we may ask whether aspectual-modal marking such as *bòø* ‘NEG’ or *siø* ‘IRR’ appears before V1, V2, either, or neither. For example, in the case of verb compounds (Chapter 20), no marking of V2 is possible (976), while in resultative constructions (Chapter 17) it is usually possible for either V1 or V2 to be directly marked (977):

- (976) a. *man2 bòø dajø nii3-paq2*
 3.B NEG ACHV flee-abandon
 ‘He didn’t abandon (her).’
 b. *man2 nii3 bòø dajø paq2*
 3.B flee NEG ACHV abandon
 (NOT: ‘He didn’t abandon (her).’)
 Possible reading: ‘He fled, he didn’t abandon (her).’
- (977) a. *man2 bòø dajø piing4 suk2*
 3.B NEG ACHV grill cooked
 ‘It did not, by grilling, get cooked.’
 b. *man2 piing4 bòø dajø suk2*
 3.B grill NEG ACHV cooked
 ‘It, by grilling, did not get cooked.’

14.5 Insertability of topic linker *kaø*

The topic linker *kaø* can be useful in understanding grammatical properties of different multi-verb constructions. We begin with tight complementation structures, a permissive and a causative, respectively (see Chapter 18):

- (978) *phen1 bòø haj5 Ø paj3*
 3.P NEG give go
 ‘He wouldn’t let (me) go.’

- (979) *baang3-thua1 ø hêt1 kèèw4 tèèk5*
 some-occasion do glass break
 ‘Sometimes (I) might break a glass.’

The following examples show the topic linker *kaø* appearing immediately after the main subject slot of these constructions (as they appeared in the text sources):

- (980) *phen1 kaø bðø haj5 ø paj3*
 3SG T.LNK NEG give go
 ‘So, he wouldn’t let (me) go.’
- (981) *baang3-thua1 ø kaø hêt1 kèèw4 tèèk5*
 some-occasion T.LNK do/make glass break
 ‘So, sometimes (I) might break a glass.’

If *kaø* appeared after the lower subject slot in these examples (i.e., before *paj3* ‘go’ and *tèèk5* ‘break’, respectively), the embedded complement readings would not be possible at all. Thus, with *kaø* after the lower subject slot, marked by ‘ø’ in (980), as follows, the verb *paj3* ‘go’ and its subject would no longer be embedded under *haj5* ‘give/make/let’, but as the translations reveal, the two verbs would be taken to belong to distinct clauses (note that further readings are possible, as indicated by ‘...’):

- (980') *phen1 bðø haj5 ø kaø paj3*
 3.P NEG give T.LNK go
 i. ‘(So, even if) they don’t give (it to me), (I’ll) go (anyway).’
 ii. ‘(If) they don’t give (it to me), (so then I’ll) go.’
 ...

The verbs *haj5* ‘give’ and *paj3* ‘go’ are interpreted in (980') as heads of separate clauses, coordinated. *Paj3* ‘go’ functions as an independent verbal head, with the result that *haj5* ‘give’ is not interpreted in its causative complement-taking sense ‘give/make/let’, and instead is interpreted as a regular main verb, literally, ‘give’. The overall expression, with two separate clauses, may then take on a conditional meaning (arising from the need to interpret a relevant link between the juxtaposed clauses).

Similarly, to take example (981) and move the topic linker *kaø* to the point immediately before V2 would disallow a reading in which the lower clause (i.e., *kèèw4 tèèk5* ‘glass break’) were subordinate to the higher

verb *hêt1* ‘do’, and would instead force a biclausal coordination reading (again, readings other than (i) and (ii) are possible):

- (981') *baang3-thùal1 Ø hêt1 kèèw4 kaø tèèk5*
 some-occasion do glass T.LNK break
 i. ‘Sometimes (I) might make a glass, and (it) will (also) break.’
 ii. ‘Sometimes (when) (I) do (it), the glasses (also) break.’
 ...

Insertion of *kaø* before V2 in the preceding examples causes a radical change in interpretation, depending on the nature of the relationship between V1 and V2. In other cases, however, there is more than one option for *kaø*-insertion. Consider the following two right-marking adverbial constructions:

- (982) a. *laaw2 tèèm4 huup4 lin5*
 3SG.FA paint picture play
 ‘She paints pictures for fun.’
 b. *laaw2 tèèm4 huup4 kêng1*
 3SG.FA paint picture adept
 ‘She’s good at painting pictures.’

These naturally both allow insertion of *kaø* immediately after the main subject *laaw2* ‘she’, marking off the whole verb sequence in each case as a predication about the subject argument:

- (983) a. *laaw2 kaø tèèm4 huup4 lin5*
 3SG.FA T.LNK paint picture play
 ‘She also paints pictures for fun.’
 b. *laaw2 kaø tèèm4 huup4 kêng1*
 3SG.FA T.LNK paint picture adept
 ‘She’s also good at painting pictures.’

However, only (982b) allows insertion of *kaø* before V2:

- (984) a. **laaw2 tèèm4 huup4 kaø lin5*
 3SG.FA paint picture T.LNK play
 (She also paints pictures for fun.)

- b. *laaw2 tèm4 huup4 kaø kêng1*
 3SG.FA paint picture T.LNK adept
 ‘She’s also good at painting pictures.’

The issue here is how the post-*kaø* verb in a construction such as (984b) (here, it is *kêng1* ‘adept’) relates semantically to what precedes it, e.g., whether the main subject has a semantic role with respect to V2, and if so, what role it is. In (982-984), *kêng1* ‘adept’ is a gradable state verb (adjective), which may be construed in this case as either predicating a property of the main subject ‘she’, or (adverbially) of a whole predication ‘She paints pictures’.

The unacceptability of (984a) suggests that *lin5* ‘play’ in (982a) does not have the same outer scope as *kêng1* ‘adept’, and belongs in an inner clause layer, where it directly marks the verb phrase only, not the subject alone, and not the sentence as a whole. This distinction between the behavior of (982a) and (982b) relates to a distinction between compounding versus complementation in right-headed adverbial constructions, and active versus stative aspectual structure of an adverbial V2 head (compare stative *kêng1* ‘adept’ versus active *lin5* ‘play’). See Chapter 21 for further discussion.

The topic linker *kaø* belongs in an immediate post-subject slot on the sentence level. It links back to a prior unit (usually a proposition) as an extracausal topic of some sort (see Chapter 9). *Kaø* cannot appear in the post-subject slot of an embedded clause, or a relative clause (as noted above). That it can appear before certain V2 resultatives and adverbials suggests that the latter can be structurally main-predicate like, more so than the verbs in their sentential ‘subjects’. This structural distinction is helpful in working out distinctions between various types of V1-V2 sequences.

14.6 Remark

This finishes our preview of structural tests which help to distinguish between types of V1-V2 strings. The remaining chapters of this part are concerned with describing the V1-V2 construction types, and the grammatical distinctions between them. (See Table 32 in Chapter 22 for a summary.)

Chapter 15

Three-participant events

Verbs such as ‘send’ or ‘put’, which specify three participants, pose a coding challenge for the clause. Given a general preference for minimizing the number of lexical arguments per clause (DuBois 1987), the need to fit yet a third argument into the clause complicates matters considerably. Typological discussion of three-place predicates has paid special attention to the differential morphosyntactic treatment of theme and goal arguments (especially where double objects are involved), given the logical possibilities of singling out one of these for the standard treatment received by grammatical object or equivalent in two-argument constructions, and treating the other as somehow special (cf. Borg and Comrie 1984, Givón 1984, *inter alia*). This chapter describes the resources made available in Lao for the encoding of three-participant events (cf. Newman 1996, Margetts and Austin 2007).

The closest to a double object type structure involves postverbal incorporation of the theme nominal (section 15.1.1). When only one verb is present in a clause, the three-argument problem is otherwise dealt with by extraposition of one of the non-subject arguments (section 15.1.2) ellipsis of arguments where contextually retrievable (section 15.1.3), or marking off of one argument in an oblique (prepositional) phrase (section 15.3). Verb serialization (section 15.2) is the more productive strategy for hosting multiple non-subject arguments.

The set of resources conventional in Lao constitutes a subset of the fuller taxonomy of strategies currently attested across languages:

- (985) Taxonomy of encoding strategies of three-participant events (adapted from Margetts and Austin 2007, based on Austin, Bowden, Evans, and Margetts 2000); Lao strategies given in bold:
- A. **Three-place predicate strategy**: all three participants are expressed as syntactic arguments of the verb (Lao strategies involve topicalization and ellipsis; section 15.1)
 - B. **Oblique strategy**: verb takes two arguments, a third participant is expressed as oblique (by case-marking or adposition) (Lao strategy involves adpositional marking of a goal participant; section 15.3)

- C. **Multi-verb strategy:** two or more verbs combine in a single clause to share the three arguments (section 15.2)
- D. **Incorporation strategy:** one participant is incorporated, not a full argument (Lao strategy involves incorporation of theme, goal is a regular object; section 15.1)
- E. Adnominal strategy: one participant is expressed as adnominal dependent of an argument
- F. Directional strategy: an adverbial directional marker indicates deictic orientation of transfer event
- G. Absorption strategy: the verb includes information about a third participant.

Typical of a mainland Southeast Asian language, Lao overcomes a constraint against three overt, full arguments in the core of a single-verb clause by utilizing a number of definitive features of the language's overall typological profile: topic-comment structure, definite argument ellipsis, and verb serialization.

15.1 Single-verb means for expression of three participants in an event

It is not possible in Lao to describe a three participant event where all three appear as full arguments in the clausal core with a single verb. Expressing three nominals with one verb in a single utterance requires 'burying' one of the arguments with incorporation, extraposing one of the arguments with topicalization, or deleting one or more arguments with ellipsis.

15.1.1 Incorporation strategy

A number of three-participant verbs (including *thaam3* 'ask', *bòòk5* 'tell', *thaa2* 'apply, smear') allow two complements to appear postverbally, with neither overtly marked as oblique. Theme (TH) participants precede goal or recipient participants:

- (986) *khian3 [qanø-nan4]_{TH} [phen1] vaj4 vaa1 siø bðø*
 write MC.INAN-DEM.NONPROX 3.P keep COMP IRR NEG
dajø maa2
 ACHV come
 ‘(I) write them a whatdoyoucallit [lit. ‘a “that-thing”’], telling
 (them I) won’t be coming (back).’
- (987) *khòj5 thaam3 [moong2]_{TH} [laaw2]*
 1SG.P ask o’clock 3SG.FA
 ‘I asked him the time.’
- (988) *caw5 haj5 [thaang2]_{TH} [phen1] dèè1*
 2SG.P give way 3.P IMP.SOFT
 ‘You please make way (for) him.’

These structures can be said to involve incorporation in that the first postverbal nominal—the theme argument—virtually forms a single predicate in combination with the verb, and this predicate may then take a direct complement. The incorporated nominal is not freely modifiable in situ. (A modifier is possible if fully extraposed, i.e., where the modifier appears in Right Position.)

In the following example, *sii3* ‘paint’ is an incorporated complement of *thaa2* ‘apply’, resulting in *thaa2 sii3* [apply-paint] ‘apply paint to’, or simply ‘to paint’:

- (989) *laaw2 thaa2 sii3 hùan2 lang3 nii4*
 3SG.FA apply paint house CLF.FRAME DEM
 ‘She painted (i.e., ‘applied paint (to)’) this house.’

Accordingly, *sii3* ‘paint’ in this context cannot be given extra weight with a direct modifier (*lùam5* ‘shiny’ in (990)) or specifier (*nan4* ‘that’ in (991)):

- (990) **laaw2 thaa2 sii3 lùam5 hùan2 lang3 nii4*
 3SG.FA apply paint shiny house CLF.FRAME DEM
 (She applied shiny paint to this house.)
- (991) **laaw2 thaa2 sii3 nan4 hùan2 lang3 nii4*
 3SG.FA apply paint DEM.NONPROX house CLF.FRAME DEM
 (She applied that paint to this house.)

If a modifier or specifier is to combine directly with the theme *sii3* ‘paint’, then another strategy is required. The main three strategies are discussed in detail in later sections, but I shall first introduce them here.

One possibility is to topicalize either the goal (992a) or theme argument (992b), putting one argument into an extracausal slot.

- (992) a. [*hùan2 lang3 nii4*]_{TH} *laaw2 thaa2 sii3 lùam5*
house CLF.FRAME DEM 3SG.FA apply paint shiny
‘This house, she applied shiny paint (to).’
b. [*sii3 lùam5*]_{TPC} *laaw2 thaa2 hùan2 lang3 nii4*
paint shiny 3SG.FA apply house CLF.FRAME DEM
‘Shiny paint, she applied (to) this house.’

A second possibility is verb serialization. This is illustrated in example (993), in which the theme is direct complement of V1 and the goal is direct complement of V2, thus making each non-subject participant a complement of a separate verb.

- (993) *laaw2 [qaw3 sii3 lùam5]_{VP1} [*thaa2 hùan2 lang3*
3SG.FA take paint shiny apply house CLF.FRAME
nii4]_{VP2}
DEM
‘She took shiny paint (and) applied (it to) this house.’*

The third possibility is to adopt an oblique strategy (994), in which either the theme or goal argument is marked off by a preposition-like element in a non-core phrase:

- (994) a. *laaw2 thaa2 hùan2 lang3 nii4 [duaj4 sii3*
3SG.FA apply house CLF.FRAME DEM with paint
*lùam5]_{ADJT}
shiny
‘She applied this house with shiny paint.’
b. *laaw2 thaa2 sii3 lùam5 [saj1 hùan2 lang3 nii4]_{ADJT}
3SG.FA apply paint shiny put house CLF.FRAME DEM
‘She applied shiny paint to this house.’**

The productivity of the noun-incorporating strategy is apparently constrained to the expression of events in which the specific noun-verb combination is an everyday or typical one (cf. Mithun 1984:861). The incorporated participant is usually if not always non-referential or non-specific.

Here are further examples, involving *hot1* ‘pour (water on something)’ and *pòòn4* ‘feed’:

- (995) *khaw3 hot1 nam4 suan3*
 3PL.B pour water garden
 ‘They watered the garden.’ (lit. ‘They water-poured the garden.’)
- (996) *man2 pòòn4 khaw5 luuk4*
 3.B feed rice child
 ‘He fed (his) child.’ (lit. ‘He rice-fed his child.’)

In these examples, the incorporated nominals *nam4* ‘water’ and *khaw5* ‘rice’ are not referential, in that they cannot be immediately referred to in the following discourse with pronominal (including zero) reference. In the case of (996) what is fed to the child need not even be rice. While these expressions include three separate nominals in surface syntax, they are not three-place predicates in a full sense. This is because the incorporated nominal is not a single phrase structure constituent (although it does display partial argument status, in allowing modification at all).

In further examples, it is even clearer that the surface exponents of three or more participants associated with a single lexical verb do not correspond to distinct referential arguments of the proposition. As in examples (995) and (996), the following involves one verb and three distinct nominals in a single clause:

- (997) *khòj5 mii2 hèèng2 khaa3*
 1SG.P have strength leg
 ‘I feel good (in) my leg(s).’

The noun-verb combination *mii2 hèèng2* literally means ‘have strength’, but the complement *hèèng2* ‘strength’ is not referential here. It is not that *mii2* ‘have’ in (997) subcategorizes for three arguments. Rather, the expression *mii2 hèèng2* ‘have strength’ is a lexicalized predicate, which may either be used intransitively (meaning ‘feel good’), or may take its own body-part complement (e.g., *khaa3* ‘leg’ in this example) in an experiencer-subject construction (see Chapter 11).

The next example shows four nominals in combination with a single verb:

- (998) *man2 qòòk5 kamlang2 kaaj3 paak5*
 3.B expend energy body mouth
 ‘She’s exercising her mouth (by chewing gum).’

In (998), the expression *qòòk5 kamlang2* (literally ‘expend energy’) has developed a simple meaning ‘to exercise’, and has come to habitually (although not obligatorily) take a further nominal complement *kaaj3* ‘body’ in a complex expression *qòòk5 kamlang2 kaaj3* [expend energy body] ‘to exercise the body’. This expression, while on the surface showing two nominal complements, may in turn be considered an intransitive predication, whereby *kaaj3* ‘body’ (in the manner of *khaw5* ‘rice’ in (996), above) is not only non-referential, but not even necessarily a literal complement of the verb at all. In (998), *qòòk5 kamlang2 kaaj3* means ‘to exercise oneself’, taking *paak5* ‘mouth’ as complement (i.e., not entailing that ‘the body’ itself is exercised, despite explicit presence of the nominal *kaaj3* ‘body’ as complement).

Examples such as (997) and (998) demonstrate the expression in a single-verb clausal core of more than two nominals as a purely surface phenomenon, not directly mapping to participants in event structure, nor to arguments in syntactic structure.

15.1.2 External topicalization strategy

The topic-comment construction is the only construction in which genuine three-participant verbs such as transfer verbs *haj5* ‘give’ and *song1* ‘send’ and placement verb *saj1* ‘put (in)’ allow full expression of three referential and modifiable noun phrases in a single sentence with no supporting morphology. However, because one of the arguments must appear in the extracausal Left Position, it is not the case that this construction features three full arguments together in the clausal core. In this construction, the agent is expressed as subject (i.e., the nominal immediately before the verb), and the theme and goal appear in Left Position and object position (with both logical orders possible—i.e., giving either NP_{THEME}-NP_{AGENT}-V-NP_{GOAL} or NP_{GOAL}-NP_{AGENT}-V-NP_{THEME}):

- (999) [ngen2 haa5-lòðj4 kiip5]_{TH} qaaj5 khòðj5 haj5 [phuø-saaj2
 money five-hundred kip eBr 1SG.P give MC.HUM-male
 phuø-nan4]_{GOAL}
 MC.HUM-DEM.NONPROX
 ‘Five hundred kip, my brother gave that man.’
- (1000) [tuu4 nuaj1 nan4]_{GOAL} mia2 khòðj5 saj1 [pùm4
 cupboard CLF.UNIT DEM.NONPROX wife 1SG.P put book
 khòðng3 caw4]_{TH}
 of 2SG.P
 ‘That cupboard, my wife put your books (in).’

15.1.3 Ellipsis

A more common strategy than the above two for solving the ‘no more than two full surface arguments per single verb clausal core’ constraint is for definite, topical arguments to be ellipsed (assuming contextual retrievability), with the result that fewer than three arguments receive surface realization. Any three-participant verb may appear with only two participants (or fewer) expressed, as long as the discourse identity of the relevant three participants is clearly understood from context. The second line of the following example illustrates:

- (1001) caw4 jaak5 daj4 ñang3 nèèw2 daj3 khòðj5 mii2,
 2SG.P want acquire INDEF.INAN type INDEF 1SG.P have
 khòðj5 haj5 caw4
 1SG.P give 2SG.P
 ‘(If) you want to get anything of any kind that I have, I’ll give (it to) you.’

Here is another example, involving the verb *fang3* ‘bury’:

- (1002) haw2 kaø khut2 khum3 qaw3 saw3 fang3 Ø mèn1 bòð3,
 1.FA T.LNK dig hole take post bury BE.SO QPLR
 lang3-caak5 qaw3 saw3 fang3 Ø lèèw4...
 back-from take post bury PRF
 ‘Then we dig a hole, and plant the post (in it), right?
 (Then,) after we’ve planted the post, ...’

The string *qaw3 saw3 fang3* [take post bury] looks like a two-verb handling-despatch structure (see section 15.2.1, below). Informants generally agree the default referent of ‘Ø’ in (1002) is *din3* ‘earth, ground’,¹ which has presumably been ellipsed under contextual retrievability. It could just as well be explicitly expressed, as follows:

- (1003) *qaw3 saw3 fang3 din3*
 take post bury earth
 ‘(He) buried the post in the ground.’

However, surface structures even leaner than *qaw3 saw3 fang3* [take post bury] in (1002) are possible, as long as the ellipsed arguments are available in the context:

- (1004) *fang3 saw3*
 bury post
 ‘(He) buried the post (in the ground).’
- (1005) *fang3 din3*
 bury ground
 ‘(He) buried (it) in the ground.’
- (1006) *fang3*
 bury
 ‘(He) buried (it in the ground).’

Note here that *fang3* ‘bury’ cannot be used in an incorporating construction:

- (1007) **fang3 saw3 din3*
 bury post ground
 (He buried the post (in) the ground.)

As long as semantic roles of nominals are clear, verbs such as *fang3* ‘bury’ and *haj5* ‘give’, which describe three-participant events, can be, and often are, treated as simple transitive or intransitive verbs (in that

¹One might think from example (1002) that the referent of ‘Ø’ could be *khum3* ‘hole’. However, *khum3* ‘hole’ cannot appear as direct object of *fang3* ‘bury’. Apparently, a direct object of *fang3* ‘bury’ must refer to the thing buried, or the substance in which something is buried, but not to the empty space which provides a place for the thing to be buried.

one or two of their three arguments goes unrealized), or may even appear without overtly expressed arguments at all.

The following example shows an unusual case, involving the three-participant verb *sùu4* ‘buy’, where the theme is ellipsed and the verb takes a source as complement, with no peripheral marking (i.e., where ‘buy it from them’ is expressed as, literally, ‘buy them’, meaning ‘buy-from them’):

- (1008) *caw4 caang4 lot1-camboo4 mùa2 lèw4 cang1 khòj1*
 2SG.P hire vehicle-jumbo return PRF then PCL
qanaa1 pajø qaw3 ngen2 lèw4 cùng1 maø sùu4 khacaw4
 HES DIR.ABL take money PRF then come buy 3PL.P
saa3
 IMP.SUGG
 ‘You hire a jumbo [a type of local transport] and go back, then um—go and get some money, and then come and buy (it from) them, why don’t you?’

15.1.4 Variations and complications

The possibilities of movement and ellipsis of arguments, combined with the linear separability of nominal heads and their modifiers in phrase structure, result in a range of cases which on initial inspection appear to counterexemplify the analysis offered so far. This section considers these cases and clarifies how underlying structure can be established despite variable surface form. The discussion is restricted to *haj5* ‘give’ as an illustration.

First consider the following examples, showing *haj5* ‘give’ in the topicalization and incorporation structures, respectively:

- (1009) [*pùm4 hua3 nan4*]_{TH} *khòj5 haj5 caw4*
 book CLF.HEAD DEM.NONPROX 1SG.P give 2SG.P
 ‘That book, I gave you.’
 Structure: NP_{THEME}-NP_{AGENT}-V_{‘give’}-NP_{GOAL}

- (1010) *mèè1 dajø haj5 [sanñaa2]_{TH} [phañaa2-sùaa3]_{GOAL}*
 mother ACHV give promise king-tiger
vaj4
 fix.in.place
 ‘The mother did give the tiger king a promise.’
 Structure: NP_{AGENT}-V_{‘give’}-NP_{THEME}-NP_{GOAL}

There are examples which show two nominals postverbally, but in which their relative ordering is goal-theme, in contrast to the order illustrated in (1010):

- (1011) *caw4 haj5 [khòj5]_{GOAL} [haa5-lòj4 kiip5]_{TH}*
 2SG.P give 1SG.P five-hundred kip
 ‘You gave me 500 kip.’
 Structure: NP_{AGENT}-V_{‘give’}-NP_{GOAL}-NP_{THEME}

Consider, however, the following ungrammatical example, with the same constituent order as (1011), but with the simple noun *ngen2* ‘money’ substituted for the classifier phrase *haa5-lòj4 kiip5* ‘500 kip’ in NP_{THEME} position of (1011):

- (1012) **caw4 haj5 [khòj5]_{GOAL} [ngen2]_{TH}*
 2SG.P give 1SG.P money
 (You gave me money.)

The ordering in (1011) is not structurally equivalent to that in (1010). This can be argued to result from a combination of zero anaphora (i.e., ellipsis of a would-be incorporated theme argument) and ‘floating’ nominal modification (allowed by the nonconfigurational nature of the noun phrase; Chapters 6-7, cf. Gil 1987). The phrase *haa5-lòj4 kiip5* ‘five hundred kip’ is a classifier phrase which quantifies *ngen2* ‘money’. Example (1011) may thus be analyzed as having a zero in the immediate postverbal theme slot, with the modifying classifier phrase *haa5-lòj4 kiip5* ‘five hundred kip’ in sentence-final Right Position, outside the clausal core and not contiguous with its notional head noun *ngen2* ‘money’, as made explicit in (1013). In both examples (1013) and (1014), evidence that the modifying classifier phrase *haa5-lòj4 kiip5* ‘five hundred kip’ is extracausally positioned is provided by the insertability of sentence-final illocutionary particles immediately BEFORE the classifier phrase, and immediately after the goal argument *khòj5* ‘I’. The modifying material is

not in a core argument position. The full structure, with the postverbal theme slot filled, is shown in (1014) (cf. (1011), above):

- (1013) *caw4 haj5 Ø khòj5 haa5-lòj4 kiip5*
 2SG.P give 1SG.P five-hundred kip
 ‘You gave me 500 kip.’
- (1014) *caw4 haj5 ngen2 khòj5 haa5-lòj4 kiip5*
 2SG.P give money 1SG.P five-hundred kip
 ‘You gave me 500 kip (of) money.’

The ‘float’ of nominal modification to extracausal Right Position results from a restriction against modified or specified arguments in the noun-incorporating construction. The following example, with the fully elaborated theme noun phrase in immediately postverbal position is unacceptable (as described in section 15.1.1 above):

- (1015) **caw4 haj5 ngen2 haa5-lòj5 kiip5 khòj5*
 2SG.P give money five-hundred kip 1SG.P
 (You gave five hundred kip me.)

Now, consider the acceptability of the following example, where the entire theme noun phrase is intact, and where, as in (1011), the relative ordering of the two postverbal participants is goal-theme:

- (1016) *caw4 haj5 khòj5 ngen2 haa5-lòj4 kiip5*
 2SG.P give 1SG.P money five-hundred kip
 ‘You gave me five hundred kip.’

Again, this V-goal-theme surface order is distinct in underlying structure from the incorporating structure, which has the order V-theme-goal. In (1016), the theme (‘money, 500 kip’) is not in a core argument slot, but is in extracausal Right Position. The goal *khòj5* ‘I’ is in regular immediately postverbal object position, and the theme is moved outside the clausal core, into the periphery. This is demonstrated by the possibility of placing a sentence-final particle *bòj3* (general polar question marker), which marks off the right border of the clausal core (see Chapters 1 and 4, above), immediately before the theme *ngen2* ‘money’ (as in (1017a)), but not after it (as shown in (1017b)), and not before the goal *khòj5* ‘I’ (as shown in (1017c)):

- (1017) a. *caw4 haj5 khòj5 bòj3, ngen2 haa5-lòj4 kiip5*
 2SG.P give 1SG.P QPLR money five-hundred kip
 ‘Did you give (it) to me, five hundred kip?’
- b. **caw4 haj5 khòj5 ngen2 bòj3, haa5-lòj4 kiip5*
 2SG.P give 1SG.P money QPLR five-hundred kip
 (Did you give me money, five hundred kip?)
- c. **caw4 haj5 bòj3, khòj5 ngen2 haa5-lòj4 kiip5*
 2SG.P give QPLR 1SG.P money five-hundred kip
 (Did you give, me five hundred kip?)

This establishes that in (1016) the elaborate noun phrase ‘five hundred kip (of) money’ is in a peripheral slot, and the surface order V-goal-theme is not a possible one for expression of theme and goal together at the core level.

This section has shown that surface constituent order can be confusing, thanks to the possibility of movement, ellipsis, and separability of components of a single noun phrase. Through tests of constituency and other features of phrase structure, the underlying structures can be teased apart. We now turn to structures which deal with expression of three event participants by combining multiple verbs in a single clausal core.

15.2 Multi-verb means for expression of three participants in an event

The most common and most productive way of structurally accommodating reference to three event participants in a single clause is for two verbs to share the load. The basic pattern is as follows (with verb-complement phrases in square brackets):

- (1018) NP_{AGENT} - [V1-NP_{THEME}] - [V2-NP_{GOAL}]

This template is superficially ambiguous between a two-clause and a one-clause structure, in a manner typical of multi-verb constructions. If we were to view the verb-complement phrases V1-NP_{THEME} and V2-NP_{GOAL} as distinct clauses in themselves, we may be tempted to dismiss this as a mere ‘discourse strategy’ for encoding three-participant events (Margetts and Austin 2007), whereby the three arguments are distributed beyond the boundaries of a single clause or sentence. But when does

a two-clause strategy become a construction in itself? There is a well established preference across languages for the introduction of new arguments one clause at a time (DuBois 1987). Under the information structure pressure of yet another argument, we might identify a kind of preferred argument structure underlying the structure in (1018), whereby a theme argument is first introduced as a verb complement on its own, after which a goal argument may be introduced in the next verb. Consider the naturalness of English sequences of just this kind—*e.g.*, *They took a knife and put it to my throat*²—where the instrument *knife* is first introduced as a full noun phrase object in its own clause, before being encoded pronominally in a three-place construction (where, incidentally, the subject is ellipsed, leaving only two surface noun phrases—one a pronoun—to accompany the three-place predicate *put*). Such pronominal encoding under coreference in a subsequent clause is naturally achieved by ellipsis.

In any case, despite the apparent two-part event structure of the constructional template in (1018), there are a number of reasons why it is to be considered monoclausal:

- The construction is prosodically integrated, normally a single intonation unit contour.
- In the construction, the handling verb does not have the same semantic properties it does when it appears as head of an independent clause. Its meaning can be more abstract than literal handling.
- It is not possible to insert material (such as marking of negation) between the two V-NP sequences and maintain the same event reading. Such insertion would normally be permissible between conjoined clauses.
- The construction denotes what is conceptually a macro-event, in that the two verbs express components of what is understood to be a single event (Durie 1997; cf. Grace 1987, Foley 1997), rather than separate events which could occur at unrelated times or be under the scope of different modal operators (Bohnenmeyer et al 2007).
- The iconicity of sub-event order is not defeasible in the construction (but is defeasible in the case of the conjoined clauses).
- The construction shows syntactic control (i.e., subject arguments of

²Source: ‘Former POW: “We were like Custer”,’ CNN.com, April 14, 2003.

the two verbs are obligatorily interpreted as shared) while the conjoined clause reading does not (since Lao has no cross-clausal pivot).

The template in (1018) can accommodate three noun phrases, and, accordingly, provides the typical (indeed the only) way for Lao speakers to describe a three-participant event with all three participants present as full arguments in the core of a single clause. Thus, Preferred Argument Structure (DuBois 1987), normally a discourse preference, is here a rule of grammar.

Two main constructions of this type may be termed handling-despatch and despatch-despatch. These are so called because of the semantics of the verbs involved. Handling verbs describe ways of manipulating a thing, as one typically must do when putting it somewhere or giving it to someone. These include verbs with meanings like ‘take’, ‘grab’, and ‘lift’. Despatch verbs describe an act of transfer or placement to some goal. These include three-participant verbs such as ‘give’, ‘send’, and ‘put’. The constructions described in this section are used not only to accommodate three-place predicates (i.e., verbs which sub-categorize for three participants), but also may be used when a third argument is added to a clause, beyond the argument structure specifications of any one verb (e.g., when instruments or causers are introduced; cf. Dixon and Aikhenvald 2000).

15.2.1 Handling-despatch construction

The handling-despatch construction is so named due to the semantic nature and relative ordering of the two verbs involved. V1 is a verb of handling, V2 is a verb of despatch. The construction typically describes transfer or placement (i.e., where the relevant three-place predicate is a ‘give’ or ‘put’ verb in V2 position) and takes the following form:

(1019) NP_{AGENT}-[V_{HANDLING}-NP_{THEME}]-[V_{DESPATCH}-NP_{GOAL}]

The prototypical and most common handling verb is *qaw3* ‘take’³, but any other coming-into-manual-control verb (e.g., *ñok1* ‘lift’ or *cap2*

³The relevant meaning of ‘take’ does not include the deictic motion component of English *take* (as in *I took the books to school*). The meaning of *qaw3* ‘take’ is merely ‘take in hand’ or ‘pick up’.

‘grab’) can appear in this slot with this function. The use of a verb ‘take’ to host (i.e., provide a structural position for) an extra argument to the clause is typical of verb-serializing languages world wide (Lord 1993: Chapter 5, Durie 1997). The handling verb itself is not a three-participant verb (i.e., ‘take’, ‘carry’, ‘hold’ and their like do not subcategorize for three arguments), but it plays the role of hosting one of the participants of a three-participant event which appears in V2 position. It is the despatch verb—usually *haj5* ‘give’ or *saj1* ‘put’—which specifies three participants.

The following examples illustrate the basic handling-despatch pattern, all featuring *qaw3* ‘take’ as the handling verb, and in despatch-verb position the three-participant verbs *song1* ‘send’, *haj5* ‘give’ and *saj1* ‘put’, respectively. In each case, the complement of the handling verb *qaw3* ‘take’ is the theme, while the complement of the despatch verb is the goal (note that in example (1022) the theme is fronted):

- (1020) *qaw3* [vèèn2-*taa3*] *maø* *song1* [cêk2] *khùùn2*
 take mirror-eye DIR.ALL send chinaman return
 ‘(He) sent the spectacles back (to) the Chinaman.’
- (1021) *qaw3* [ngaaw4] *maø* *haj5* [qaaj4] *nèè1*
 take sword DIR.ALL give eBr IMP.SOFT
 ‘Please give me (older brother) the sword.’
- (1022) [*tamlaa2*_i], *khaw3 kaø* *qaw3 Ø_i maø* *saj1* [*thong3-sùà5*]
 recipe 3PL.B T.LNK take DIR.ALL put bag-shirt
 ‘The recipe, he put (in) his shirt pocket.’

In these examples, the allative directional marker *maø* (from *maa2* ‘come’), appears on the second sub-clause. This is common in handling-verb constructions (cf. Enfield 2002d). While the presence of the directional marker in these examples may suggest a clause chain (‘take the sword, come, give it to me’) rather than a serial verb construction, there are reasons to think that the directional verb is not an independent clausal head: (1) it is omissible without appreciable change in referential meaning; (2) it is prosodically fully incorporated (i.e., fully de-stressed and prosodically dependent on the following element); (3) its subject need not be the main actor in the event, but rather the orientation of the central action (see example (1022), in which it is not the actor that moves toward a deictic centre, rather the action of putting the recipe in his pocket is

directed toward the actor's deictic centre). See section 9.1.8, above, and footnote 6, below.

The following examples show handling verbs other than *qaw3* 'take' (namely, *ñok1* 'lift', *hòðp5* 'carry in the arms,' and *nam2* 'lead, take with') in the handling-verb position:

- (1023) *ñok1...* [*mòð5-kèng3 ñaj1*]... *saj1* [*taw4-faj2*]
lift pot-soup big put stove-fire

'(He) lifted the big soup pot onto the stove.'

- (1024) [*bak2 ñak1 kum3phan2*] *hòðp5* [*phuu2*] *pên3*
M.B ogre K carry.in.arms mountain COP
nuaj1 maø thim5 saj1 [Ø]
CLF.UNIT DIR.ALL discard put

'The ogre Kumphan carried the whole mountain and dropped it on (that place).'

- (1025) *caø tòðng4 nam2* [*saan3 nii4*] *haj5*
IRR OBLIG lead official.letter DEM give
[*sêê3naa2.qaa3maat4*]
military.forces

'(We) will have to take this official letter to the military forces.'

The more semantically specific handling verbs in (1023-1025) are less frequent than the generic, maximally abstract handling verb *qaw3* 'take'.

The examples seen so far in this section are genuine three-argument predications in that firstly all three arguments must be definite (contextually retrievable) for the expression to make sense, and secondly any or all of the arguments may be given further modification or specification in situ. Consider the following, exemplifying the handling-despatch construction with three simple nominals:

- (1026) *haw2 qaw3 ngen2 haj5 mèø-thaw5*
1.FA take money give CT.Mo-old

'I gave money to (my) mother-in-law.'

This structure allows a complex noun phrase like *ngen2 haa5-lòj4 kiip5* 'five hundred kip (of money)' to be expressed in full, without being split by modifier float, or moved to an outer position (cf. section 15.1.4, above):

- (1027) *haw2 qaw3 ngen2 haa5-lòðj4 kiip5 haj5 mèø-thaw5*
 1.FA take money five-hundred kip give CT.Mo-old
 ‘I gave 500 kip (of) money to (my) mother-in-law.’

As discussed in section 15.1.4 above, the possibility of full elaboration of the noun phrase in situ is not available when the theme argument is incorporated in a single-verb clausal core.

Note finally that the combination of movement and nominal ellipsis can create further possible surface constituent orders. Here is one example, with the structure NP_{THEME}-V_{HANDLE}(‘take’)-V_{DESPATCH}(‘give’)-NP_{GOAL} resulting from fronting of the theme and ellipsis of the source:

- (1028) [*luuk4 faj2-saaj3 niø*]_i Ø_j *qaw3 Ø_i haj5 man2*
 child fire-project TPC take give 3.B
 ‘Torch batteries_i, (we_j) gave (to) him.’

15.2.2 Despatch-despatch construction

The despatch-despatch construction is structurally similar to the handling-despatch construction but in this case both verbs specify three participants and both express despatch (or some kind of ‘giving’):

- (1029) NP_{AGENT}-[V_{DESPATCH}-NP_{THEME}]-[V_{DESPATCH}-NP_{GOAL}]

Usually the second despatch verb is *haj5* ‘give’ or *saj1* ‘put’, and the first verb expresses a more specific ‘giving’ or ‘placing’ notion, such as *mòðp4* ‘hand over’ or *song1* ‘send’, as in the following examples (as above, the theme is direct complement of V1):

- (1030) *phon3 thii2-sut2 Ø kaø mòðp4 mùang2 haj5 sin2saj2*
 result at-extreme T.LNK hand.over kingdom give S
 ‘The final result (was that he) handed over the kingdom to Sinxay.’
- (1031) *khòðj5 siø song1 lot1-cak2 haj5 phòð1*
 1SG.P IRR send CT.VEHICLE-motorcycle give father
 ‘I’m going to deliver the motorcycle to Dad.’

As shown above for other examples, there are further possible surface orders due to movement and ellipsis. The following examples show

postposing, and fronting, respectively, of the theme, giving the two surface orders NP_{AGENT}-V_{DESPATCH}-V_{DESPATCH}-NP_{THEME} and NP_{THEME}-NP_{AGENT}-V_{DESPATCH}-V_{DESPATCH}-NP_{GOAL}.⁴

- (1032) *haw2 caø mòðp4 Ø_i haj5 Ø_j*
 1.FA IRR hand.over give
[saang4-maa4-ngua2-khuaj2-sing1-khòðng3-paa3nakaan3-
elephant-horse-cow-buffalo-things-stuff-of.various.kinds-
kèèw4-vèèng3-ngen2-kham2]_i
 crystal-rings-silver-gold
 ‘I’ll hand over (to them) livestock, goods, and many precious items.’
- (1033) *[thuk1-sing1-thuk1-jaang1 kiaw1-kap2 lùang1 nii4]_i qaaj4*
 each-thing-each-kind about matter DEM eBr
mòðp4 Ø_i haj5 nòðng4_j
 hand.over give yG
 ‘Everything concerning this matter, I (older brother) hand over to you (younger sibling).’

Given that both V1 and V2 positions allow despatch verbs, there are naturally some despatch verbs which may appear in either position. For example, the despatch-despatch construction in (1031) with *song1* ‘send’ in V1 slot can be rephrased as a handling-despatch construction with *song1* ‘send’ as V2 (and *qaw3* ‘take’ as V1):⁵

- (1034) *khòðj5 siø qaw3 lot1-cak2 song1 phòð1*
 1SG.P IRR take CT.VEHICLE-motorcycle send father
 ‘I’m going to deliver the motorcycle to Dad.’

⁴In (1032) NP_{GOAL} is ellipsed under contextual retrievability.

⁵This example is ambiguous, since (as noted in section 15.2.5, below), the direct object of the handling verb can also be interpreted not as a theme but as an instrument. Thus, (1034) can also mean ‘I’m going to send Dad (somewhere) with the motorcycle’ (i.e., ‘I’m going to take the motorcycle and send Dad somewhere (on it)’). This second meaning was the one intended in the source context.

15.2.3 Addition of a third ‘reception’ verb

There is no verb meaning ‘show’, but there is a verb *bòòk5* ‘tell’, which may appear as a single verb with three arguments in a topic-comment construction (as described in section 15.1.2, above):

- (1035) [*lùang1 nii4*]_{TH} *khòòj5 bòòk5 caw4 lèèw4*
 story DEM 1SG.P tell 2SG.P PRF
 ‘This story, I’ve told you already.’

Other verbs of ‘telling’ or ‘showing’, such as *vaw4* ‘say’, do not display this pattern:

- (1036) * *lùang1 nii4 khòòj5 vaw4 caw4 lèèw4*
 story DEM 1SG.P say 2SG.P PRF
 (This story, I’ve said you already.)

Verbs of communication such as *vaw4* ‘say’, *law1* ‘relate, tell’, and *saaj3* ‘screen’ (e.g., a film) may enter into a variation on the two-verb structure sketched in (1018), above, using the basic despatch verb *haj5* ‘give’ in V2 position, and with the addition of a final verb of ‘reception’ (usually *fang2* ‘listen’ or *beng1* ‘look’), giving the following frame:

- (1037) NP_{AGT}-[V_{COMMUNICATION}-NP_{THEME}]-[V_{DESPATCH}-NP_{GOAL}-V_{RECEPTION}]

Here are four examples (the first expressing what (1036) tries to express):

- (1038) *lùang1 nii4, khòòj5 vaw4 haj5 caw4 fang2 lèèw4*
 story DEM 1SG.P say give 2SG.P listen PRF
 ‘This story, I’ve told to you already.’
- (1039) *khòòj5 dajø vaw4 Ø haj5 caw4 fang2 nòòj5-nùng1*
 1SG.P ACHV say give 2SG.P listen a.little-one
 ‘I did tell you (this joke) a little.’
- (1040) *nòòng4 mii2 ñang3... khuam2 khat2-khòòng5 naj2 qok2*
 yG have INDEF.INAN NZR get.in.the.way in chest
naj2 caj3, khòò3-haj5 vaw4 haj5 qaaj4 fang2
 in heart request-give say give eBr listen
 ‘What do you (younger sibling) have? (What) difficulty in (your) heart? Please tell (it) to me (older brother).’

- (1041) *man2 saaj3 nang3 haj5 kuu3 beng1*
 3.B screen movie give 1SG.B look
 ‘He screened a movie (for) me (to) watch.’

This manner of expressing ‘showing’ and ‘telling’ involving three verbs together—‘communication’, ‘despatch’, and ‘reception’—is an areal feature in mainland Southeast Asia, also found in languages such as Vietnamese, Khmer, and Cantonese (cf. e.g., Matthews and Yip 1994:138, 308).

15.2.4 Other three-participant event types

Occasionally, multi-verb structures expressing three-participant events differ from the constructions described so far in that the two verbs involved do not obviously belong to the semantic types hitherto identified (i.e., handling, despatch, communication, and reception). The next two examples involve a three-participant verb *kè̀m4* ‘to snack on something with a drink’, which specifies an agent and two theme arguments (namely, a snack food and an alcoholic beverage):

- (1042) *haw2 kin3 hua3-khaw1 kaj1 kè̀m4 bia3*
 1.FA eat head-knee chicken snack-on-with-liquor beer
 ‘We snacked (on) chicken knees (with) beer.’
- (1043) *hua3-khaw1 kaj1, haw2 (kin3) kè̀m4 bia3*
 head-knee chicken 1.FA eat snack-on-with-liquor beer
 ‘Chicken knees, we snacked (on with) beer.’

Here is another example which also does not neatly fit the patterns examined so far:

- (1044) *pajø tat2 maj4 maø lòm4 hua4*
 DIR.ABL cut wood DIR.ALL encircle fence
 ‘(We) went and cut wood (and) encircled a fence (around the rice fields).’

While neither verb in this example (*tat2* ‘cut’, *lòm4* ‘encircle’) specifies three participants, the example nevertheless describes a cohesive event involving three participants. This is a typical case of serialization becoming tighter such that an erstwhile series of distinct clauses, with topical arguments ellipsed, takes on the shape of a single clause.

15.2.5 Other functions for the multi-verb pattern

There are further instances of the basic pattern illustrated in (1018) (i.e., NP1-[V1-NP2]-[V2-NP3]), in which three arguments are expressed, but in which neither of the two verbs subcategorizes for all these three. These mostly involve *qaw3* ‘take’ in V1 position.

First, the complement of V1 *qaw3* ‘take’ may be an instrument in some action. The subject of *qaw3* ‘take’ performs the action expressed in V2. In these cases it is possible to omit the V1-NP2 combination without compromising the general event semantics. The resulting expression remains true of any event of which the full description—including V1-NP2—is true. In the following example, I have put square brackets around omissible material (as usual, any of the noun phrases are omissible on their own):

- (1045) *man2 [qaw3 sòdn3 maø] cam4 kacèè3 fong4 leej2*
 3.B take arrow DIR.ALL ram lock come.apart NO.ADO
 ‘He broke the lock apart [with an arrow].’ (lit. ‘He took an arrow (and) rammed the lock (and it) came apart completely.’)

Second, the theme (i.e., complement of *qaw3* ‘take’) may be a causee (cf. Enfield 2002d:19). Here, in contrast to previous examples, it is NP2, the complement of ‘take’, not NP1, which performs the action of the following verb phrase:

- (1046) \emptyset *qaw3 siang2-miang5 maø suaj1* \emptyset
 take S-M DIR.ALL help
 ‘(He would) get Siang Miang to come (and) help (him).’
- (1047) \emptyset *qaw3 khon2 pajø khut2-hêt1 khòng2.mùang3*
 take people DIR.ABL dig-make canal-channel
 ‘(They) got the people to dig canals.’

A third possibility may be called an effected object construction, in which the theme and goal arguments are coreferential, but where the goal is the theme having been transformed by some process predicated or suggested by V2 (usually *hêt1* ‘make’):

- (1048) *qaw3 fùang2 maø hêt1 hun1*
 take straw DIR.ALL make effigy
 ‘(They) made effigies with straw.’ (lit. ‘They took straw and made effigies.’)

A final use of the two-verb construction using *qaw3* ‘take’ in V1 position is in so-called pretransitive constructions or disposal constructions (cf. Chao 1968, Li and Thompson 1981, Jagacinski 1987, Enfield 2002d), in which the theme argument is complement of both V1 and V2 (i.e., despite there being two transitive verbs in the structure, there remains a total of only two arguments):⁶

- (1049) *phen1 kaø qaw3 toø-nii4 pajø hian2 khùù2*
 3.P T.LNK take MC.ANIM-DEM DIR.ABL study same
kan3
 COLL
 ‘They also did study this.’ (lit. ‘They also did take this (and) go (and) study (it).’)

This is hardly different in meaning to the following simple transitive expression:

- (1050) *phen1 kaø pajø hian2 toø-nii4 khùù2-kan3*
 3.P T.LNK DIR.ABL study CLF.ANIM-DEM same-COLL
 ‘They also did study this.’

The distinction between (1049) and (1050) is partly related to pragmatic factors concerning information structure. In terms of event structure, the presence of two verbs in (1049) gives a finer granularity, with

⁶V2 in these constructions is almost always directly preceded by a directional marker (*pajø* ‘go’ from or *maø* from ‘come’; see examples). As discussed in section 15.2.1, above, the effect is not mere predication of motion or direction of action. Structurally, it appears that the directional element is not necessarily a preverbal marker of V2, but may be a complement of the phrase headed by V1. This conclusion is based on facts about ellipsis of NP2. If NP2 is to be ellipsed (as its discourse status may allow), both V1 (*qaw3* ‘take’) and the directional marker may remain, but if the entire ‘V1-phrase’ (e.g., *qaw3* ‘take’ and its nominal complement NP2) is to be ellipsed, it is usually much more natural to (and sometimes impossible not to) also remove the directional marker which follows NP2, suggesting it is attached to the V1-NP2 phrase. See Enfield (2002d:17) for discussion.

explicit mention of two sub-components of the event which might otherwise have been packed into the semantics of a single verb, or simply inferred. Having two verbs in (1049) allows separation of a two-argument event (someone learning something) into two sub-events, first coming-into-control-of (literally taking-in-hand) an undergoer, and second a controlled action upon that undergoer. A single participant is thus given two roles in succession, first treated as a theme, second a patient. Although expressions such as (1049) are two-place, they display the same event packaging characteristics as the three-place serial verb constructions described above. In common is a construal of the event structure as bifurcated: first, control over a theme, then, despatch. The example demonstrates that what might otherwise look like a dedicated three-participant event structure has a broader functionality in the language's resources for event representation.

A final case of a derived three-argument structure involves the use of *haj5* 'give' in V2 position, marking a peripheral beneficiary rather than a literal recipient of a theme (cf. next section):

- (1051) *khon4 din3 khon4 saaj2 haj5 khaw3 naa3*
 dig.up earth dig.up sand give 3PL.B FAC.EXPLIC
 '(I) dug up earth and sand for them, you know.'
- (1052) *phuø-nan4 kaø qaan1 Ø haj5 laaw2*
 MC.HUM-DEM.NONPROX T.LNK read give 3SG.FA
 'That fellow read (it) for him.'

In neither of these examples does the complement of *haj5* 'give' actually receive anything. While in (1052) one could argue that the goal receives knowledge or information, the goal participant in (1051) is purely a benefactor. In both cases, however, a third participant is introduced.

Given the centrality of multi-verb constructions in the grammar, it is no surprise that they may serve across a range of argument structure functions, including sub-types of three-place predications, as well as special construals of two-place events. We turn now to a different type of strategy for expressing three-place predications, where a third argument is hosted by a preposition in an external adjunct.

15.3 An oblique strategy

A typologically common strategy for three-place predicates is to host one or another of the non-subject arguments as an adjunct. In Lao, this only works for recipient or goal arguments. Non-theme arguments may be overtly marked as peripheral adjuncts. Marking is done either by verbal elements such as *nam2* ‘with’ (elsewhere a main verb ‘accompany, lead’; example (1053)), or by dedicated adjunct-markers such as *kap2* ‘with, and’ (example (1054)), *kèè1* ‘to’ (example (1055)), or *duaj4* ‘with’ (example (1056)):

- (1053) *laj1 ñaat4-qaw3 tòòn1 siin4 [nam2 maa3]_{ADJT}*
 chase grab-take lump meat with dog
 ‘(She) chased the dog to grab the lump of meat from it.’
- (1054) *khòj5 dajø haj5 sanñaa2 [kap2 caw4]_{ADJT} lèèw4*
 1SG.P ACHV give promise with 2SG.P PRF
 ‘I did give my promise to you already.’
- (1055) *caø dajø law1 nithaan2 pakòp5 thammaq1 phua1*
 IRR ACHV relate fable.tale comprise dharma in.order.to
pen3 khatiq2-kham2-sang1-sòòn3 haj5 [kèè1
 COP provision-word-order-teach give to
qanuson2-hun1-lang3]_{ADJT}
 younger.generations
 ‘(I) will tell some dharmic tales as lessons to give to the younger generations.’
- (1056) *hêt1 khòòn4-tabòng3 thaa2 [duaj4 namø-sii3 dam3*
 make stick-torch apply with CT.LIQUID-paint black
lùam5]_{ADJT}
 shiny
 ‘(They) made torch-sticks (and) painted (them) with shiny black paint.’

Also, with placement verbs like *saj1* ‘put’ or *vaang2* ‘place’, denominal locatives such as *theng2* ‘on’ and *naj2* ‘in’ (see Chapter 16) may be used to mark goals:

(1057) *kuu3 vaang2 pùm4 [theng2 toq2]_{ADJT}*
 1 SG.B place book on table

‘I put the book on the table.’

(1058) *khòj5 saj1 nam4 [naj2 mòj5 nii4]_{ADJT}*
 1 SG.P put water inside pot DEM

‘I put water in this pot.’

Compare example (1058) with the following handling-despatch example, which features the same three-participant verb (*saj1* ‘put’) and the same three arguments:

(1059) *khòj5 qaw3 nam4 saj1 mòj5 nii4*
 1 SG.P take water put pot DEM

‘I put water (in) this pot.’

The next examples combine a handling-despatch multi-verb structure with additional marking of the goal by *naj2* ‘in’:

(1060) *phen1 qaw3 ñang3 saj1 naj2 kap2 hanø kaø bðø*
 3.P take INDEF.INAN put in box TPC.DIST T.LNK NEG
huu4
 know

‘What he put in that box, (I) don’t know.’

(1061) *qaa3 hanø qaw3 laan3 pajø sùang1 vaj4 naj2*
 aunt TPC.DIST take nephew DIR.ABL hide put.aside in
kòòng3 dðk5-maj4
 pile flower

‘The aunt hid her nephew in a pile of flowers.’

Naj2 ‘in’ in both these examples is omissible (i.e., removal of *naj2* from these examples would not significantly change the meaning, and would not affect the examples’ grammaticality). (*Vaj4* ‘put.aside’ is also optional here in the same sense.) However, some three-participant verbs require that the goal take explicit adjunct-marking. For example, while the three-participant verb *haaj1* ‘decant’ is otherwise semantically appropriate as a despatch verb, it may not appear in V2 slot in a typical handling-despatch construction (section 15.2.1, above). In other words, it can only take as its direct complement a theme argument:

- (1062) *khòdòj5 haaj1 nam4 sajl kèèw4*
 1 SG.P decant water put bottle
 ‘I decanted the water into a bottle.’
- (1063) **khòdòj5 qaw3 nam4 haaj1 kèèw4*
 1 SG.P take water decant bottle
 (I decanted the water into a bottle.)

The ungrammatical example (1063) shows the despatch verb taking a direct goal argument. When the despatch verb is *haaj1* ‘decant’ (among others such as *thim5* ‘discard’ and *thòdòk5* ‘pour out’), *saj1* ‘put’ must be used to mark off the goal argument (*kèèw4* ‘bottle’ in example (1063)), so that the latter is not a direct complement of the theme-only verb *haaj1* ‘decant’:

- (1064) *khòdòj5 qaw3 nam4 haaj1 sajl kèèw4*
 1 SG.P take water decant put bottle
 ‘I decanted (the) water into a bottle.’

15.4 Remark

For description of three-participant events, heavy constraints apply when the clausal core contains only one verb. In such cases, one of the three event participants is accommodated outside the clausal core (by extraposition) or in the constrained format of incorporation. Otherwise, ellipsis relieves one or more arguments from placing any structural burden on overt syntactic structure (where the burden could involve any kind of structure at all—the point here being that ellipsis simply relieves the grammar of having to find a way of morphosyntactically hosting one or more of the three arguments involved). An ellipsis strategy is available for contextually retrievable arguments, i.e., arguments already definite and known from the context. This presupposition of prior introduction of the relevant argument is in line with patterns of preferred argument structure (Du Bois 1987). If arguments are first introduced in structurally lighter (one- or two-place) expressions, then one or more arguments will already be available for ellipsis or other reduced format when a three-place expression is used. A three-argument predicate in natural discourse should then seldom if ever have to appear with three fully elaborated noun phrases. To

really establish how this works, further investigation needs to go beyond single clauses and single sentences, and consider stretches of discourse in which three-participant event descriptions are constructed and elaborated clause by clause.

The only genuine possibility for having three full arguments explicit in a single clausal core is provided by verb serialization. With a handling verb like ‘grab’ or ‘take’ in V1 position, two verbs share the load in a single-clause complex predicate. But the function of this structure is not simply to accommodate the expression of three arguments (cf. discussion of examples (1049) and (1050), above). A despatch type serial verb construction may also be used in the expression of a two-participant event, as the following examples show:

- (1065) a. *man2 thim5 ngen2*
 3.B discard money
 ‘She discarded (the) money.’
 b. *man2 qaw3 ngen2 thim5*
 3.B take money discard
 ‘She took the money (and) discarded (it).’

While the handling-verb serial construction exemplified in (1065b) is not restricted to the description of three-participant events, its structure and the event construal it encodes happen to be highly compatible with typical three-place predications such as ‘give’ and ‘put’. The serial verb strategy not only provides structurally for three full arguments, but brings with it a construal of the three-participant event as bifurcated and controlled. The single-clause constructions in (1065a) and (1065b) express different construals of the internal structure of the same event. The presence of two verbs in (1065b) brings to a two-place event the logic of a three-place event. It brings finer granularity to the event structure by explicitly mentioning two event sub-components. The (1065b) structure bifurcates a simple transitive event (‘she discards money’), separating it into two sub-events, first a taking-in-hand and coming-into-control of something (‘money’), and second a now-enabled controlled action upon that thing. A single participant (‘money’) is construed first as a theme and second as a patient. The construction results in this theme-patient argument having a higher degree of individuatedness and definiteness (Enfield 2002d:24; cf. Li and Thompson 1981:483), both properties being associated with increased transitivity (Hopper and Thompson 1980). Similarly

associated with higher transitivity is a higher degree of control and agentivity specified by the construction.

Chapter 16

Spatial predication

This chapter describes the expression of motion and location in space. Such expression typically involves combinations of multiple types of motion verb in singular clauses. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first concerns the expression of motion events, the second concerns location.

16.1 Motion

16.1.1 *Tiing3/nêng3* ‘move’

The concept ‘move’ is expressed in Lao by *tiing3* or *nêng3*, the two words being synonymous and interchangeable. The only restriction seems to be that in a synonym compound combination, the order is always *nêng3-tiing3*, never *tiing3-nêng3*.

The following two examples describe a scene in which a tiger, having made an attack on a field hut, has just been thwarted by a small child who has thrown a pot of boiling bamboo-shoot soup over its head. The tiger is lying still, unconscious or dead:

(1066) *khuang1 maj4-khòdn4 saj1, kaø bòø nêng3 bòø tiing3*
throw wood-bat put T.LNK NEG move NEG move
ñang3
INDEF.INAN

‘(They) threw pieces of wood at (it), and (it) didn’t move in any way.’

(1067) *thèè4 naa3, kaø bòø nêng3-tiing3 ñang3*
really FAC.EXPLIC T.LNK NEG move-move INDEF.INAN

‘Really, it didn’t move in any way.’

In the next example, ‘move’ is used in a more general, almost figurative sense, to refer to severe restrictions of general social freedom (including travel) during the early period of the revolutionary government:

- (1068) *vêê2laa2 nan4 nêng3-tiing3 ñang3 kaø*
 time DEM.NONPROX move-move INDEF.INAN T.LNK
bòø daj4 lèèw4
 NEG CAN PRF
 ‘(At) that time, one couldn’t move in any way.’

While English *move* suggests change of location and accordingly is compatible with directional complements (*It moved from A to B*), *tiing3* ‘move’ describes only movement of something relative to itself, i.e., with no entailment of change of location. The following example is a speaker’s description of busily patterned wallpaper which is creating an illusion of shimmering in low light:

- (1069) *beng1 dee4, khùù2 vaa1 faa3 nêng3*
 look FAC.ONRCD like COMP wall move
 ‘Look, y’hear, it’s like the wall is moving!’

In the next example, a character has noticed an intruder outside her room, who is at the time staying completely still so as to avoid detection:

- (1070) *phaj3 phuø-lii4 juu1 nii4, hên3 lèèw4, bòø tiing3*
 INDEF.HUM MC.HUM-hide be.at DEM see PRF NEG move
 ‘Who’s hiding here, (I) see (you), (you’re) not moving.’

These examples show that *tiing3* ‘move’ refers to non-directional movement in a place. Unlike, say, *paj3* ‘go’ or *lèèn1* ‘run’, *tiing3* ‘move’ cannot be used to describe movement from one place to another:

- (1071) *man2 paj3 bòòn1 nan4 lèèw4*
 3.B go place DEM.NONPROX PRF
 ‘He has gone to that place.’
- (1072) *man2 lèèn1 paj3 bòòn1 nan4 lèèw4*
 3.B run go place DEM.NONPROX PRF
 ‘He has run to that place.’
- (1073) * *man2 tiing3 (paj3) bòòn1 nan4 lèèw4*
 3.B move go place DEM.NONPROX PRF
 (He has moved to that place.)

The next example presents an apparent exception in that *tiing3* ‘move’ takes a complement *thaang2 daj3* ‘any direction’, which is usually a complement of directional verbs such as *paj3* ‘go’, and which is usually thus given an interpretation ‘in any direction’. In the scene being described, a man’s arms are tied by long ropes, each held out to his sides, with a crew of men holding each rope, tightly and in opposite directions:

- (1074) *tii3 loot4 lèw4, vaa1 tèl1 man2 tiing3 thaang2 daj3*
 hit NO.HES PRF COMP only 3.B move way INDEF
 ‘Go right ahead and hit (him), right whenever he moves on any side.’

The translation ‘moves on any side’ reflects the non-directional meaning of *tiing3* ‘move’. Here, the speaker is not talking about movement TO either side, but ON either side. Similarly, the following describes shaking or wiggling of one’s hand, with no necessary change of location:

- (1075) *laaw2 hêt1 mùù2 tiing3*
 3SG.FA make hand move
 ‘He moved his hand.’

The word *ñaaaj4*, expressing the directional sense of ‘move’, would be inapplicable for describing mere wiggling of the hand. An informant explained why:

- (1076) *man2 ñang2 juu1 bòdn1 kaw1*
 3.B STILL be.at place old
 ‘It (i.e., the hand) is still in the former place.’

Thus, while directional *ñaaaj4* ‘move (from one place to another)’ entails change of location, *tiing3* ‘move’ entails only internal or local movement, in a single place.

I have so far referred to non-directional internal or local movement, by which I mean movement within something, or motion of its parts, independent of any change of location. There are many verbs specifically involving location change, including *paj3* ‘go’, *ñaaaj4* ‘move, transport, shift’, and *lùùn1* ‘slip, slide’ but these do not necessarily include any sense of internal or local movement (as a cause of directional movement or not). A possible source of confusion in nailing down the concept of ‘move’ is the fact that events involving directional movement (i.e., ‘from

A to B') are often accompanied by (causal) internal or local movement. For example, walking involves internal or local movement (of the legs), and resultant change of location (of the whole body). By contrast, however, compare the movement of sliding, which involves only directional movement (no necessary causal internal movement), with movement such as shaking or revolving, which makes no reference to (caused or coincidental) directional movement. Thus, English *move* is polysemous, and any apparent vagueness (e.g., in *Don't anybody move!*) arises only from the fact that the two kinds of movement (directional vs. internal or local) are inseparable (pragmatically) in some contexts. Unlike English *move*, however, Lao *tiing3* 'move' is in no way vague as to whether it depicts directional or local/internal movement. *Tiing3* 'move' cannot appear in a source-goal construction, nor can it appear with any directional serial verb complement (i.e., in a construction analogous with English *move away*, *move across*, or *move down*; see below). Compatibility of a *tiing3* 'move' expression with directional movement is metonymic. Local movement is often associated with directional movement, and the latter is hard to imagine without the former.

16.1.2 Consecutive vector motion

One way in which a motion event may be complex is due to a mover changing direction of motion a number of times. Description of such multi-vector events demands separation of each vector description into distinct clauses, and thus does not make use of the kind of tight V1-V2 strings which are the focus of later sections of this chapter. Consecutivizing constructions separate out parts of a complex motion event (e.g., different vectors, temporally distinct, and not of the same kind). Basically, these are clause-chains, which remain clause-separable by partition into distinct intonation units, with or without morphological material such as conjunctive particles.

One scene in a set of animated stimuli (Bohnenmeyer and Caelen 1999; cf. Bohnemeyer et al 2007) shows a complex path in which a moving figure (a red ball) sitting at the bottom of a tall blue container rolls to the side of the container, up the inside wall to the top, across the rim of the container wall, and down the outside to the outer base of the container, then continuing along the ground going away from the base of the container,

to a small green pyramid, rolling finally up the side of the pyramid and coming to a halt at the pyramid's peak. The following spontaneous description of this scene shows each separate clause (separated by a comma) expressing one distinct vector at a time (note that a number of the vectors in the target scene are not included in the description):

- (1077) *sii3-dèng3 king4 khùn5 paj3 paaj3 sii3-thalêê2, king4*
 color-red roll ascend go tip color-sea roll
long2 maa2 phùn4 din3, lèw4 long2 paj3 haa3
 descend come floor ground PRF descend go seek
sii3-khiaw3, khùn5 còdm3 sii3-khiaw3
 color-green ascend peak color-green

'The red thing rolls up to the tip of the sea-colored thing, (it) comes rolling down to the ground, then (it) goes down towards the green thing, (and) goes up to the peak (of) the green thing.'

The individual clauses in this example feature complex manner-path-direction constructions in which combinations of manner and path of motion, and presence of multiple non-figure objects are expressed by more than one verb together in a single clause. We turn now to these.

16.1.3 Manner-path-direction constructions

In events with a single motion vector, three distinct facets of motion can be distinguished. These are manner (by what action the motion is conducted, e.g., 'walk', 'roll', 'fly'), path (with respect to spatial coordinates intrinsic to the non-figure entities in the scene, e.g., 'ascend/up', 'enter/into', 'cross/across') and direction (with respect to some relative deictic anchor, e.g., 'away/go', 'here/come').

Table 29. Slots in the manner-path-direction construction

1	2	3
Verb of MANNER	Verb of PATH	Verb of DIRECTION
DOZENS OF VERBS	10 VERBS	3 VERBS
<i>lèn1</i> 'run'	<i>khùn5</i> 'ascend'	<i>paj3</i> 'go'
<i>ñaang1</i> 'walk'	<i>long2</i> 'descend'	<i>mùa2</i> 'return'
<i>king4</i> 'roll'	<i>khaw5</i> 'enter'	<i>maa2</i> 'come'
<i>lúan1</i> 'slide'	<i>qòòk5</i> 'exit'	
<i>tên4</i> 'jump'	<i>khaam5</i> 'cross.over'	
<i>lòòj2</i> 'float'	<i>lòòt4</i> 'cross.under'	
<i>khii1</i> 'ride'	<i>taam3</i> 'follow'	
<i>khaan2</i> 'crawl'	<i>phaan1</i> 'pass'	
<i>taj1</i> 'creep'	<i>liap4</i> 'go along edge'	
<i>com1</i> 'sink'	<i>qòòm4</i> 'go around'	
<i>doot5</i> 'leap'		
etc.		

Two representative examples of this construction can be found in the first two clauses of (1077), above:

- (1078) a. *king4 khùn5 paj3*
 roll ascend go
 '...roll up going...'
- b. *king4 long2 maa2*
 roll descend come
 '...roll down coming...'

It is impossible to reflect in the English translation the fact that the three elements are unmarked verbs of similar status within the clause.¹

Due to the fact that these constructions express overlay of multiple facets of motion in a single state of affairs, they are not clause-separable. So, while the three verbs in (1079), below, describe simultaneous and overlaid facets of a single event, insertion of the clause-linking particle *lèkaø* in subsequent examples (1080) and (1081) encourages an interpretation by which the different verbs express temporally separated states of

¹Consequently, Lao and similar languages do not fit simple versions of Talmy's (1985, 2000) typology, which assume a clear distinction between main verb and 'satellite' in a clause.

affairs, where the resulting meaning is very different to the non clause-separated example:

- (1079) *man2 ñaang1 qòðk5 paj3*
 3.B walk exit go
 ‘He walked out away.’
- (1080) *man2 ñaang1 lèkaø qòðk5 paj3*
 3.B walk C.LNK exit go
 ‘He walked and went out away.’
- (1081) *man2 ñaang1 lèkaø qòðk5 lèkaø paj3*
 3.B walk CLNK exit CLNK go
 ‘He walked and went out and went.’

16.1.4 Multi-participant motion events

The path and direction verbs in the manner-path-direction construction may take complements referring to non-figure participants. These can be simple nominals or oblique phrases headed by deverbal prepositions such as *haa3* ‘seek/towards’, *theng3* ‘reach/to’, *hòðt4* ‘reach/to’, or *caak5* ‘leave/from’. By non-figure participants I mean participants in a motion event which have semantic roles such as source, goal, or path (e.g., *house* in *He ran from/to/past the house*; Jackendoff 1983, Talmy 2000).

The following examples, based on example (1079), above, show the addition of non-figure participants, in the first case as simple nominals (*khòðj4* ‘slope’ and *hùan2* ‘house’), and in the second case as adjuncts headed by deverbal prepositions (*taam3 thaang3* [follow path] ‘along the path’ and *haa3 hùan2* [seek house] ‘towards the house’):

- (1082) *man2 ñaang1 khùn5 khòðj4 paj3 hùan2*
 3.B walk ascend slope go house
 ‘He walked up the slope away to (his) house.’
- (1083) *man2 ñaang1 khùn5 taam3 thaang2 paj3 haa3 hùan2*
 3.B walk ascend follow path go seek house
 ‘He walked up along the path towards (his) house.’

Descriptions of complex motion events can combine these manner-path-direction constructions with chains of deverbal adjuncts. The following example is one speaker's description of an animated scene in which motion of a red figure along a single vector is accompanied by the presence of numerous non-figure objects (a blue source, a yellow path, a red via, and a green goal):

- (1084) *sii3-dèng3 king4 qòk5 caak5 sii3-faa4 taam3 sên5*
 color-red roll exit from color-blue follow line
sii3-làng3 kaaj3 sii3-dèng3 maa2 haa3 sii3-khiaw3
 color-yellow pass color-red come seek color-green
 'The red thing rolls out from the blue thing, (and) follows the yellow line, passing the red thing, coming towards the green thing.'

16.2 Location

16.2.1 Locative verb *juu1*

The verb *juu1* is the most general verb of location, meaning 'to be located (somewhere)'. It may take a theme as its subject and a location as its object:

- (1085) *phen1 juu1 talaat5*
 3.P be.at market
 'She is at the market.'

It may also be the head of an oblique phrase referring to a location of the main clause action:

- (1086) *phen1 lin5 phaj4 juu1 talaat5*
 3.P play cards be.at market
 'She is playing cards at the market.'

When predicating location, *juu1* normally takes a nominal complement (referring to the location), but in one common case, it does not. This is where the location is clear from the context, usually the person's home or normal place of activity. It can be compared to English *in* in *Is John in?*:

- (1087) Q *qàajø-dam3 juu1 bòdò3*
 eZ-D be.at QPLR
 ‘Is Dam in?’
 A *juu1*
 be.at
 ‘(Yes, she’s) in.’

Also without a nominal complement, *juu1* may mark a kind of continuous aspect (as in (1088), below), or function as a particle expressing attenuation or downplaying of the main predication (as in (1089); see Chapters 4 and 9):

- (1088) *phen1 lin5 phaj4 juu1*
 3.P play cards CONT
 ‘She is playing cards (at the moment).’
 (1089) *phen1 lin5 kêng1 juu1*
 3.P play adept FAC.WEAK
 ‘She is reasonably good at playing.’

16.2.2 Basic locative construction

The basic locative construction (cf. Levinson and Wilkins 2006) involves a verb of location or placement (or both), and may in addition involve a denominal locative marker. The template for a locative construction is as follows (Note: 1, 2 or both 1 and 2 must be realized; if 1 is realized, either 2 or 3 must also be realized):

NP_{FIGURE} (V_{placement/posture})₁ (*juu1*)₂ (LOC_{denominal})₃ NP_{GROUND}

Figure 16.1. Template for the basic locative construction

Following are some of the logical possibilities for realization of the template in Figure 16.1.²

²The examples in this section were elicited using stimuli developed by the Language and Cognition Group at the Max Planck Institute, Nijmegen (see Levinson and Wilkins 2006).

NP_{TH} *juu1* NP_{LOC}
 ‘NP_{TH} is at NP_{LOC}’

(1090) *man2 juu1 toq2*
 3.B be.at table
 ‘It’s at/on the table.’

(1091) *man2 juu1 kataa1*
 3.B be.at basket
 ‘It’s at/in the basket.’

(1092) *phen1 juu1 talaat5*
 3.P be.at market
 ‘She’s at the market.’

NP_{TH} V_{placement/posture} *juu1* NP_{LOC}
 ‘NP_{TH} is positioned somehow (in some way) at NP_{LOC}’

(1093) *man2 vaang1 juu1 toq2*
 3.B place be.at table
 ‘It’s laid at/on the table.’

(1094) *man2 tang4 juu1 toq2*
 3.B to.erect be.at table
 ‘It’s standing at/on the table.’

(1095) *phen1 nang1 juu1 talaat5*
 3.P sit be.at market
 ‘She’s sitting at the market.’

(1096) *man2 còdòt5 juu1 hùan2*
 3.B park be.at house
 ‘It’s parked at the house.’

(1097) *man2 phaata4 juu1 phiak4*
 3.B draped.over be.at line
 ‘It’s draped over the line.’

NP_{TH} juu1 LOC_{denominal} NP_{Loc}‘NP_{TH} is at some location with respect to NP_{Loc}’

- (1098) *man2 juu1 theng2 toq2*
 3.B be.at top.of table
 ‘It’s on top of the table.’
- (1099) *phen1 juu1 naj2 huan2*
 3.P be.at inside house
 ‘She’s inside the house.’
- (1100) *man2 juu1 kòng4 tiang3*
 3.B be.at under bed
 ‘It’s underneath the bed.’

NP_{TH} V_{placement/posture} (juu1) LOC_{denominal} NP_{Loc}‘NP_{TH} is positioned somehow at a location with respect to NP_{Loc}’

- (1101) *man2 vaang1 (juu1) theng2 toq2*
 3.B place be.at top.of table
 ‘It’s laid on top of the table.’
- (1102) *phen1 nang1 (juu1) naj2 huan2*
 3.P sit be.at inside house
 ‘She’s sitting inside the house.’
- (1103) *man2 còt5 (juu1) kòng4 huan2*
 3.B park be.at under house
 ‘It’s parked underneath the house.’
- (1104) *man2 phaata4 (juu1) theng2 phiak4*
 3.B draped.over be.at top.of line
 ‘It’s draped over the top of the line.’
- (1105) *man2 ñat1 (juu1) naj2 thòl*
 3.B stuff.in be.at inside pipe
 ‘It’s stuffed inside the pipe.’

A number of the denominal locative markers are dedicated to their locative marking function, in the sense that they do not have regular nominal functions any more. So, *theng2* ‘top of’, *naj2* ‘inside of’, *kòng4* ‘underneath of’ are defective as nominals (since, for example, they cannot enter into numeral classifier constructions), while, say, *khaang5* ‘side

of' and *naa5* 'front of' are not. Table 30 shows a list of the main denominal locative markers.

Table 30. Denominal locative markers

<i>theng2</i>	'above, on top of'
<i>lum1</i>	'below, lower than'
<i>kòðng4</i>	'directly underneath'
<i>khaang5</i>	'beside, side of'
<i>naa5</i>	'front of, face of'
<i>lang3</i>	'behind, back of'
<i>nùà3</i>	'upstream, north of'
<i>taj4</i>	'downstream, south of'
<i>khua3</i>	'right'
<i>saaj4</i>	'left'
<i>naj2</i>	'inside'
<i>nòðk4</i>	'outside'

Of the denominal locative markers listed in Table 30, only *khaang5*, *naa5*, and *lang3* are regular nouns, but in those meanings they refer to human body parts ('side', 'face', and 'back', respectively; Enfield 2006c), or by extension to parts of ground objects ('the side', 'the front', 'the back or top'). In the context of the locative construction they refer to the area contiguous with that part of the ground object (cf. Langacker 2002). The word *naj2* as a noun means 'seed', related to, but distinct from, its locative meaning 'inside'.

In some cases, a nominal which refers to a part of a ground object can fulfill the same function as a locative marker. An example is *paak5* 'mouth' in the following:

- (1106) *man2 phaata4 juu1 paak5 kataa1*
 3.B draped.over be.at mouth basket
 'It's draped over the mouth of the basket.'

16.2.3 Spatial frames of reference

Lao speakers may choose between three frames of reference for saying where something is: relative, intrinsic and absolute (Levinson 2003). It is unclear what conditions the choice, and there is no evidence that one

frame of reference is dominant (although more widespread use of the absolute system is noticeable in rural areas; note, however, that people rarely use absolute terms for saying where things are in ‘table top space’). The absolute directional terms *nùá3* ‘upstream/North’ and *taj4* ‘downstream/South’ reflect the conflation of river flow and cardinal direction at the macro level in this part of the world. It happens that the major rivers of mainland Southeast Asia (e.g., the Mekong and the Chao Phraya) flow from North to South. The terms *nùá3* and *taj4* can be ambiguous, depending on whether the intended reference is the macro, North-South direction of major river flow, or the micro, local direction of water flow in a smaller river or stream. There are many places where local rivers or streams do not flow North-to-South (think of a typical snaking river which changes direction continually). In conversation between villagers, people tend to spatially orient to local river flow. If necessary, speakers can unambiguously refer to the macro, cardinal directions North and South by using the relevant directional term as a modifier of *thit1* ‘cardinal direction’ (as in *thit1 taj4* ‘South’).

Terms for ‘East’ and ‘West’ are derived from terms for the sun’s rise and setting. Naturally, their absolute direction does not vary significantly as a function of local conditions:

- (1107) *thaang2/thit1* *tavên2 qòðk5*
 way/cardinal.direction sun emerge
 ‘(in the) East’ (lit. ‘the direction (in which) the sun emerges’)
- (1108) *thaang2/thit1* *tavên2 tok2*
 way/cardinal.direction sun fall
 ‘(in the) West’ (lit. ‘the direction (in which) the sun falls’)

Expressions referring to absolute directions on the two axes are grammatically distinct. ‘East’ and ‘West’ are expressed by means of the complex constructions shown in (1107) and (1108). The terms *nùá3* ‘upstream/ North’ and *taj4* ‘downstream/South’ are locational nominals which may be complements of the location verb *juu1*, or which may be modifiers in structures similar to (1107) and (1108), above:

- (1109) *man2 juu1 taj4*
 3.B be.at downstream/South
 ‘He is/lives (in the) South, downstream.’

- (1110) *baan4 nua3* *bòø mi2 vat1*
village upstream/North NEG have temple
'The upstream/Northern village doesn't have a temple.'
- (1111) a. *thaang2/thit1* *taj4*
way/cardinal.direction downstream/South
'(in the) South, in a downstream direction'
- b. *thaang2/thit1* *nua3*
way/cardinal.direction upstream/North
'(in the) North, in an upstream direction'

Chapter 17

Secondary predication

Secondary predication constructions are V1-V2 constructions in which one of the verbs (usually V2) makes a secondary predication in addition to that of the main verb phrase. There are three semantic subtypes: resultative, adverbial, and depictive, with subtypes of each. Negation may appear on V2 in many of these constructions. I refer to negation of V1 as initial negation, and negation of V2 as medial negation. When either pattern is possible, there is a corresponding semantic distinction.

Semantically, I make the following distinctions among secondary predications:¹

Depictive: The secondary verb expresses an incidental and transient state of one of the participants in a primary predication. There is no connection of cause, result, or manner between the two predications. Examples are *She ate the fish **raw*** and *He gave the lecture **nude***.

Resultative: The secondary verb expresses something that happens or is the case because the primary predication happens or is the case. Examples are *She licked the platter **clean*** and *He broke it **in half***.

Adverbial: The secondary verb says something about the manner of the primary predication, as in *He ate **fast*** and *She spoke **hesitantly***.

The following examples, differing only with respect to the identity of the verb in second position, illustrate the three types, respectively:

- (1112) *man2 kin3 paa3 nii4 dip2*
3.B eat fish DEM raw
'He ate this fish raw.'

¹These three categories are not always neatly distinguishable. While I describe these distinctions as semantic, some of the meaning in these three categories may be derived from pragmatic implicature.

(1113) *man2 kin3 paa3 nii4 met2*
 3.B eat fish DEM finished
 ‘He ate this fish up.’

(1114) *man2 kin3 paa3 nii4 vaj2*
 3.B eat fish DEM fast
 ‘He ate this fish fast.’

In the absence of explicit marking, descriptive complement constructions may be ambiguous as to whether they predicate the actuality of the descriptive V2 being realized with respect to a given V1 (e.g., when referring to a particular occasion of a certain event having had a certain result), or predicating the potential for the descriptive V2 to be realized with respect to V1. The following example of a resultative construction has two interpretations (the first of which was intended in the original context):

(1115) *baang3 khon2 kaø paj3_{V1} vit2_{V2}, baang3 khon2 kaø*
 some person T.LNK go escape some person T.LNK
paj3_{V1} bðø vit2_{V2}
 go NEG escape
 i. ‘Some people made it through, some people didn’t make it through.’
 ii. ‘Some people would (or can) make it through, some people wouldn’t (or can’t) make it through.’

The (1115ii) interpretation expresses the potential for a certain event (here ‘going’) to enable and actually result in, a second event (here ‘escaping’). This is expressible as an if-then inference: ‘Some people, if they went, would make it through; some people, if they went, wouldn’t make it through.’ This is a typical example of specific semantic and pragmatic effects cohering around a grammatical structure of simple V1-V2 juxtaposition, or associative organization (Diller 1988, Bisang 1991, 1996, Gil 2005a). In some sections below, it will be convenient to disregard ‘potential’ readings of these constructions.

Due to the high degree of pragmatic dependency in the interpretation of grammatical structure, a modal meaning can emerge naturally out of this resultative V1-V2 structure. Enfield (2003c:125-128) shows that this actual/potential opening licences a path in semantic change of the verb *daj4* ‘acquire, succeed’ in V2 position, developing into a general modal

of possibility (see Chapter 9). This is related to both the general lack of morphological expression of relationships among predicates in combination, and the heavy reliance on context in determining relationships among expressions which have semantically loose, associative organization.

We now examine depictive and resultative expressions. Adverbial expressions are presented in Chapter 21.

17.1 Depictives

17.1.1 V2 Depictives

In clauses of the form (NP1) V1 (NP2) V2, V1 and V2 may be in a relationship of either coordination or subordination. In the latter case, either V1 or V2 may be the secondary predication. We first consider V1-V2 structures in which V2 makes a depictive secondary predication.

A stock example of a depictive secondary predicate is ‘raw’. It predicates a changeable or transient state of a (usually edible) primary predicate object argument, and has little if any bearing on how the action involving that object (e.g., ‘eating’) is carried out. While the word order of English distinguishes between *He eats meat raw* versus *He eats raw meat*, an equivalent construction in Lao makes no surface distinction:

- (1116) *man2 kin3 siin4 dip2*
 3.B eat meat raw
 i. ‘He eats meat raw.’
 ii. ‘He eats raw meat.’

In the depictive reading (1116i), the main predication is the idea that ‘He eats meat’, and predicated in addition to this is the idea that the meat is, at this time, in the state of being raw. A verb such as *vaj2* ‘fast’ can appear in the same position, with adverbial meaning (see example (1114), above). The difference here is that the secondary element *vaj2* ‘fast’ does not make a predication about the food, but about the manner of eating.

In the (1116ii) reading, *dip2* ‘raw’ is a nominal modifier, forming a constituent with the nominal head *siin4* ‘meat’ to give a noun phrase *siin4 dip2* ‘raw meat’ which could, for example, function as a subject argument:

- (1117) *siin4 dip2 bðø dii3*
 meat raw NEG good
 ‘Raw meat is no good.’

The difference between the two interpretations of the role of *dip2* ‘raw’ in (1116) corresponds in many languages to an overt morphosyntactic distinction (e.g., in patterns of agreement, word order, derivational morphology). The distinctions in Lao are covert. They come to light when we look at possibilities for movement, paraphrase and insertion. The distinction between an analysis of a nominal followed by a stative predicate (as in (1116)) as a complex noun phrase (with N+modifier structure) or as a simple noun phrase followed by secondary predicative element can be made explicit if the noun phrase is more complex (e.g., with a determiner included, as in (1118-1119)), or is fronted (1120-1121):

- (1118) *man2 siø kin3 [siin4 dip2 nii4]_{NP}*
 3.B IRR eat meat raw DEM
 ‘He’s going to eat this raw meat.’ (does not entail that he’ll eat it raw)
- (1119) *man2 siø kin3 [siin4 nii4]_{NP} dip2*
 3.B IRR eat meat DEM raw
 ‘He’s going to eat this meat raw.’
- (1120) *[siin4 nii4]_i, man2 siø kin3 Ø_i dip2*
 meat DEM 3.B IRR eat raw
 ‘This meat, he’s going to eat raw.’
- (1121) *[siin4 dip2 nii4]_i, man2 siø kin3 Ø_i*
 meat raw DEM 3.B IRR eat
 ‘This raw meat, he’s going to eat.’ (does not entail that he’ll eat it raw)

Such tests using constituent extraposition can reveal differences in grammatical behavior between potentially depictive elements such as *dip2* ‘raw’ in (1122a) and nominal modifiers such as *ñajl* ‘big’ in (1123a). The (b) examples show that the nominal head of the object argument can be fronted in the case of the depictive expression, but not in the case of the noun-modifier expression:

- (1122) a. *man2 kin3 siin4 dip2*
 3.B eat meat raw
 ‘He eats meat raw.’ (also possible: ‘He eats raw meat.’)
 b. *siin4, man2 kin3 dip2*
 meat 3.B eat raw
 ‘Meat, he eats raw.’
- (1123) a. *man2 juu1 hùan2 ñaj1*
 3.B live house large
 ‘He lives in a large house.’
 b. **hùan2, man2 juu1 ñaj1*
 house 3.B live large
 (A house, he lives in large.)

A final point concerns the yes-answer properties of the two readings of (1116), above. Ambiguity in a question between depictive and noun-modifier readings (i.e., (1116i) versus (1116ii)) can be removed in an affirmative answer (in favor of the depictive reading), by using both the primary and secondary verb together (without the object argument), as opposed to just the primary predicate (in which case the response remains ambiguous):

- (1124) Q *man2 kin3 siin4 dip2 bòd3*
 3.B eat meat raw QPLR
 i. ‘Does he eat meat raw?’
 ii. ‘Does he eat raw meat?’
- Ai *kin3 dip2*
 eat raw
 ‘(Yes, he) eats (it) raw.’ (depictive interpretation)
- Aii *kin3*
 eat
 i. ‘(Yes, he) eats (it).’ (non-depictive interp. preferred)
 ii. ‘(Yes, he) eats (it raw).’ (depictive interp. possible)

17.1.1.1 *Depictive combinations pragmatically constrained?*

Particular combinations of main verb and depictive secondary predicate in expressions such as (1116), (1119-1120), and (1122b) are associated with familiar, conventionalized combinations of event and accompanying state. This does not mean that the combination of event and state must be typical in itself, and in fact it may be that depictive predications are more likely to be used when the combination of predications is pragmatically marked (as, for example, in the celebrated case of ‘eating meat raw’). But the combination must make sense with reference to some kind of conventionalized or sensible scenario (i.e., as ‘eating meat raw’ presupposes a contrasting norm of ‘eating meat cooked’). Out of context, a V2 depictive *jên3* ‘cool’ is perfectly natural in combination with a primary predication *kin3* ‘eat/consume’ but not with *tak2* ‘scoop’:

(1125) *nam4, man2 dajø kin3 jên3*
 water 3.B ACHV eat cool
 ‘Water, he drank cool.’

(1126) **nam4, man2 dajø tak2 jên3*
 water 3.B ACHV scoop cool
 (Water, he scooped cool.)

Depictive expressions are subject to pragmatic restrictions on specific combinations of primary and secondary predicate, related to the cultural relevance or conventionality of the combination (cf. Mithun 1984, Enfield 2002c).

17.1.1.2 *No distinct depictive construction*

Depictive expressions such as (1116), (1119-1120), and (1122b), involving *dip2* ‘raw’, are not formally distinct enough from secondary predicates of other kinds (e.g., adverbials) to be regarded as distinct constructions. The following examples, involving *vaj2* ‘fast’ as a V2 adverbial secondary predicate, show the same grammatical properties as have been illustrated for unmarked V2 depictive expressions: (a) manner versus modifier ambiguity (1127), (b) disambiguation by insertion of demonstrative in different positions (1128), (c) disambiguation by fronting of

the object nominal head alone (1129a) versus object nominal together with secondary predicate (1129b):

- (1127) *man2 khap2 lot1 vaj2*
 3.B drive car fast
 i. ‘He drives cars fast.’
 ii. ‘He drives fast cars.’
- (1128) a. *man2 khap2 [lot1 vaj2 nii4]_{NP}*
 3.B drive car fast DEM
 ‘He drives this fast car.’
 b. *man2 khap2 [lot1 nii4]_{NP} vaj2*
 3.B drive car DEM fast
 ‘He drives this car fast.’
- (1129) a. *lot1, man2 khap2 vaj2*
 car 3.B drive fast
 ‘Cars, he drives fast.’
 b. *lot1 vaj2, man2 khap2*
 car fast 3.B drive
 ‘Fast cars, he drives.’

17.1.2 V1 Depictives

Some verbs, such as verbs of posture and wearing, can have depictive function in V1 position. These verbs include in their internal semantics an event (e.g., ‘putting on a hat’ or ‘moving into a sitting position’) followed by a resultant state (e.g., ‘wearing a hat’ or ‘being in sitting position’). Such V1-V2 strings are interpretable as either a series of actions (e.g., ‘sit and then read’) or an overlapping of state and action (e.g., ‘sitting [i.e., in the state of having sat], read’; cf. Enfield 2002b). These can appear to be compounds (‘He drunk-drives’), subordinating adverbial constructions (‘He drunk, drives’), or clause chains (‘He (gets) drunk (and then) drives’). The distinction is difficult to make in the absence of simple morphosyntactic tests. Tests such as paraphrase and movement can upset the integration of such structures and make judgements inconclusive.

Here are two examples of V1 depictive expressions:

- (1130) *man2 nang1 qaan1 pùm4*
 3.B sit read book
 ‘He sat reading a book.’ (or: ‘He read a book sitting.’)
- (1131) *man2 maw2 maa2 hùan2*
 3.B drunk come house
 ‘He came home drunk.’

It is possible, but pragmatically dispreferred, for the depictive element in these expressions to appear after the primary predicate:

- (1132) ?? *man2 maa2 hùan2 maw2*
 3.B come house drunk
 (He came home drunk.)

The preference for the constituent order illustrated in (1130-1131) is presumably due to the nature of the depictive element being an expression of ‘process followed by result’ (e.g., ‘sitting followed by being seated’, ‘putting hat on followed by wearing hat’, ‘getting drunk followed by being drunk’). The depictive expression needs to occur in V1 position to preserve the iconicity of the process occurring before the state, which then holds over the primary predicate which follows. This is not the case when the depictive element expresses a simple state (which does not inherently presuppose a preceding process of transition-into-state) such as ‘raw’, ‘fresh’, or ‘cool’ (cf. section 17.1.1, above).

17.1.3 Use of nominals in depictive expressions

Nominals are used in depictive expressions in a number of ways. First, ‘floating’ classifier phrases may have depictive function (see Chapter 7, above). Second, certain constituents which appear formally to be noun phrases (but which turn out to be predicative elements) can have depictive function. Third, a type of adjunct headed by the copula verb *pên3* hosts nominals with a range of depictive, adverbial, and resultative meanings.

17.1.3.1 'Floating' classifier phrases

A lexical noun may be separated from its modifying classifier phrase (containing various quantifiers, determiners, and modifiers), with the classifier phrase postposed to sentence-final position. Here are two examples, with the post-posed phrase in square brackets (see also Chapter 7):

- (1133) *taw4 dòðk5-maj4 hanø tèèk5 saq1, [saam3 taw4]*
 vase flower-tree TPC.DIST break IDEO three vase
 'Those vases smashed, three (of them).'
- (1134) *phen1 dajø qaw3 khòòng3-khuan3 haj5, [qanø-nùng1]*
 3.P ACHV take gift give MC.INAN-one
 'He did give (to him a) present, a (certain) one.'

These adjuncts are depictive in that they express information additional to the main predicate about one of the arguments in the main clause. Different constituent orders are possible, such that the same information can be expressed in tighter relation to the noun phrase, as the following paraphrases of the previous two examples demonstrate:

- (1135) *taw4 dòðk5-maj4 saam3 taw4 hanø tèèk5 saq1*
 vase flower-tree three vase TPC.DIST break IDEO
 'Those three vases smashed.'
- (1136) *phen1 dajø qaw3 khòòng3-khuan3 qanø-nùng1 haj5*
 3.P ACHV take gift MC.INAN-one give
 'He did give a (certain) present to (him).'

Sometimes these quantifying phrases are introduced in postverbal position by the achievement marker *dajø*, which elsewhere introduces temporal and other adverbial complements (Enfield 2003c, see Chapter 21):

- (1137) *puuk5 phoon2 khùn5 dajø cèt2 nuaj1*
 plant hillock ascend ACHV seven CLF.UNIT
 '(They) planted up seven hillocks.'

This is not a simple depictive, since it includes the idea of achievement, introduced by *dajø* (see Chapter 9).

17.1.3.2 *A predicative nominal phrase as V2 depictive*

An apparent case of a nominal in depictive function is as follows:

- (1138) *man2 mùa2 hùan2 mùù2 paw1*
 3.B return house hand empty
 ‘She returned home empty-handed.’

While the sequence *mùù2 paw1* [hand empty] can be analyzed as a nominal meaning ‘empty hand(s)’, in this context it predicates a state of affairs (‘having empty hands’).² As a general rule, sequences of the form ‘body part noun’+‘stative verb’ can function as proper predicates, which may take full verb trappings (cf. Clark 1996 on this phenomenon in Southeast Asian languages more generally). The following examples show the sequences *taa3 khiaw3* [eye green] (elsewhere a noun phrase ‘green eye(s)’) and *phom3 dèèng3* [hair red] (elsewhere a noun phrase ‘red hair’) as main predicates, taking direct negation and irrealis marking, respectively:

- (1139) *khon2 laaw2 bòø taa3 khiaw3*
 person Lao NEG eye green
 ‘Lao people (are) not green-eyed.’
- (1140) *luuk4 caw4 caø phom3 dèèng3*
 child 2SG.P IRR hair red
 ‘Your child will (be) red-haired.’

So, the depictive element *mùù2 paw1* ‘empty hand(ed)’ in (1138) can be analyzed as a predicate in V2 position, and thus this is not a genuine case of an unmarked nominal having depictive function.

17.1.3.3 *Adverbial/deictive/resultative adjuncts marked by pên3 ‘be’*

A construction which involves an adjunct headed by the copula verb *pên3* often has depictive meaning, but also shows adverbial and resultative

²While nominals may occasionally be used predicatively—e.g., in equational expressions such as *phuø-nan4 qaaj4 khòj5* [MC.HUM-DEM.NONPROX eBr 1SG.P] ‘That person (is) my brother’—they are quite restricted. They can take no verbal trappings whatsoever (negation, aspect marking, etc.; cf. Chapters 9 and 10, above).

meanings. In these cases, the complement of *pên3* is a nominal.³ Here is an example which semantically is clearly depictive, in which the classifier *nuaj1* is the complement of *pên3*, as an adjunct of *hòp5 phuu2* ‘carry a mountain’:

- (1141) *bak2-ñak1-kum3phan2 hòp5 phuu2 pên3 nuaj1*
 M.B-ogre-K carry.in.arms mountain COP CLF.UNIT
 ‘The Ogre Kumphan carried the mountain whole.’

In (1141), the word *nuaj1* is the numeral classifier for mountains (among other things), and the adjunct *pên3 nuaj1* in this context means ‘whole’ or ‘as a unit’. The expression is depictive in that it makes an added predication about the state (as whole rather than in parts) of one of the participants involved in the main predication (i.e., the object of *hòp5* ‘carry in arms’). The use of sortal classifiers in *pên3*-adjuncts with the meaning ‘whole, as a unit’ is fully productive.

Pên3 has a range of main verb functions in other contexts (cf. Chapter 11). It may serve as a simple copula (1142), as a light verb (i.e., as a copula whose complement is a relativized nominal) (1143), and as a predicator of illness (1144):

- (1142) *tòn3 nan4 khòj5 pên3 nakø-hian2*
 time DEM.NONPROX 1SG.P COP CT.AGT-STUDY
 ‘At that time, I was a student.’
- (1143) *sumun2thaa2 pên3 khon2 thii1 ngaam2 ñing1*
 S COP person REL beautiful especially
 ‘Sumunthaa was a person who was especially beautiful.’
- (1144) *pên3 khaj5*
 COP fever
 ‘(They) had fever.’

Pên3 may also appear as a postverbal modal expressing inherent, learned or acquired ability (see Chapter 9):⁴

³There are a few exceptions. For example, the sequence *pên3 pok2katiq2* [COP normal/regular] (where *pok2katiq2* is a verb), is a common adverbial adjunct meaning ‘in normal/regular fashion’.

⁴In some uses, and in some dialects, *pên3* may be used with this meaning as a preverbal complement-taking predicate—cf. Stung Treng Lao *bòp pên3 vaw4 laaw2* [NEG COP speak Lao] ‘don’t know how to speak Lao’ versus Vientiane Lao *vaw4 laaw2 bòp pên3* [speak Lao NEG COP] ‘don’t know how to speak Lao’.

- (1145) *hòq2 bòø pên3 dêê4*
 fly NEG KNOW.HOW FAC.FILLIN
 ‘(He) couldn’t fly, you know.’
- (1146) *mùng2 kaø hêt1 kin3 bòø pên3 dòøk5*
 2SG.B T.LNK make eat NEG KNOW.HOW FAC.RESIST
 ‘You don’t know how to cook them!’

The *pên3*-adjunct makes a secondary predication which can express meanings ranging from depictive to adverbial to resultative. Some examples are difficult to uniquely categorize.

Like example (1141), above, the following two examples have genuinely depictive semantics, in that the secondary expressions describe the form or state of the main clause object at the time of the main verb event taking place (with no necessary relation of cause or manner holding between the two predications):

- (1147) *khaw3 kin3 siin4 pên3 tòøn1*
 3PL.B eat meat COP chunk
 ‘They ate (the) meat in chunks.’
- (1148) *man2 hènng5 laø kèq2 qòøk5 pên3 phèèn1 cia4*
 3.B dry and peel exit COP CLF.SHEET paper
 ‘(When) it’s dry, then peel it off as paper sheets.’

Similarly, in another example, the *pên3*-adjunct is depictive in that it describes the physical arrangement of the argument of the main clause ‘they’ during the time that the action of the main clause takes place:

- (1149) *khaw3 nang1 kin3 khaw5 pên3 thèèw3*
 3PL.B sit eat rice COP row
 ‘They sat and ate in rows.’

A final example is difficult to interpret, since it is not obvious whether ‘being in English’ is a predication about the ‘form’ of a story:

- (1150) *man2 vaw4 lùang1 nii4 pên3 phaa2saa3 qang3kit2*
 3.B say story DEM COP language English
 ‘He told this story in English.’

Pên3-adjuncts can also express a state of the primary predicate object which is not incidental to the primary predication but rather results from it. The main semantic difference between these expressions and genuine depictive expressions is the temporal relationship between the two predications. In these cases, the secondary predication is true after the primary predication, while in the case of depictives, the two predications overlap temporally. There are a number of subtypes of these ‘state as result’ secondary predications.

The *pên3*-adjunct may express the physical form of the object argument as resulting from the primary predication, in terms of physical transformation or modification (1151-1152), transformation in status or social role (1153), or coming into existence (1154):

- (1151) *maø paat5 pên3 sii1 liam1*
 DIR.ALL slice COP four sides
 ‘Bring (the wood and) cut (it) into four sided (pieces).’
- (1152) *liaw3 beng1 sùak4 khanaat5 nii4 pùaj1 pên3 phong3*
 turn look rope size DEM dissolved COP powder
 ‘(They) turned (and) looked (and saw) a rope of such size dissolved into powder.’
- (1153) *phen1 leej2 haj5 buat5 pên3 phaql*
 3.P NO.ADO give ordain COP monk
 ‘Then he had (me) ordained (as) a monk.’
- (1154) *can3thaa2 mèø-khaw4 keet5 luuk4 pên3 sat2*
 C CT.Mo-rule born child COP animal
 ‘Chantha the queen gave birth to children (as) animals.’

The following example expresses ‘state as result of manner’:

- (1155) *tòk5 pên3 diw4*
 nail.in COP finger
 ‘(You) nail (them) in in vertical rows.’

Here, it is not that the object is in vertical rows (‘as fingers’) merely ‘because you nailed them’. What matters here is HOW you nailed them, and thus we see adverbial and resultative semantics combined.

Some *pên3*-adjuncts are comparable to predicative complements such as *I consider him a brother* which in English are morphosyntactically and semantically distinct from depictive complements.

- (1156) *kuu3 thùù3 khon2 nii4 pên3 qaaj4*
 1SG.B regard person DEM COP eBr
 ‘I regard this person (as a) brother.’

‘Being the speaker’s brother’ is not asserted in the *pên3* adjunct merely as an incidental state of the primary predicate object. There is a semantic subordination of ‘being brother’ to ‘regarding’ something to be the case. Unlike the examples we have seen so far, in this case the *pên3* adjunct is not omissible without changing the meaning of the main verb *thùù3*. In (1156), *thùù3* means ‘regard, consider’. If the *pên3* adjunct were removed, the meaning of the verb *thùù3* would be ‘hold, carry’, and the sentence as a whole would mean ‘I carried this person’ (cf. English *I regard this person as a brother* versus *I regard this person*).

17.2 Resultative constructions

Resultative constructions consist of a verb (phrase) V1, followed by a verb V2 which predicates a result of V1. No morphology encodes the resultative relationship between verbs:⁵

- (1157) *laaw2 ñing2 nok1 taaj3*
 3SG.FA shoot bird die
 ‘She shot a bird dead.’
- (1158) *caw4 qat2 patuu3 nèn5 bòò3*
 2SG.P close door tight QPLR
 ‘Did you close the door tight?’
- (1159) *laaw2 doot5 khua3 taaj3*
 3SG.FA leap bridge die
 ‘She leapt from a bridge and died.’

The yes-answer properties of examples (1157-1159) are not unequivocal. If either verb is available alone as a yes-answer, it is usually V2. This is a marked contrast with left-headed complement structures such

⁵Throughout this section, the discussion is restricted to ‘actualized’ construals of resultative constructions (i.e., in which V1 and V2 are interpreted as having been attained, rather than merely expressing potential that the result take place; cf. discussion at beginning of this chapter).

as those described in Chapters 19 and 21, below. In examples (1157-1159), it is less obvious which of the two verbs is head, and V2 seems more likely. This is perhaps odd for an otherwise strongly head-initial language.

We now consider some general facts about the semantics of resultative constructions, before going on to discuss sub-types.

17.2.1 Semantics of cause-result expressions

Many events or situations which we want to put into words seem conceptually unitary, yet involve distinct subcomponents. Imagine a man killing a duckling by cutting through its neck. It is natural to think of this as a unitary scene, and describe it with simple grammar, such as the following single-verb transitive clause in English:

(1160) *He killed a duckling.*

But this event can easily be thought of as having more than one component: (a) the man cuts through a duckling's neck; (b) the duckling dies. While the verb *kill* does not specify WHAT the agent does, it does contain in its semantic structure reference to these two separate sub-events: 'the man did something to the duckling, and as a result it was dead'. This single-verb expression can be represented as [p_{EVENT}+q_{RESULT}], with a single set of square brackets representing the single verb form (i.e., *kill*), and the sign '+' representing the relation of cause specified in the verb's internal semantics.

In Lao, as in other languages with widespread use of multi-verb constructions, it is common to explicitly spell out the multi-component structure of events, as follows:

(1161) *man2 paat5 khò2 taaj3*
 3.B slice neck die
 'He killed (it) by slicing (its) neck.' ('He sliced (its) neck (and it) died.')

The separate expression of those event components by two different verbs can be represented as [p_{EVENT}]+[q_{RESULT}], each component in its own set of square brackets, representing two separate verb forms.

A large class of such conceptually unitary yet multi-component event descriptions may on semantic grounds be termed resultative, because they predicate a relationship of result between sub-components (as in our example ‘cut-neck-and-then-because-of-this-be-dead’). As just shown, semantically resultative expressions sometimes contain explicit reference to more than one event component (*He pounded it flat*), while sometimes the event components are still phonologically separate but bound in morphology (*He flatt-en-ed it*), or are hidden away in the semantics of a single verb (*He squashed it*).

17.2.2 Same-subject resultatives

In same-subject resultatives, the logical subjects of V1 and resultative V2, subscripted for convenience in the following examples, are coreferential (see also (1115), above):

- (1162) *n̄ang2 daj∅ kin3_{V1} qiim1_{V2} juu1*
 STILL ACHV eat satiated FAC.WEAK
 ‘One still could more or less eat one’s fill (at that time).’

We may note three important properties displayed by these constructions. First, V1 may appear with its own direct object complement, showing that the first element is a VP and not just a V (using as our example the V1-V2 combination *kin3 qiim1* ‘eat be.satiated’ from example (1162)):

- (1163) *khòj5 kin3 mak∅-muang1 qiim1 lèw4*
 1SG.P eat CT.FRUIT-mango full PRF
 ‘I’ve eaten my fill of mangoes.’

Second, V2 may be directly negated:

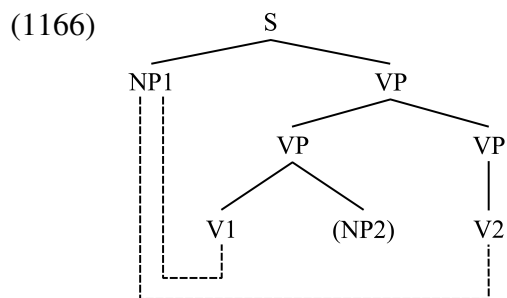
- (1164) *khòj5 kin3 mak∅-muang1 b∅ qiim1*
 1SG.P eat CT.FRUIT-mango NEG full
 ‘I’ve not (yet) eaten my fill of mangoes.’

Third, with the medial negation shown in (1164), V1 is entailed. Thus, (1164) entails ‘I’ve eaten mangoes’. Schematically (assuming an ‘actualized’ reading):

- (1165) [V1 *b∅* V2] ‘V1-NEG-V2’ entails [V1 *lèw4*] ‘V1 PRF’

Same-subject resultatives are like VP chains (Chapter 20) with subject of V2 ellipsed under coreference with that of V1, and with further tightness due to the semantic relationship between V1 and V2. V2 is not simply conceptually associated or temporally connected to V1, but has a more specific relation of condition or consequence. (Unlike these resultative constructions, sequential or distributive VP chains may not be medially negated; cf. Chapter 20, below.)

These facts suggest the following constituent structure analysis of same-subject resultatives (dotted line connects verbs with their common subject):



The two verbs have the same subject, as demonstrated by the following entailment property of these structures:

(1167) NP1-V1-NP2-V2 entails NP1-V1-NP2 and NP1-V2

Thus, (1163) [1SG eat mango full] entails both [1SG eat mango] and [1SG full] (with a close temporal connection implied by the fact that V2 is caused by V1).

In further support of this analysis, note that these constructions are clause-separable, like VP chains (Chapter 20, below). Compare (1163) with the following:

(1168) *khòj5 kin3 makø-muang1 naa3, khòj5 qiim1 lèw4*
 1SG.P eat CT.FRUIT-mango FAC.EXPLIC 1SG.P full PRF
 ‘I ate mangoes, you see, I’m full.’

(1169) *khòj5 kin3 makø-muang1 lèkaø qiim1 lèw4*
 1SG.P eat CT.FRUIT-mango C.LNK full PRF
 ‘I ate mangoes and (so I’m) full.’

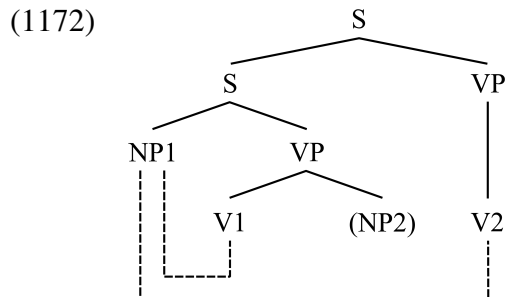
Consider now insertability of the topic linker *kaø*, which may appear in one of two places. First, as would be expected, it may appear marking the highest VP in (1166), between matrix subject and predicate (cf. (1164)):

- (1170) *khòj5 kaø kin3 makø-muang1 bðø qiim1*
 1SG.P T.LNK eat CT.FRUIT-mango NEG full
 ‘I’ve also not (yet) eaten my fill of mangoes.’

However, a second possibility is for *kaø* to appear immediately before the resultative V2 (and any accompanying aspectual-modal marking such as negation):

- (1171) *khòj5 kin3 makø-muang1 kaø bðø qiim1*
 1SG.P eat CT.FRUIT-mango T.LNK NEG full
 ‘I didn’t even get full from eating mangoes.’

This second possibility supports an analysis in which the resultative V2 is a higher predication about the whole of what precedes it—i.e., with an alternative constituent structure to (1166) above, in which V2 is head of the highest sentential VP, and what precedes it is a kind of sentential subject:



In relativization of the main subject of a different-subject resultative construction, the initial verb must be overtly mentioned. Consider the following different-subject resultative (1173), and its relativized form (1174) with both VPs present:

- (1173) *man2 ñing2 nok1 taaj3*
 3.B shoot bird die
 ‘He shot the bird dead.’

- (1174) *kuu3 hên3 khon2 ñing2 nok1 taaj3*
 1SG.B see person shoot bird die
 ‘I saw the person who shot the bird dead.’

The first VP is not omissible without changing the meaning:

- (1175) *kuu3 hên3 khon2 taaj3*
 1SG.B see person die
 ‘I saw the person who died’ (not entailed by (1174))

The situation for a same-subject resultative, in which the main subject is necessarily also the subject of the second verb (cf. (1167), above), is different. Here is a same-subject resultative (1176), and in (1177) the full construction in a relative clause:

- (1176) *laaw2 doot5 khua3 taaj3*
 3SG.FA leap bridge die
 ‘He leapt from a bridge and died.’
- (1177) *kuu3 hên3 khon2 doot5 khua3 taaj3*
 1SG.B see person leap bridge die
 ‘I saw the person who leapt from a bridge and died.’

In this case, the first VP is omissible from the relative clause:

- (1178) *kuu3 hên3 khon2 taaj3*
 1SG.B see person die
 ‘I saw the person who died’ (entailed by (1177))

This is because the same-subject resultative pattern entails NP1-V2.

17.2.3 Projected resultatives

Accomplishment verb semantics entail an activity leading to and causing a change of state (Dowty 1979:91ff, Foley and Van Valin 1984:38). The similar but distinct class of projected accomplishment verbs (e.g., *samak1* ‘apply.for’, *haa3* ‘look for’, *hian2* ‘study’, *sêng3* ‘sit an exam’, *fang2* ‘listen’), also refer to an activity leading up to a resultant event or change of state, but instead of entailing the successful result of that ensuing event,

the entailment is that in undertaking the activity, the subject's PURPOSE is to achieve that result. (Cf. Quine's 'intentional object verbs', 1960:219-22.) For example, the aim entailed by 'seeking' is 'finding', of 'sitting an exam' is 'passing an exam', of 'listening' to someone is 'understanding' what they are saying. But unlike true accomplishments, none of 'seek', 'sit an exam', nor 'listen' entail those projected results.

Compare entailments of accomplishments with those of projected accomplishments:

(1179) **Accomplishment**

'knit a scarf'

- entails activity 'knit'
- entails purpose 'want there to be a scarf'
- entails result 'birth of scarf' (i.e., change of state from 'there is no scarf' to 'there is a scarf')

(1180) **Projected accomplishment**

'look for a scarf'

- entails activity 'look for scarf'
- entails purpose 'want to find scarf'
- ideal result of activity is achievement of purpose 'find scarf' (i.e., change of state from 'have no scarf' to 'have scarf')
- does not entail 'find scarf'

In a projected resultative construction, a projected accomplishment verb in V1 position makes reference to an intended result, and the realization of this result is expressed by the resultative V2:

(1181) *man2 haa3 kacèè3 hèn3 lèèw4*

3.B seek key see PRF

'He's found the key.'

Here, *haa3* 'seek' projects—and does not entail—a result such as 'seeing' or 'encountering' or 'finding' something. Its internal structure may be expressed as '[p_{EVENT}-seek'(>q_{RESULT}-find')]'. Addition of the separate verb *hèn3* 'see' as a resultative V2 overtly expresses the projected result '(>q)'. The overall structure is '[p_{EVENT}-seek'(>q_{RESULT}-find')]+[q_{RESULT}-see']'.

In these projected resultative constructions, medial negation is permissible, whereby V1 is entailed (once again, assuming an 'actualized', not potential reading):

- (1182) *man2 haa3 kacèè3 bòø hên3*
 3.B seek key NEG see
 ‘He hasn’t found the key.’

Example (1182) entails that he has looked for the key.

17.2.4 Reiterative resultatives

As discussed above, sometimes the complexity of multi-component resultative events is encompassed in the semantics of a single verb:

- (1183) *man2 khaa5 pêt2 toø-nan4*
 3.B kill duck MC.ANIM-DEM.NONPROX
 ‘He killed that duck.’

The verb *khaa5* ‘kill’ contains a complex structure [_{P_{EVENT}+Q_{RESULT}}] (specifically, [‘do something to x’_{EVENT} + ‘x is dead’_{RESULT}]).

A similar resultative event can be explicitly spelt out with a multi-verb resultative construction:

- (1184) *man2 tii3 pêt2 toø-nan4 taaj3*
 3.B hit duck MC.ANIM-DEM.NONPROX die
 ‘He hit that duck dead.’

Here, the subcomponents [_{P_{EVENT}}] and [_{Q_{RESULT}}] are separately lexicalized, and the resultative relationship emerges from the construction itself.

It is possible for these two options to combine, in a reiterative resultative construction, of the form [‘_{P_{EVENT}+Q_{RESULT}}’+‘_{Q_{RESULT}}’]:

- (1185) *man2 khaa5 pêt2 toø-nan4 taaj3*
 3.B kill duck MC.ANIM-DEM.NONPROX die
 ‘He killed that duck dead.’

In this example, a single RESULT event component—‘die’—is specified twice. It appears first in the internal semantic structure of *khaa5* ‘kill’, and is then explicitly reiterated by *taaj3* ‘die’ in resultative V2 function, as follows:

- (1186) [‘do something to x’_{EVENT}+‘x is dead’_{RESULT}]+[‘x is dead’_{RESULT}]

More abstractly, the structure of a reiterative resultative construction is as follows:

(1187) [p_{EVENT}+q_{RESULTi}]+[q_{RESULTi}]

While for regular and projected resultatives V1 is entailed under medial negation (see (1165), above), in the case of V1-V2 reiterative resultative combinations, medial negation is acceptable, but V1 is not entailed:

- (1188) a. *khaa5 taaj3*
 kill die
 ‘(I) killed (it) dead.’
 b. *khaa5 bə̀ə taaj3*
 kill NEG die
 ‘I couldn’t/can’t/didn’t kill it.’
 (NOT: I killed it but it didn’t die.)

- (1189) a. *paj3 theng3*
 go reach
 ‘(He) reached (there).’
 b. *paj3 bə̀ə theng3*
 go NEG reach
 ‘(He) couldn’t/can’t/didn’t didn’t reach there.’
 (NOT: He went there but didn’t reach there.)

The medially negated example (1188b) does not entail V1. One possibility is that *khaa5* ‘kill’ may differ from its English translation in not entailing that the undergoer dies. However, it is difficult, if possible at all, to paraphrase example (1188b), in the manner of regular resultatives, as ‘(I) killed it, (but) it didn’t die’. The V1-V2 example (1188a) is not a straightforward resultative construction, because V1 *khaa5* ‘kill’ already contains the result ‘die’ (the meaning of V2) in its semantics (though perhaps as merely the PURPOSE of the action). In contrast, the V1 elements of simple resultatives do not contain results in their semantics, and those of projected resultative constructions do contain reference to a result, but do not entail that result.

Like resultatives in general, these reiterative resultatives lend themselves easily to potential readings (e.g., (1188b) as ‘It can’t be killed dead’, (1189a) as ‘It can be reached’).

17.2.5 Remark

Above sections have illustrated some ways in which semantic structures expressed in lexicon and syntax may co-occur and interact. Three types of resultative construction are recognized, defined by differences in internal semantics of V1. These are illustrated in Table 31.

Table 31: Three types of resultative construction, by semantic structure of V1

Expression	Semantic structure	Example	Semantic structure of example
a Simple verb	[p]	hit	['hit']
b Simple resultative construction	[p]+[q]	hit-die ('kill')	['hit']+['die']
c Resultative verb	[p+q]	kill	['do-something-to'+ 'die']
d Reiterative resultative construction	[p+q]+[q]	kill-die ('kill dead')	['do-something-to'+ 'die']+['die']
e Projected accomplishment verb	[p(>q)]	seek	['seek' (> 'find')]
f Projected resultative construction	[p(>q)]+[q]	seek-find	['seek' (> 'find')]+ ['acquire']

Notation: '(>q)' means 'with the purpose of having q happen', not entailing q; [...]_q represents a single verb form; '+' represents a resultative relationship between semantic components.

Chapter 18

Causation

Perhaps the semantically simplest notion of causation is expressed by the clause linker *ñdòn4* ‘because’, whose complement is typically marked by the complementizer *vaa1*:

- (1190) *laaw2 bðø jaak5 caaj1 ñdòn4 vaa1 laaw2 bðø mii2*
 3SG.FA NEG want pay because COMP 3SG.FA NEG have
ngen2 laaj3
 money much
 ‘He didn’t want to pay because he didn’t have much money.’
- (1191) *thaang2 baan4 bðø cap2, ñdòn4 ñang3, ñdòn4*
 direction village NEG catch because INDEF.INAN because
haw2 man2 khon2 kheej2 juu1 nam2 kan3 laaj3 pii3 lèw4
 1.FA 3.B person EXP be.at together COLL much year PRF
 ‘The village (people) didn’t capture (me)—why?—because I am someone who they have lived together (with) for many years already.’

Ñdòn4 ‘because’ may also directly mark a nominal, as follows:

- (1192) *kuu3 hèn3 muu1 nii3, ñdòn4 qanø-nii4 kuu3*
 1SG.B see peer flee because MC.INAN-DEM 1SG.B
caj3-haaj4
 heart-angry
 ‘I saw the others flee; because of this (thing), I am angry.’

Example (1192) shows that the nominal *qanø-nii4* ‘this thing’—a nominal complement of *ñdòn4* ‘because’—stands anaphorically for a preceding clause. The following example is also elliptical, with ‘you’ in ‘because of you’ referring, presumably, to some event or action on behalf of ‘you’ (i.e., ‘This happened because you did/said something’):

- (1193) *qanø-nii4 keet5-khùn5 ñdòn4 mùng2*
 MC.INAN-DEM happen because 2SG.B
 ‘This (thing) happened because of you.’

Another common word for ‘because’ is *phòq1*. It apparently does not differ in meaning from *ñòòn4*, and has much the same distribution:

- (1194) *siø kin3 khòj5 kaø kin3 saa3, phòq1 vaa1 khòj5*
 IRR eat 1SG.P T.LNK eat IMP.SUGG because COMP 1SG.P
dajø haj5 san3ñaa2 kap2 caw4 lèw4 vaa1 caø
 ACHV give contract with 2SG.P PRF COMP IRR
kap2-khùùn2 maø haj5 kin3
 go.back-return DIR.ALL give eat
 ‘(If) you’re going to eat me, then do it, because I did give you a promise that (I) would come back and let (you) eat (me).’

Causation may also be expressed in verbs containing a notion of cause in their internal semantics (e.g., *khaa5* ‘kill’), as well as by selection of different argument structure constructions involving the same verb, allowing transitivity alternations which differ as to the presence or absence of a causer in argument structure:

- (1195) *kafêê2 nan4 qun1*
 coffee DEM.NONPROX warm
 ‘That coffee is warm.’
- (1196) *phen1 qun1 kafêê2 nan4*
 3.P warm coffee DEM.NONPROX
 ‘He warmed that coffee.’

Note that this strategy is not available for all comparable verbs. Compare *hòòn4* ‘hot’, which does not enter into the caused state construction (cf. Chapter 11):

- (1197) *kafêê2 nan4 hòòn4*
 coffee DEM.NONPROX hot
 ‘That coffee is hot.’
- (1198) **phen1 hòòn4 kafêê2 nan4*
 3.P hot coffee DEM.NONPROX
 (He heated that coffee.)

For *hòòn4* ‘hot’, only a periphrastic strategy is available for expressing controlled or intentional causation:

- (1199) *phen1 hêt1 (haj5) kafêê2 hòðn4*
 3.P make give coffee hot
 'He made the coffee hot.'

This periphrastic strategy involves no overt marking of the relationship between the main causative verb and its complement.

Other structures involving causative semantics include the resultative constructions described in Chapter 17. There are no morphological causative structures.

There are three productive causative complement type constructions, involving the verbs *hêt1* 'do/make' and *haj5* 'give', along with some variations involving verbs with more specific semantics. We now sketch the main types (cf. Wierzbicka's 1988, 1996 analyses of causatives).

18.1 Causatives in *haj5* 'give'

The verb *haj5* 'give' is common in descriptions of interpersonal causation, translatable in different contexts with English causative verbs *have*, *let*, *make*, and *get*:

- (1200) *man2 haj5 nòðj4 paj3 talaat5*
 3.B give N go market
 i. 'He had Noi go to the market.'
 ii. 'He let Noi go to the market.'
 iii. 'He made Noi go to the market.'
 iv. 'He got Noi to go to the market.'

The idea common to the translations in (1200i-iv) is that the causer (the main subject) does or says something (usually to the causee, the lower clause subject), because of which the causee then does something. In addition, the main subject knows that as a result of his action, the complement event will happen. This is compatible with a wide range of kinds of interpersonal causation including 'allowing', 'forcing', and 'ordering'. In each case, the complement event happens because of what the main subject has done (or said), and this is under the control of the main subject, in the sense that he is aware that the complement event will happen as a result of his action (cf. Wierzbicka's 2002:171-177 analysis of *lassen*

in German). Accordingly, these constructions only involve animate arguments, and thus cannot be used to express equivalents of, say, *The wind made the door close* or *Pepper makes me sneeze*.

18.2 Causatives in *hêt1* ‘make’

The verb *hêt1* ‘do/make’ is used as a main verb in a causative construction with more restricted use than constructions involving *haj5* ‘give’:

- (1201) *man2 hêt1 còk5 tèk5*
 3.B make cup break
 ‘He broke the cup.’

This example would be a typical description of a situation in which somebody has bumped or dropped the cup, and as a result it has fallen and broken. In this case, the main subject does something (usually to the causee), and because of that the complement event occurs. An important difference between this and the *haj5* ‘give’ construction is that here the complement event must specify something that happens to the lower clause subject (not something that the lower clause subject does). Hence, it cannot be used in the kinds of interpersonal causation typical of the *haj5* ‘give’ construction:

- (1202) **man2 hêt1 nòj4 paj3 talaat5*
 3.B make N go market
 (He made Noi (to) go to the market.)

The *hêt1* ‘do/make’ causative construction is never used with an animate causee, and never with an inanimate causer.

18.3 Causatives in *hêt1-haj5* ‘make-give’

The verbs *hêt1* ‘do/make’ and *haj5* ‘give’ are combined in a third common syntactic causative construction:

- (1203) *man2 hêt1-haj5 còk5 tèk5*
 3.B make-give cup break
 ‘He caused the cup to break.’

- (1204) *man2 hêt1-haj5 kuu3 met2 ngen2 laaj3*
 3.B make-give 1SG.B finish money much
 ‘He caused me to lose a lot of money.’

The meaning of this construction is more general than that of the previous two types, similar in meaning to the *haj5* ‘give’ construction, but lacking the component of main subject control (i.e., it is not necessarily the case the main subject was aware that his or her action would result in the complement event occurring). In this construction, unlike in the previous two, what the main subject does is not DONE TO the lower subject. Further, there is no restriction with regard to animacy of the causer and causee arguments.

18.4 Other verbs as causative complement-taking predicates

Verbs of more specific meaning than *hêt1* ‘do/make’ and *haj5* ‘give’ can be used as complement-taking predicates with causative meaning:

- (1205) *laaw2 phaa2/khii1/suaj1 maa4 tên4 khaam5 hua4*
 3SG.FA lead/ride/help horse jump cross.over fence
 ‘He led/rode/helped the horse to jump over the fence.’

Many verbs combine obligatorily with *haj5* ‘give’ (in the same slot as *hêt1* ‘do/make’ in the *hêt1-haj5* ‘make-give’ construction), as shown for *bangkhap1* ‘force’ in the following example:

- (1206) *laaw2 bangkhap1 haj5 maa4 tên4 khaam5 hua4*
 3SG.FA force give horse jump cross.over fence
 ‘He forced the horse to jump over the fence.’
- (1207) **laaw2 bangkhap1 maa4 tên4 khaam5 hua4*
 3SG.FA force horse jump cross.over fence
 (He forced the horse to jump over the fence.)

The next example shows *haam5* ‘forbid’ in this structure, with the added feature of obligatory negation on *haj5* ‘give’, due to the nature of the causation expressed (i.e., causing something not to happen):

- (1208) *laaw2 haam5 bòø haj5 maa4 tên4 khaam5 hua4*
 3SG.FA forbid NEG give horse jump cross.over fence
 ‘He forbade the horse to jump over the fence.’

- (1209) * *laaw2 haam5 maa4 tèn4 khaam5 hua4*
 3SG.FA forbid horse jump cross.over fence
 (He forbade the horse to jump over the fence.)

Structures such as these are discussed further in Chapter 19.

18.5 Other periphrastic strategies for expressing causation

I now briefly mention two further strategies for description of causation. Suppose that a situation of being cold causes a person to shiver. This could be expressed by a *hêt1-haj5* ‘make-give’ construction, as described in section 18.3, above:

- (1210) *khuam2-naaw3 hêt1-haj5 laaw2 san1*
 NZR-cold make-give 3SG.FA shiver
 ‘The cold is making him shiver.’

Two alternatives for expressing this causative relation are as follows. First, the preposition-like element *con3* ‘until’ (not a verb) can host an adverbial or resultative complement which describes a situation or event that the main event gives rise to:

- (1211) *laaw2 naaw3 con3 san1*
 3SG.FA cold until shiver
 ‘He is (so) cold that he is shivering.’

Second, the two distinct clauses can be linked by marking the logical apodosis (i.e., the caused event) with *kòð1*, elsewhere a verb meaning ‘construct, create’:

- (1212) *laaw2 naaw3, kòð1 laaw2 siø san1*
 3SG.FA cold create 3SG.FA IRR shiver
 ‘He is cold, that’s why he is shivering.’

Another constituent order is possible:

- (1213) *kòð1 laaw2 siø san1, laaw2 naaw3*
 create 3SG.FA IRR shiver, 3SG.FA cold
 ‘What’s making him shiver is: he’s cold.’

Chapter 19

Complementation

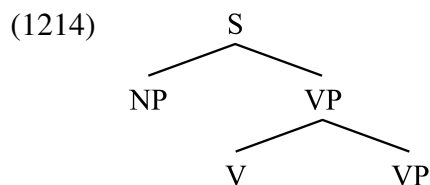
There are a number of types of complementation. In none of them is the relationship between the main and subordinate predicate morphologically marked in an overt way. In each case, V1 is the clausal head, and accordingly V1 has certain associated grammatical properties (e.g., typically functioning as a yes-answer). A basic division is between control and non-control complementation. This concerns the degree to which the temporal or argument structure properties of the complement-taking predicate will determine those of the lower predicate.

19.1 Control complementation

In control complementation, there is syntactic control by the main verb of argument coreference as well as temporal relation across the two predicates. The two patterns discussed here are same-subject, and different-subject, respectively.

19.1.1 Same-subject control complements

In same-subject control complements, the matrix verb specifies a verb phrase as its complement, where the subject of the subordinate verb phrase (a) must be understood as coreferential with the main subject, and (b) cannot overtly appear immediately prior to the lower verb. I suggest a constituent structure for this construction as follows:



One piece of evidence for this right-branching structure in which the main verb takes a VP complement is that the complement of a same-subject control complement verb such as *jaak5* 'want to' can be a com-

plex verb phrase, such as a complement construction, a compound verb, or a verb phrase chain. This suggests that the complement of the main V is an expandable VP, and not, say, a V and an NP in a flat structure. Here are some examples of same-subject control complement constructions using the main verb *jaak5* ‘want’, with various kinds of complex VP complements (in square brackets), including a *haj5* ‘give’ causative construction (where *haj5* ‘give’ has a switch-reference function; cf. section 19.5.3):

- (1215) *bòø jaak5 [haj5 nòng4 qòòk5 caak5 vang2]*
 NEG want give yG exit from palace
 ‘(I) don’t want you (younger sister) to leave the palace.’

a distributive clause chain;

- (1216) *jaak5 [qòòk5 pajø som2 suan3 pajø qaap5
 want exit DIR.ABL appreciate garden DIR.ABL bathe
 nam4]
 water*
 ‘(She) wanted to go out and appreciate the garden, and bathe.’

a cognition complement with overt complementizer;

- (1217) *khaw3 jaak5 fang2 phòq1 khaw3 jaak5 [huu4 vaa1
 3PL.B want listen because 3PL.B want know COMP
 sathan3akaan3 man2 pian1-pèng3 paj3 jaang1 daj3]
 situation 3.B change-fix go way INDEF*
 ‘They wanted to listen (to the radio) because they wanted to know how the situation had changed.’

a complex handling-verb construction;

- (1218) *muu1 haw2 jaak5 [ñok1-qaw3 lùang1 nithaan2 siang2-miang5
 group 1.FA want lift-take story tale S-M
 maø lom2]
 DIR.PCL discuss*
 We want to raise the story of Siang Miang for discussion.’

or a right-headed resultative construction:

- (1219) *mii2 laang2 qan3 man2 jaak5 saj4 haw2 lùù3 jaak5*
 there.is some CLF.INAN 3.B want use 1.FA or want
 [*khom1 haw2 long2*]
 press 1.FA descend
 ‘There are some things (with regard to which) they want to use
 (take advantage of) us or want to oppress us.’

Same-subject control complement verbs include typical equi verbs like *jaak5* ‘want’ and various other verbs (many of which include ‘want’ in their internal semantics), such as *sòðk4* ‘look to’, *còðp5* ‘stalk in order to’, *haan3* ‘dare to’ (= *kaa4* ‘dare to’; cf. example (1241), below), *ñdòm2* ‘agree to’, *lùùm2* ‘forget to’, as well as phase complements like *leem1* ‘begin to’.¹ These are illustrated in the following examples:

- (1220) *bòø jaak5 caaj1 ngen2*
 NEG want pay money
 ‘(He) didn’t want to pay.’
- (1221) *sòðk4 ñing2 nok1 ñing2 nuu3*
 look.for shoot bird shoot rat
 ‘(We’d) look to shoot birds and rats.’
- (1222) *còðp5 baaj1 tèè1 haang3 maa4*
 stalk stroke only tail horse
 ‘All (they) do is look to stroke horse’s tails.’²
- (1223) *khòj5 bòø haan3 hêt1 ñang3*
 1SG.P NEG dare do INDEF.INAN
 ‘I didn’t dare to do anything.’
- (1224) *maa3 kaø bòø ñdòm2 vaang2*
 dog T.LNK NEG yield release
 ‘The dog wouldn’t yield to release (the sausages).’
- (1225) *khòj5 lùùm2 law1 suu1 caw4 fang2*
 1SG.P forget tell reach 2SG.P listen
 ‘I forgot to tell you.’

¹These verbs can take different-subject subordinate clauses only if *haj5* ‘give’ is used to mark the switch of reference (cf. section 19.5.3).

²This is a remark about balding men who grow their hair long at the back.

- (1226) *khòj5 leem1 huu4-cak2 mia2 khòj5*
 1SG.P begin know wife 1SG.P
 ‘I began to get to know my wife (at that time).’

In general, separate aspectual-modal marking cannot appear in the lower complement of these constructions, but some future-oriented verbs such as *jaak5* ‘want’ occasionally allow preverbal marking of the lower verb by either of the irrealis particles *siø* or *caø*:

- (1227) *man2 jaak5 caø paj3*
 3.B want IRR go
 ‘She wants to go’

19.1.2 Different-subject control complements

In different-subject control complement constructions, the matrix verb takes a sentential complement whose subject may be ellipsed. The complement cannot be given independent aspectual-modal marking, and its subject, if ellipsed, cannot be coreferential with the main subject. In cases where upper and lower subjects are coreferential (e.g., when one sees oneself do something in a mirror, or helps oneself do something in a dream), a logophoric pronoun *qêêng3* (usually preceded by the classifier *too3* ‘body, self’, or an appropriate pronoun) can be used as the higher-clause-object/lower-clause-subject, as in the following example (see Chapter 13):

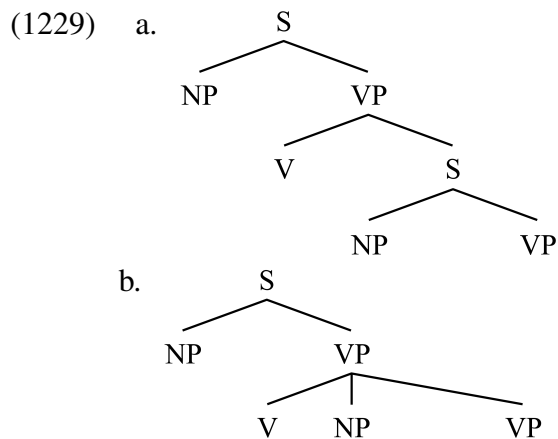
- (1228) *lèw4 khon2 laaw2 niø siø song1 toø-qêêng3 paj3*
 PRF person Lao TPC IRR send REFL go
qùt2-hiiw3 nam2 khaw3 kaø bòø jaak5 hêt1
 starve-be.hungry accompany 3PL.B T.LNK NEG want do
nòq1
 QPLR.AGREE
 ‘And so for Lao people to send their own (i.e., “themselves”) to go and starve with them is not something they want to do, right?’

With different-subject control complements, aspectual-modal marking cannot usually appear in the lower clause. In a structure like *Someone*

saw John send the letter, the lower clause *John send the letter* occurs at the same time as the main event of someone seeing it. Tense of the lower verb remains controlled by that of the upper verb. However, certain aspectual marking (such as the progressive marker *kamlang2*) is occasionally possible.

The relationship between upper and lower predicates in different-subject control complement constructions is tight, such that the lower clause is strongly dependent on the main verb. V2 cannot appear as a yes-answer, nor, importantly, is internal insertion of the topic linker *kaø* (i.e., between the lower subject and predicate) possible. These facts indicate that the lower verb does not head an independent verb phrase.

The following two structures show possible constituent structure analyses of these types of constructions:



The structure in (1229a) appears to be appropriate for describing different-subject control complement constructions in which the upper verb clearly takes the lower clause as a whole complement, as in direct perception-of-event complements like those of *hên3* 'see' or *daj4-ñin2* 'hear', such as the following (the sentential complement is given in square brackets):

- (1230) *laaw2 dajø maø hên3 [phòø-luung2 phuø-nùng1 saj1*
 3SG.FA ACHV DIR.ALL see CT.Fa-Pa.eBr MC.HUM-one put
vèñ1-taa3 qaan1 nang3sùù3]
 spectacles read writing
 'He saw an old man put on glasses to read.'

- (1231) *phuak4 khòðj5 hên3 [man2 ñing2 baan4]*
 group 1SG.P see 3.B shoot village
 ‘We saw them bomb the village.’

Content questions may be formed from these constructions by substituting *ñang3* ‘what, something’ for the whole lower NP-VP structure (see Chapter 5). Thus, (1231) could be an answer to the following:

- (1232) *phuak4 caw4 hên3 ñang3*
 group 2SG.P see INDEF.INAN
 ‘What did you see?’

Note, however, that the complement clause cannot be freely moved into Left Position or Right Position in the same way that noun phrases and other less tightly dependent constituents can be.

A yes-answer to a polar question formed from (1231) would simply be the matrix verb *hên3* [see] ‘(I) saw (it)’, showing that this is the head with respect to the whole construction.

Constructions of the form shown in (1229a) may be referred to as s-comp different-subject control complement constructions. One difference between these and the ‘flat’ different-subject control complement constructions we are about to discuss is that s-comp different-subject complement clauses tend not to allow their subjects to be ellipsed.

Other different-subject control complement constructions are better analyzed as having the structure in (1229b). These may be referred to as flat different-subject control complement constructions, due to the main verb phrase being flat with respect to the relatedness of the upper verb and lower verb phrase, namely that they appear as constituent structure sisters. This structure directly reflects the ambiguity of the lower noun phrase as either object of the upper verb, or subject of the lower verb, or, better, simultaneously both. A typical instance involves *haj5* ‘give’ in its causative function (see Chapter 18, above):

- (1233) *haj5 toø-mên2 taaj3*
 give MC.ANIM-lice die
 ‘...to make the lice die.’

Unlike the s-comp different-subject control complement construction described above, here the lower subject and predicate cannot be replaced in a content question by *ñang3* ‘what, something’:

- (1234) * *haj5 ñang3*
 give INDEF.INAN
 ('to do/cause what?')

Another difference, again related to contrasting headship properties emerging from different constituent structures, concerns the kind of yes-answer which would be elicited by polar questions based on flat different-subject control complement constructions. Thus, with reference to (1233), neither *haj5* 'give' (the matrix causative verb), nor *taaj3* 'die' (the lower verb) would suffice as a yes-answer on its own, suggesting that neither is an unequivocal head of the overall expression:

- (1235) Q: *haj5 toφ-mên2 taaj3 bðð3*
 give MC.ANIM-lice die QPLR
 'To make the lice die?'
 A: *haj5 taaj3*
 give die
 '(Yes,) to make (them) die.'

Flat different-subject control complement verbs typically include causative verbs such as *haj5* 'give', *hêt1* 'make', *haam5* 'forbid', and *suaj1* 'help', as shown, respectively, in the following examples:

- (1236) *phen1 kaφ bðφ haj5 Ø paj3*
 3.P T.LNK NEG give go
 'He wouldn't let (me) go.'
- (1237) *baang3-thùa1 Ø kaφ hêt1 kèèw4 tèèk5*
 some-occasion T.LNK make glass break
 'Sometimes (I) might break a glass.'
- (1238) *khaw3 haam5 Ø suup5 Ø*
 3PL.B forbid smoke
 'They forbid (people) to smoke (it).'
- (1239) *khòj5 paj3 suaj1 mèφ-tuu4 khòj5 hêt1 viak4*
 1SG.P go help CT.Mo-Pa.Pa 1SG.P do work
 'I went to help my grandmother to work.'

Also, the lower VP can be structurally complex. In the following example, the main different-subject control complement verb is *haj5* 'give',

the lower subject is *khon2* ‘person’, and the lower VP (in square brackets) is a handling-verb construction involving *qaw3* ‘take’ (Chapter 15, above):

- (1240) \emptyset *haj5 khon2* [*ma\emptyset qaw3 khùang1 thaj2-haw2 ni\emptyset*
 give person DIR.ALL take stuff people-1.FA TPC
 paj\emptyset tom4]
 DIR.ABL boil
 ‘(They’d) get someone to come and take our clothes and go and
 boil them.’

Semantically, these involve causation, whereby the object of the first verb is affected by action of the main subject, and as a result of that main subject action, the first verb object is the lower verb subject with respect to the lower VP. Example (1240) has a constituent structure along the lines $[NP_1 < V NP_2 (V NP_3 VP)_{VP > VP}]$, where NP2 *khon2* ‘person’ is the main causee, and is the subject of the action predicated in the lower complex clause.

Finally, note that the two kinds of complement construction described in this section and the previous one may be combined in single complex clauses. The following example shows a flat different-subject control complement (in square brackets) subordinate to a same-subject control complement verb (with the whole same-subject control complement construction in angle brackets), such that the full sentence has a structure along the lines $(NP < V_{SSCC} [V_{DSCC} NP VP]_{VP > VP})$:

- (1241) *thaang2 khan5 theng2 ka\emptyset* < *b\emptyset kaa4* [*khom1-hêng3 \emptyset_{us}*,
 way level upon T.LNK NEG dare oppress
 long2]>
 descend
 ‘The upper administration <didn’t dare [to force (us) to come
 down]>.’

19.2 Non-control complementation

A final class of complements, involving verbs of speech and cognition, and usually marked with an overt complementizer *vaal* ‘say’, is loosely

subordinating, whereby the lower clause retains many of the properties of an independent sentence. The structure of such sentences resembles that of (1229a), proposed for s-comp different-subject control complement constructions, above—namely, where the whole lower clause is properly a complement of the main verb.

Here are some examples of non-controlled complementation, involving verbs of speech and cognition *bòòk5* ‘tell’, *haaj4* ‘berate’, *khùt1* ‘think’, *huu4* ‘know’, and *jaan4* ‘afraid’, respectively, all requiring that the complement be overtly marked by *vaa1* ‘say’ in its role as a complementizer:

- (1242) *naj2 vèlaa2 nan4 siang2-miang5 bòòk5 vaa1*
 in time DEM.NONPROX S-M tell COMP
sùak4 sii1 sên5 haj5 dùng3 khêng1 samee3 kan3
 rope four CLF.LINE give pull tightly.stretched evenly COLL
 ‘At that time, Siang Miang told them that the four ropes were to be pulled to an even tightness.’
- (1243) *haaj4 vaa1 qaw3 ñon2 vaan1 qanø-nii4*
 berate COMP take aeroplane scatter MC.INAN-DEM
 ‘(He) was angry (i.e., ‘berated me’) that I took an aeroplane and scattered these (flowers).’
- (1244) *khùt1 vaa1 man2 taaj3 lèw4*
 think COMP 3.B die PRF
 ‘(He) thought that it had died.’
- (1245) *khaw3 ñang2 bòø huu4 vaa1 siø song1 paj3 bòòn1 daj3*
 3PL.B STILL NEG know COMP IRR send go place INDEF
 ‘They didn’t yet know where they’d send (us).’
- (1246) *jaan4 vaa1 khòòng3 haw2 niø hên3*
 afraid COMP of 1.FA TPC see
 ‘(We’re) worried our (man) will see (him).’

Note that *vaa1* is common as a main complement-taking predicate in itself, meaning ‘utter’, ‘say’ (see 19.5.5, below):

- (1247) *muu1 vaa1 qooj4 jaan4 man2 taaj3 lèw4*
 group say INTJ afraid 3.B die PRF
 ‘The others said, “Oh, we suspect it’s dead!”’

- (1248) *phuak4 ñuan2 vaa1 caw4-naaj2 phen1 pòðj1 kuu3*
 group Vietnamese say authorities 3.P release 1SG.B
loot4
 NO.HES
 ‘The Vietnamese said, “The authorities let me go right away”.’

Let us now consider some grammatical properties of these non-controlled complement constructions, with reference to the following example, whose main complement-taking verb is *laaj2-ngaán2* ‘to report’:

- (1249) *man2 laaj2-ngaán2 vaa1 khon2 baan4 nii4 ñaaj4 pajø*
 3.B report COMP person village DEM move DIR.ABL
juu1 baan4 nan4
 be.at village DEM.NONPROX
 ‘(They) reported that the people of this village had moved to that village.’

First, (1249) fails the clause separability test, since the lower predicate is dependent on the upper predicate in a particular way. The whole sentence is not simply an assertion of the two clauses, and in particular the lower clause is not entailed. So, (1249) does not entail that ‘the people of this village had moved to that village’, since this sentence describes an event which constitutes the content of someone’s report, and is not an assertion of the truth of that event. Example (1249) merely entails that someone reported something. Second, due to the relative grammatical independence of the lower clause, insertion of the topic linker *kaø* is possible either between the higher subject and matrix predicate (i.e., immediately after *man2* ‘it’), or inside the complement, between the lower subject and its predicate (i.e., immediately after the subject *khon2 baan4 nii4* ‘people of this village’).

Third, in this kind of construction, the aspectual-modal marking on the lower verb phrase is independent of the aspectual-modal properties of the matrix verb. So, the following example, inserting complex aspectual-modal marking on the lower verb of (1249), is grammatical (cf. also (1245), above):

- (1250) *man2 laaj2-ngaan2 vaa1 khon2 baan4 nii4 khùù2 siø bðø*
 3.B report COMP person village DEM PROB IRR NEG
than2 dajø ñaaaj4 pajø juu1 baan4 nan4
 YET ACHV move DIR.ABL be.at village DEM.NONPROX
 ‘They reported that the people of this village have probably not yet moved to that village.’

Finally, the whole lower clause, including or not including the complementizer *vaa1*, may be replaced by *ñang3* ‘INDEF.INAN’ in a content question, as follows:

- (1251) *man2 laaj2-ngaan2 (vaa1) ñang3*
 3.B report COMP INDEF.INAN
 ‘What did he report?’

19.3 Verbs in both control and non-control complementation

Some complement-taking predicates, like *hên3* ‘see’ or *daj4-ñin2* ‘hear’ (cf. section 19.5.4), may act either as s-comp different-subject complement verbs (without overt complement marking) or may head non-controlling constructions whose lower complements are overtly marked (by the complementizer *vaa1*). Compare the (a) and (b) examples in the following pairs:

- (1252) a. *phuak4 khòj5 hên3 man2 ñing2 baan4*
 group 1SG.P see 3.B shoot village
 ‘We saw them shoot (i.e., bomb) the village.’
 b. *phuak4 khòj5 hên3 vaa1 man2 (siø) ñing2 baan4*
 group 1SG.P see COMP 3.B IRR shoot village
 ‘We saw that they shot (i.e., bombed) the village.’
- (1253) a. *laaw2 daj4-ñin2 caw4 khaa5 man2*
 3SG.FA hear 2SG.P kill 3.B
 ‘She heard you kill it.’
 b. *laaw2 daj4-ñin2 vaa1 caw4 (siø) khaa5 man2*
 3SG.FA hear COMP 2SG.P IRR kill 3.B
 ‘She heard that you killed it (/will kill it).’

In the (a) examples, the complement must be read as coterporal with the main verb. So, in (1252a) the ‘seeing’ and the ‘bombing’ happened at the same time. But in the (b) examples, in which the lower clause is separated from the main verb by the complementizer *vaa1*, the lower verb is not temporally dependent on the main verb, as shown by the possibility of inserting independent aspectual-modal marking on the lower verb. There is a difference in evidential status between the (a) and (b) examples, such that in the (a) examples the main subject has had direct perceptual access to the event predicated in the lower clause, whereas in the (b) examples the subject infers the truth of the lower clause predication, either by visual evidence of the results (1252b), or by hearsay (1253b).

19.4 Undergoer complement construction: the so-called passive

A final type of complement construction is an undergoer complement construction, marked by the verb *thùùk5* ‘strike, come into contact with’. This is sometimes regarded as a passive marker. Cross-linguistically, the term passive normally refers to a construction type in a language with an S/A pivot (subject) with the syntactic function of removing an A from a transitive clause, and putting the erstwhile O into intransitive subject (S) position, often allowing the erstwhile A to be expressed in an oblique phrase (Foley and Van Valin 1985, Dixon 1994). Motivations for having such a construction in a subject-prominent language relate to argument management in discourse, providing speakers with a way to background A arguments, foreground O arguments, and otherwise manipulate grammatical relations where strict constraints on functional structure apply (e.g., due to inflexible control of cross-clausal co-reference of ellipsed arguments). In Lao, however, there is little need for a dedicated passive construction, since the functions just discussed are handled by ellipsis, freedom of pragmatically-determined argument movement, and versatility in verb argument structure (cf. Chapter 11). Co-reference of ellipsed subjects in conjoined clauses is not under strict syntactic control (i.e., Lao has no syntactic pivot).

Let us then consider what the so-called passive marked by *thùùk5* ‘strike’ actually does. The following examples show *thùùk5* as a transitive verb meaning ‘strike, come into contact with’:

- (1254) *khòj5 thùük5 toq2*
1SG.P strike table
'I bumped into the table.'
- (1255) *nang3 toø nii4 thùük5 nam4, man2 bòø mii2*
hide MC.ANIM DEM strike water 3.B NEG have
khun2naphaap4
quality
'(If) this hide comes into contact with water, it doesn't have (the) quality (to stay in tact).'
- (1256) *phuak4 khèng1 phuak4 ñang3 niø thùük5 kaø daj4*
group lower.leg group INDEF.INAN TPC strike T.LNK CAN
'It's okay for (the ball) to come into contact with the lower leg and whatever.'

The 'contact' meaning of *thùük5* may be extended beyond literal physical contact, as the following examples show:

- (1257) *bòø khùan2 thùük5 laa4sakaan3*
NEG OBLIG.WEAK strike royal.service
'(They) shouldn't be selected for royal service.'
- (1258) *thùük5 khòj5-haa3 vaa1 pên3 khon2 bòø dii3*
strike accusation COMP COP person NEG good
'(You'd) get an accusation that you were a bad person.'

The next set of examples show *thùük5* in the context in which it is most likely to be taken as a passive marker. In these cases, *thùük5* takes a verb phrase or sentence complement, where the subject of *thùük5* is coreferential with the object of the lower complement:

- (1259) *qaat5 caø thùük5 cap2 kaø pên3 daj4*
SPEC IRR strike catch T.LNK COP CAN
'It was possible that (you) might even get caught.'
- (1260) *kaø thùük5 khaw3 ñing2 taaj3*
T.LNK strike 3PL.B shoot die
'(And then they'd) get shot dead by them.'
- (1261) *phuø-thii1-sòng3 paj3, kaø thùük5 paa3 kin3*
MC.HUM-ORD-two go T.LNK strike fish eat
'The second person went, and he (also) got eaten by fish.'

- (1262) *caw4 caø thùùk5 pòðj1 tua3 naj2 mùa1 daj3*
 2SG.P IRR strike release body in time INDEF
 ‘When would you be released?’

It is easy to see why one might label these examples as passive. If we view *thùùk5* as simply a grammatical marker here, its function would be to put an O argument (an undergoer) of the verb it marks into main subject position (cf. the English translations). But not all uses of *thùùk5* as a complement-taking predicate follow this pattern. The following examples show *thùùk5* taking same-subject VP complements, meaning that it ‘fell to’ the subject to do something, or that the subject had to do something:

- (1263) *thùùk5 nêê2lathêêt4 paj3 hanø*
 strike exile go TPC.DIST
 ‘(He) was exiled.’
- (1264) *nèè1-nòòn2 haw2 tòòng4 thùùk5 son2*
 definitely 1.FA OBLIG strike fight
 ‘I will definitely have to fight.’ (i.e., ‘Definitely I must be made to fight’.)

These are not passive, since the main subject is agent, not undergoer, of the lower verb.

Further, in the next three examples, the main subject of *thùùk5* is not an argument of the lower clause at all, but a possessor of an argument of the lower clause (in a rather more abstract sense in the second and third examples):

- (1265) *thùùk5 ñak1 hak2 khèèn3 hak2 khaa3 qiik5*
 strike troll snap arm snap leg more
 ‘(They) got (their) arms, and (their) legs too, snapped by a troll.’
 (or: ‘(They) suffered a troll snapping (their) arms and (their) legs, too.’)
- (1266) *lùù3 vaa1 thùùk5 phuø-khon2 lom4 taaj3 sia3 haaj3*
 or COMP strike MC.HUM-person fall die lose disappear
 ‘...or (if you) suffer anyone (of your people) falling over and dying...’

- (1267) *phen1 thùùk5 phua3 pajø nòn2 kap2 phuø-saaw3*
 3.P strike husband DIR.ABL sleep with MC.HUM-girl
 ‘She suffered her husband sleeping with (another) girl.’
 (or: ‘She was slept-with-another-girl by her husband.’)

Thus, while *thùùk5* in one of its common functions is analogous in grammatical function to a passive marker, its function is broader. The main subject may correspond to subject or object or even neither argument of the lower clause. The relationship between simple transitive sentences and undergoer complement constructions marked by *thùùk5* is not a simple one of syntactic permutation, but involves addition of specific semantic content (meaning essentially ‘have a (usually adverse) experience of VP, not by one’s choice or control’).

19.5 Some illustrative complement-taking predicates

This section further fleshes out the syntax of complementation, with discussion of the most semantically basic complement-taking predicates: mental predicates *khùt1* ‘think’, *huu4* ‘know’, *jaak5* ‘want’, *hên3* ‘see’, *daj4-ñin2* ‘hear’, and the verb of speaking *vaw4* ‘say’ (cf. Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002).

19.5.1 *khùt1* ‘think’

‘Think’ is expressed in Lao by either *khùt1* or *khit1*, which are essentially interchangeable with this meaning. *Khit1* has a further meaning of ‘calculate, reckon’, often in a synonym compound with *laj1* ‘calculate’, as follows:

- (1268) *khòj5 khit1-laj1 phit2*
 1 SG.P think-calculate incorrect
 ‘I calculated incorrectly (and didn’t have enough money to finish off the house I am building).’

Khùt1 does not appear in this kind of context. Hereafter, for convenience I will refer to *khùt1* only, but the facts are also true for *khit1* (with the meaning ‘think’, not ‘calculate’), as many of the examples show.

Khùt1 ‘think’ optionally takes a direct postverbal complement, a locutionary topic (or about-argument), or a sentential complement clause. We first address nominal complements of *khùt1* ‘think’, which are rare in natural discourse. Of over 100 text examples of *khùt1* ‘think’, only the following two have direct nominal complements:

- (1269) *khùt1 ñang3, law1 mèè4*
 think INDEF.INAN tell IMP.UNIMPD
 ‘Whatever (story) you think of, go ahead and tell it!’
- (1270) *ñang2 bòø hòt4 baan4 hòt4 hùn2 thù1, kaø maø*
 STILL NEG reach home reach house YET T.LNK DIR.ALL
khìt1 lùang1 kaw1 hanø
 think story old TPC.DIST
 ‘(He) still hadn’t yet reached his home, and he came to think (about) the same story as before.’

Locutionary topics are marked by *kiaw1-kap2* ‘about’ (where *kiaw1* means ‘concerning’ or ‘having to do with’, and *kap2* is a preposition ‘with’), as in (1271). Direct complements of *khùt1* may co-occur with locutionary topics, as in (1272).

- (1271) *man2 khùt1 kiaw1-kap2 mùng2*
 3.B think about 2SG.B
 ‘He thought about you.’
- (1272) *man2 khùt1 laaj3 lùang1 kiaw1-kap2 mùng2*
 3.B think many matter about 2SG.B
 ‘He thought many things about you.’

More often, nominal complements of *khùt1* are marked as oblique, by a V2 such as *hòt4* ‘reach/to’, *theng3* ‘reach/to’, *hên3* ‘see’, *haa3* ‘seek’, *phòt4* ‘meet’, as in the following examples:

- (1273) *haw2 khùt1 hòt4 tòn3 kêp2 kafêê2*
 1.FA think reach time gather coffee
 ‘I miss the time when (I) was harvesting coffee.’

- (1274) *tèè1 phen1 kaø siø khìt1 **theng3** qanø khuam2-phit2*
 but 3P T.LNK IRR think reach HES NZR-wrong
khòòng3 phen1 juu1
 of 3.P CONT
 ‘But she would have thought about—um—her wrong-doings.’
- (1275) *haw2 khìt1 **hên3** haw2 tòn3 ñang2 nòj4*
 1.FA think see 1.FA time still small
 ‘I think of myself when I was still small.’
- (1276) *mèè1 ngua2 toø-nan4 kaø tok2-caj3,*
 mother cow MC.ANIM-DEM.NONPROX T.LNK fall-heart
*kaø leej2 khùt1 **haa3** luuk4*
 T.LNK NO.ADO think seek child
 ‘That mother cow was shocked, and then thought of her child.’
- (1277) *haw2 laø khìt1 **phòð4** qanø-nan4*
 1.FA PRF think meet MC.INAN-DEM.NONPROX
 ‘(So) that came to my mind.’

Also often in natural usage, *khùt1* ‘think’ takes a verb phrase or sentence complement, introduced by the complementizer *vaa1* (elsewhere ‘say’):

- (1278) *laaw2 leej2 khìt1 vaa1 vèen1-taa3 phaa2 haj5 qaan1*
 3SG.FA NO.ADO think COMP mirror-eye lead give read
nangsùù3 daj4
 writing CAN
 ‘So he thought that spectacles led one to be able to read.’
- (1279) *thaa5 bòø thavaaj3 hanø, khaw3 khùt1 vaa1 phii3*
 if NEG make.offering TPC.DIST 3PL.B think COMP spirit
hanø caø maø kuan3 khòðp4-khua2 hùan2-saan2
 TPC.DIST IRR DIR.ALL disturb family home
khaw3
 3PL.B
 ‘If (they) don’t make offerings, they think that the spirits will come and disturb their family and their home.’

The complement introduced by *vaa1* may also be a nominal if this is a direct quotation of an actual thought (cf. English ‘*The butler*’, *he*

thought). The following example comes from a description of an old man's attempt to give his grandchild a clue as to how to read the third letter of the Lao alphabet, by pointing at his neck (the name of the letter—*khòò2*—is homophonous with the Lao word for 'neck'):

- (1280) *suan1 laan3, man2 liaw3 paj3, man2 bòø khít1 vaa1*
 part grandchild 3.B turn go 3.B NEG think COMP
khòò2
 neck

'As for the child, he turned around, (but) he didn't think "neck".'

In directly quoting speech (with main verbs like 'say'; see section 19.5.5), speakers introduce, and also often close off, the section of quoted speech with a discourse marker such as an interjection (which is understood to be part of the quoted conversation), with the function of indexing the interactional context of the utterance being described. This strategy is also used for direct quotation of the wording of someone's thoughts:

- (1281) *khít1 vaa1 paa1-thoø khon3 khiø-hèè4*
 think COMP INTJ body.hair CT.SHIT-underarm
mèø-paa4 nii4 maø ñaaw2 thèè4
 CT.Mo-Pa.eZ DEM DIR.ALL long really

'(He) thought, "Wow, this old lady's underarm hair is so long!"'

- (1282) *haw2 kaø tòong4 khít1 vaa1 bah2 khaw3 siø qaw3*
 1.FA T.LNK OBLIG think COMP INTJ 3PL.B IRR take
pajø saj3 diaw3-niø
 DIR.ABL INDEF.PLACE THZR

'I had to think "Bah, where are they going to take me now?"'

Finally, there is an intransitive frame for *khít1* 'think', often in combination with some adverbial material:

- (1283) *tòong4 haj5 laaw2 khít1 khakø-khak1, khian3 vaj4*
 OBLIG give 3SG.FA think RDP.A-clear write keep

'(We) must let him think clearly, and then write (it) down.'

- (1284) *laaj3 khon2 khit1 suaj1 kan3 sòðk4 lùang1 diø-dii3*
 many people think help COLL seek story RDP.A-good
muanø-muan1 maø haj5 naa3
 RDP.A-fun DIR.ALL give FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘Many (of us should) help each other to think, and find good fun stories to give (him) you must understand.’

19.5.2 *huu4* ‘know’

Huu4 ‘know’ takes direct nominal complements more readily than *khùt1* ‘think’, and does not appear with the oblique-marked objects (marked by verbs such as *hòðt4* ‘reach’ or *haa3* ‘seek’) described for *khùt1* ‘think’, see (1273-1277) above:

- (1285) *bòø huu4 sùù1 laaw2 dòðk5*
 NEG know name 3SG.FA FAC.RESIST
 ‘(I) don’t know his name.’
- (1286) *khòðng3 sin3saj2, bòø huu4 ñang3 naa3*
 of S NEG know INDEF.INAN FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘As for Sinsay, (he) didn’t know anything, you must understand.’

Sentential complements of *huu4* ‘know’ are common, and are also introduced by the complementizer *vaa1*:

- (1287) *nòðng4-saaw3 huu4 vaa1 khòðj5 maa2*
 yG-girl know COMP 1SG.P come
 ‘(My) sister knew that I had come (here).’

The idea of knowing a person is usually expressed in Lao by the term *huu4-cak2*, a compound of *huu4* ‘know’ and *cak2*, which also means ‘know’ or ‘recognize’, and is considered either archaic or typical of Southern dialects. In example (1288), *cak2* alone means ‘know’:

- (1288) *laaw2 bòø cak2 nèèw2 siø hêt1*
 3SG.FA NEG know manner IRR do
 ‘He didn’t know what to do.’

The following two examples show *huu4-cak2* as a verb ‘to know someone’.

- (1289) *leem1 huu4-cak2 mia2 khòòj5*
 begin know wife 1SG.P
 ‘(I) started (getting) to know my wife.’
- (1290) *mùng2 huu4-cak (kap2) dam3 bòò3*
 2SG.B know (with) D QPLR
 ‘Do you know Dam?’

Semantically, both *huu4* and *huu4-cak2* may serve as ‘recognize’ and ‘know’ alike. However, *huu4-cak2* more usually refers to ‘knowing someone’, and this is reflected in a grammatical limitation on *huu4* ‘know’, namely that *huu4* ‘know’ alone cannot take an oblique nominal marked by *kap2* (in contrast to *huu4-cak2* in (1290)). *Huu4-cak2* may easily refer to ‘knowing something’, or ‘knowing that’ something is the case. In an example, a man has asked his wife why his mother-in-law has been constantly absent from the house of late. She replies:

- (1291) *caw4 bòø huu4-cak2—phen1 lin5 phaj4*
 2SG.P NEG know 3.P play cards
 ‘You don’t know—she’s been (out) playing cards.’

Conversely, while *huu4* alone as ‘know’ more commonly refers to ‘knowing things’, and ‘knowing that’ something is the case, it may nevertheless also be used in the sense of ‘knowing someone’:

- (1292) *mùng2 huu4 phòò1 man2 bòò3*
 2SG.B know father 3.B QPLR
 ‘Do you know her father?’

Unlike *khùt1* ‘think’, *huu4* ‘know’ does not appear in quotative constructions. *Huu4* ‘know’ (like *khùt1* ‘think’) also may take an oblique about-phrase marked by *kiaw1-kap2* :

- (1293) *man2 huu4 laaj3 lùang1 kiaw1-kap2 mùng2*
 3.P know many matter about 2SG.B
 ‘He knows many things about you.’

The expressions ‘to know about something/someone’ and ‘to think about something/someone’ are not structurally equivalent. ‘He thought about you’ is a complete predication, while ‘He knows about you’ is elliptical, and must mean ‘He knows something about you’.

19.5.3 *jaak5* ‘want’

As noted above, *jaak5* ‘want’ displays a strict same-subject co-reference constraint between main and subordinate verb:

- (1294) *bòø jaak5 caaj1 ngen2*
 NEG want pay money
 ‘(He) didn’t want to pay the money (for his room).’
- (1295) *paa3 kaø jaak5 daj4, siin4 kaø jaak5 daj4*
 fish T.LNK want acquire meat T.LNK want acquire
 ‘The fish, (she) wanted to get, the meat, (she) wanted to get.’

When main and lower subjects are non-coreferential (as in ‘He didn’t want him to open it’), *haj5* ‘give’ is used as the direct complement of *jaak5* ‘want’, resulting in obligatory non-coreference between lower subject (optionally expressed), and main subject (i.e., the wantor):

- (1296) *mèè1 kaø bòø jaak5 haj5 luuk4 taaj3, luuk4 kaø bòø*
 mother T.LNK NEG want give child die child T.LNK NEG
jaak5 haj5 mèè1 taaj3
 want give mother die
 ‘The mother didn’t want her child to die, the child didn’t want its mother to die.’
- (1297) *phen1 bòø jaak5 haj5 khòòj5 paj3 qiik5*
 3.P NEG want give 1SG.P go more
 ‘They didn’t want me to go again.’

Elsewhere, *haj5* ‘give’ is a complement-taking causative verb, ‘let someone V’/‘get someone to V’ (see Chapter 18). In direct contrast to *jaak5* ‘want’, *haj5* displays a strict different-subject constraint with subordinate verbs. Note also that ellipsis of the lower clause subject is optional with *haj5* ‘give’, but obligatory with *jaak5* ‘want’. So, there may be alternative readings of these constructions involving *jaak5* ‘want’ and *haj5* ‘give’ in combination, depending on whether *haj5* is regarded as a true causative verb or a mere structural mechanism for switching reference of main and lower subjects:

- (1298) *kuu3 jaak5 haj5 man2 paj3 talaat5*
 1SG.B want give 3.B go market
 i. ‘I want to get him to go to the market.’
 ii. ‘I want him to go to the market.’

The (1298i) reading assumes *haj5* ‘give’ to be a genuine causative. The (1298ii) reading, where no causal relation between main subject and subordinate clause is intended (i.e., the speaker does not want to do anything), suggests that *haj5* ‘give’ has a purely syntactic function. This is supported by (1299), where it could not reasonably be argued that a causative meaning for *haj5* is intended:

- (1299) *kuu3 jaak5 haj5 fon3 tok2*
 1SG.B want give rain fall
 ‘I want it to rain.’

The following examples show a range of semantically basic predicates (*huu4* ‘know’, *hên3* ‘see’, *daj4-ñin2* ‘hear’, *hêt1* ‘do’, and *juu1* ‘live’) as complements of *jaak5* ‘want’ (with example (1302) using *haj5* ‘give’ in switch-reference function):

- (1300) *man2 mii2 khuam2 tòong4-kaan3 jaak5 huu4 jaak5 hên3*
 3.B have NZR require want know want see
jaak5 daj4-ñin2—saam3 qanø-nii4 man2 pacam3 juu1
 want hear three MC.INAN-DEM 3.B stationed be.at
caj3 khòòng3 khon2 haw2
 heart of people 1.FA
 ‘They have the need to want to know, to want to see, to want to hear—these three things are established in the hearts of we people.’
- (1301) *man2 jaak5 maø hêt1 qiik5 hanø*
 3.B want DIR.ALL do more TPC.DIST
 ‘They wanted to come and do (it [i.e., go fishing in that river]) some more.’

- (1302) *jaak5 haj5 juu1 bèèp5 phòd1-mèè1-luuk4 juu1 nam2-kan3*
 want give be.at way father-mother-child be.at together
saam3 khon2 leej2 naa3
 three people NO.ADO FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘(I) want (us) to live as father, mother and child, living together
 just the three of us, you must understand.’

19.5.4 *hên3* ‘see’, *daj4-ñin2* ‘hear’

The basic perception verbs *hên3* ‘see’ and *daj4-ñin2* ‘hear’ take three kinds of complement. First, simple nominals, as shown in square brackets in the following examples:

- (1303) *qoo4 hên3 [tèè1 nam4]*
 INTJ see only water
 ‘Oh, (I) saw only water!’
- (1304) *khan2 hêt1 niø bðø hên3 [luuk4] hên3 [mia2] lèèw4*
 if do TPC NEG see child see wife PRF
 ‘If (I) do it, (I) won’t see my wife and kids again.’
- (1305) *khòd5 kaø daj4-ñin2 [khaaw1] juu1*
 1SG.P T.LNK hear news FAC.WEAK
 ‘I did hear the news (of the Chernobyl incident).’
- (1306) *maa2 phòdm4 daj4-ñin2 [Ø] loot4*
 come together hear NO.HES
 ‘Come as soon as you hear (the order)!’

Second, *hên3* ‘see’ and *daj4-ñin2* ‘hear’ may take simple sentential complements, where the lower subject is non-coreferential with the main clause subject (unless lower subject is the reflexive/logophoric pronoun *toø-qêêng3* ‘self’), and where tense-aspect of the lower clause is taken to be identical with that of the main clause:

- (1307) *khòd5 leej2 hên3 lot1-cak2 khan2*
 1SG.P NO.ADO see CT.VEHICLE-motorcycle CLF.VEHICLE
nùng1 lèèn1 kòdn1 khòd5
 one run before 1SG.P
 ‘I then saw one motorcycle riding ahead of me.’

- (1308) *liaw3 maa2 haa3 thong3 loot4 hên3 maa3 toφ-nùng1*
 turn come seek bag NO.HES see dog MC.ANIM-one
khaap4-qaw3 saj5-kòðk5 laaw2 lèn1 paj3 lèw4
 hold.in.mouth-take sausages 3SG.FA run go PRF
 ‘(He) turned around towards the bag, and then saw a dog carrying
 away in its mouth the sausages, and running away.’
- (1309) *haw2 kheej2 daj4-ñin2 khacaw4 vaw4 naj2 thoo2-lathat1*
 1.FA EXP hear 3PL.P say in television
 ‘I’ve heard them speaking (it) on the television.’
- (1310) *khòj5 daj4-ñin2 qanφ nik1san4 vaw4 qanφ pùn3 luuk4*
 1SG.P hear HES N say HES gun bullet
diaw3 ñing2 nok1 sòng3 too3
 single shoot bird two CLF.ANIM
 ‘I heard um Nixon say um “Kill two birds with one shot”.’

Third, *hên3* ‘see’ and *daj4-ñin2* ‘hear’ may take looser complements, marked by the complementizer *vaa1*.

- (1311) *caφ pajφ beng1 juu1 saj3, hên3 vaa1 khaw3*
 IRR DIR.ABL look be.at INDEF.PLACE see COMP 3PL.B
sùal-thùù3 phii3
 believe-hold spirits
 ‘Wherever (you) may look, you’ll see that people believe in spir-
 its.’
- (1312) *daj4-ñin2 tèè1 vaa1 khon2 taaj3 laaj3, pên3 khùù2*
 hear only COMP people die many COP like
cang1-san4, daj4-ñin2 vaa1 khaw3 ñing2 kan3 juu1
 like-thus hear COMP 3PL.B shoot COLL CONT
lùajφ-lùaj4 juu1 khèè2m2 khòng3
 REG be.at bank Mekong
 ‘All (I) heard is that lots of people died, that’s how it was, (I) heard
 that they were fighting regularly on the banks of the Mekong.’

The presence of the complementizer *vaa1* indicates that the percep-
 tion is not first-hand (see section 19.3).

19.5.5 *vaw4* ‘say’

The grammar of *vaw4* ‘say’ parallels that of *khùt1* ‘think’. It may take a direct nominal complement, and an oblique locutionary topic marked with an about-phrase (i.e., ‘say something about’). In the following example, both these slots are filled:

- (1313) *man2 vaw4 ñang3 kiaw1-kap2 kuu3*
 3.B say INDEF.INAN about 1SG.B
 ‘What did he say about me?’

Further, *vaw4* ‘say’ allows a third type of complement, that of ‘say something TO SOMEONE’, with the addressee argument marked by the linker *kap2* ‘with’, as in the following:

- (1314) *vaw4 kap2 mia2 vaa1 haw2 qòòk5*
 say with wife COMP 1.FA exit
 ‘(I) said to (my) wife, “We’re leaving”.’

- (1315) *mùng2 vaw4 ñang3 kap2 man2*
 2SG.B say INDEF.INAN with 3.B
 ‘What did you say to her?’

The following examples show another structure for bringing in an addressee argument, involving a verb complex with a verb of saying (e.g., *vaw4* ‘say’ or *law1* ‘relate/tell’) in combination with a benefactive/causative phrase ‘give/reach you listen’ (i.e., ‘for you to listen’; see Chapter 15, section 2.3).

- (1316) *kuu3 vaw4 lùang1 nii4 haj5 man2 fang2*
 1SG.B say matter DEM give 3.B listen
 ‘I said this to her (I told her this, I related this matter to her).’

- (1317) *qee4 khòòj5 lùùm2 law1 suu1 caw4 fang2*
 INTJ 1SG.P forget tell reach 2SG.P listen
 ‘Oh, I forgot to tell you.’

The following example shows *vaw4* ‘say’ with all three complement slots filled:

- (1318) *mùng2 vaw4 lùang1 bòø dii3 kap2 laaw2 kiaw1-kap2*
 2SG.B say matter NEG good with 3SG.FA about
kuu3
 1SG.B
 ‘You said bad things to them about me.’

Quotative complements of *vaw4* ‘say’ are introduced by the complementizer *vaa1*. *Vaa1* basically means ‘say’, but has greater grammatical restrictions than *vaw4* ‘say’. For example, it cannot take an about-phrase, as *vaw4* ‘say’ does in (1313) and (1318), above. In many cases, when *vaa1* introduces a speech complement, no main verb of saying is expressed. Consider the following example:

- (1319) *laaw2 (vaw4) vaa1 mùng2 bòø khuan2 paj3*
 3SG.FA say COMP 2SG.B NEG OBLIG.WEAK go
 ‘He said you shouldn’t go.’

Without some kind of marked intonation between the complementizer and the complement clause, this would not be construed as a direct quotation. More commonly, as described above for mental predicates involving ‘saying’ at some level (e.g., *khùt1* ‘think’ and *huu4-sùk2* ‘feel’), direct quotation is formally marked by introduction of the clausal complement of *vaa1* with an interactional discourse marker, usually an interjection such as *qoo4* or *qooj4*. The following examples illustrate this embedded discourse marker quotative strategy:

- (1320) *muu1 vaa1 qooj4 jaan4 man2 taaj3 lèèw4*
 friends say INTJ afraid 3.B die PRF
 ‘(His) friends said “Oh, (we’re) afraid he’s died!”.’
- (1321) *mia2 phaṅaa2 kaø thaam3 vaa1 qoo4 qaaj4*
 wife lord T.LNK ask COMP INTJ eBr
kham2-pan4-poo4 phaṅaa2 paj3 saj3 lèèw4
 K lord go INDEF.PLACE PRF
 ‘So the lord’s wife asked “Oh, Khampanpoo, where has the lord gone?”.’

It is also common in direct quotation, especially in narrative sequences, to add at the end of the quoted material a particle *vaø-san4*, a reduced combination of *vaa1* ‘say’ and *san4* ‘thus’ (although the presence of *vaø-san4* does not entail direct quotation):

- (1322) *qaw2, qaan1 nam2-lang3 phòø-tuu4, dee4 vaø-san4*
INTJ read after CT.Fa-PaPa FAC.ONCRD say-thus
'“Okay, read after grandpa, y’hear!”, (he) said.'
- (1323) *cak2 siø hêt1 cang1-daj3 kin3 vaø-san4*
don’t.know IRR do way-INDEF eat say-thus
'“What on earth am I going to make to eat?”, (he) thought.'

Chapter 20

Coordinating constructions

20.1 Verb phrase chaining

A verb (phrase) chain is a string of verb phrases with no overt linking morphology, usually with a single understood subject which may or may not be overtly expressed. The following examples are typical (chained verb phrases are square-bracketed):

- (1324) *paj3* [*cap2 nok1*] [*cap2 nuu3*] [*cap2 puu3*] [*cap2 paa3*]
go catch bird catch rat catch crab catch fish
[*maø kin3*]
DIR.ALL eat

‘(We’d) go and catch birds, and rats, and crabs and fish to eat.’

- (1325) *khan2 phuø-daj3* *düü4* *pajø* [*qaap5 nam4*] [*sak1*]
if MC.HUM-INDEF naughty DIR.ABL bathe water wash
khüang1
clothes

‘If anyone was naughty and went to bathe or wash their clothes...’

- (1326) [*kap2-khüün2* *maa2 pathêêt4*] [*hian2 tòð1*]
go.back-return come country study continue

‘(They) returned to their country (to) continue (their) studies.’

Different semantic relationships between clauses may hold. In (1324) and (1325), the chained clauses are in a parallel or distributive relationship. There is no dependence among the bracketed verb phrases in terms of temporal, consequential, conditional, causative, or purposive relation. In (1326), however, there is a purposive relationship between the two clauses, such that the second VP describes the purpose of the first VP, and the truth of the whole sentence entails the truth of the first VP, but not necessarily the second (i.e., it only means that ‘the purpose of the first VP was the second VP’). These different kinds of semantic relationships can be hierarchically combined in a single sentence, as in the following example:

- (1327) [*<tùk2 hèè3>* *<haa3 hòòj3>*] [*<saj1 mòòng2>* *<haa3 paa3>*]
 cast cast.net seek shells put hang.net seek
 fish

‘We’d cast cast-nets for shells, and put out hang-nets for fish.’

The two constituents in square brackets are VPs in parallel. Both of these complex VPs consist of two chained VPs (in angled brackets), where the second VP describes the intended purpose of the first.

A second kind of relationship between chained verb phrases is a sequential one. This is where the events listed in the chain are understood to happen one after the other. In clause chains where the actions are to be interpreted as distinctly separated events, this separation is often overtly marked by the clause linker *lèkaø*, which is almost always followed by a zero anaphor coreferential with the subject of the previous clause. In the following example, \emptyset ’s refer to *tamluat5* ‘police’, and other ellipsed arguments are unmarked:

- (1328) *khan2 [tamluat5 hèn3] hanø [ø qaw3 paj3] [ø kèp2*
 if police see TPC.DIST take go collect
paj3] lèkaø [ø pap2-maj3] lèkaø [ø pòòj1 maø
 go C.LNK fine C.LNK release DIR.ALL
kin3 law5 khùù2 kaw1]
 consume liquor like old

‘If the police see (them), (they) would take (them) away, pick (them) up, and then fine (them), and then release (them) to come and carry on drinking like before.’

Here, the linker *lèkaø* overtly partitions the string of verb phrases into the three separate events of (i) ‘police taking them, picking them up’, (ii) ‘police fining them’, and (iii) ‘police releasing them to carry on drinking’.

Another example illustrates numerous chained clauses, all with subject ellipsed, and just one overt linking of clauses using *lèkaø*:

- (1329) [kap2 maa2] [maø laang4 tiin3] [laang4 mù2]
 go.back come DIR.ALL wash foot wash hand
 [qanaa2maj2] **lèkaø** [khùn5 tiang3] [tii3 kalèng1] [nòòn2]
 clean.up C.LNK ascend bed hit bell sleep
 ‘(We’d) come back and wash (our) feet, (and) wash (our) hands,
 clean up, and then get into bed, (when they’d) ring the bell (for
 us) to go to sleep.’

Here, the first chain [‘return’ + ‘wash hands’ + ‘wash feet’ + ‘clean up’] shows no overt marking between VPs. These actions are habitually linked together in a normal daily complex event (given the context of boarding school life for children), and so are conceptually unitary, relatively speaking. This complex (but monoclausal) chain is then connected by the clause linker *lèkaø* to another unmarked chain of VPs, [‘get into bed’ + ‘hit the bell’ + ‘sleep’], again a series of actions habitually linked in the daily flow of events, although not necessarily normally directly linked to those of the first chain. Note that the subject of *tii3 kalèng1* ‘ring the bell’ is non-coreferential with the subject of the prior and subsequent verb phrases, *khùn5 tiang3* ‘get into bed’, and *nòòn2* ‘lie down/sleep’, respectively. This is an exception to the pragmatically-driven tendency for verb phrases in such series to have coreferential subjects. It demonstrates the lack of a syntactic pivot.

Such strings are typical in narratives. The following example is illustrative, from one speaker’s elicited description of a series of events acted out in a video stimulus designed to explore the cross-linguistic packaging of complex series of events (van Staden et al 2001). The clause linker *lèkaø* occurs seven times:

- (1330) *phuø-saaj2 khon2 nii4 nòn2-lap2 juu1, laø laaw2*
 MC.HUM-male CLF.HUM DEM lie-sleep CONT then 3SG.FA
kaø huu4-mùal khùn5 maa2, sii3 taa3 lèkaø luk1
 T.LNK become.conscious ascend come rub eye C.LNK arise
khùn5, nang1 juu1 lèkaø hêt1 jiat5 qèèw3
 ascend sit CONT C.LNK do stretch.out lower.back
jiat5-khaan4 lèkaø kaw3 hua3 lèkaø luk1 ñaang1
 stretch.oneself C.LNK scratch head C.LNK arise walk
pajø cap2 qaw3 saam2 lèkaø ñaang1 paj3 qaw3 nam4
 DIR.ABL grab take bowl C.LNK walk go take water
juu1 kakhuq1 lèkaø thêk5 nam4 sajl saam2 lèkaø thùù3
 be.at bucket C.LNK pour.out water put bowl C.LNK carry
saam2 kap2 khùn2 maa2
 bowl go.back return come

‘This man is sleeping, and then he wakes up, rubs (his) eyes and then gets up, sits there and then does- stretches his back, stretches (him)self, and then scratches (his) head and then gets up (and) walks (to) get a bowl, and then walks (to) get water in a bucket, and then pours the water into the bowl, and then carries the bowl back.’

20.2 Verb compounds

Two or more verbs can be compounded, resulting in what is effectively a single verb, with a single subject and a single object. These usually involve a pair of near synonyms. This may be interpreted as lexical compounding or syntactic coordination of verbs under V', under VP.

Here are a few examples, with the compound verb in square brackets (in the third example the clause is relativized):

- (1331) *man2 kaø [nii3-paq2] naang2 qanø-nii4*
 3.B T.LNK flee-abandon young.woman MC.INAN-DEM
 ‘He abandoned this girl.’

- (1332) *baat5 [phop1-hên3] tòn3 nan4 khòj5 jaak5*
 moment meet-see time DEM.NONPROX 1SG.P want
mà2
 return
 ‘When (I) met (them) at that time, I wanted to return.’
- (1333) *phuak4 thii1 vaal [pun4 cii4 khaa5] khaw3*
 group REL COMP hold.up stick.up kill 3PL.B
 ‘those who hold up and stick up and murder people’

In each of these cases, the verbs in compound are clause-separable. Semantically, they involve simple synonymic reiteration. A verb compound V1-V2 entails both V1 and V2.

20.3 Sentential coordination

There are several particle-type elements which may be used as sentential coordinators. Many of these are illustrated in examples throughout this book. *Ñòn4* ‘because’ is discussed in Chapter 18.

A general clause linker is *lèkaø*. This may join clauses which predicate events occurring in temporal-causal sequence (1334), or which have some other natural connection (1335):

- (1334) *khòj5 maal khaw5 lèkaø nùng1*
 1SG.P soak rice C.LNK steam
 ‘I soaked the rice and (then) steamed (it).’ (particular temporal order implied, causal relation implied.)
- (1335) *khòj5 nùng1 khaw5 lèkaø sak1 khàng1*
 1SG.P steam rice C.LNK wash clothes
 ‘I steamed the rice and washed the clothes.’ (part of the same set of actions (‘chores’), no particular temporal order implied, no causal relation implied.)

Other clause linkers include *tèè1* ‘but’ and *lùù3* ‘or’, each of which may optionally take a complementizer *vaal*:

- (1336) *khòòj5 siø paj3 talaat5 tèt1 (vaa1) lot1-mêê bðø*
 1SG.P IRR go market but COMP CT.VEHICLE-bus NEG
maa2
 come
 ‘I was going to go to the market, but the bus didn’t come.’
- (1337) *caw4 siø caaj1 ngen2 lùù3 (vaa1) khòòj5 siø pèn3*
 2SG.P IRR pay money or COMP 1SG.P IRR COP
phuø caaj1
 MC.HUM pay
 ‘Will you pay (the money), or shall I be the one to pay (it)?’

The coordinator meaning ‘if’ is *thaa5* (elsewhere a verb meaning ‘to wait (for something)’). In ordinary discourse, conditional meanings often arise with no morphosyntactic marking at all. The order of clauses in such cases is with protasis preceding. (Other orders are possible, but require marked intonation, i.e., strong de-stressing of the protasis showing that it has been moved into Right Position.) Example (1194) shows an unmarked conditional construction. Other examples can be found throughout this book. The following example shows a concessive meaning ‘even if’ arising in context, with no overt marking of the protasis:

- (1338) *bðø nòòn2 kaø bðø haj5 luk1 paj3 saj3*
 NEG sleep T.LNK NEG give get.up go INDEF.PLACE
 ‘(Even if) you didn’t sleep, (they) wouldn’t let (you) get up and go anywhere.’

Haiman (1985) has documented this iconic ordering across languages. The protasis provides the setting or background, conditions for the clause that follows, and is thus functionally and structurally a topic (Haiman 1978, 1985:61ff), the initial element in a formally co-ordinate structure. Despite this co-ordinate syntactic structure, the semantic structure is clearly one of subordination. It is also common to overtly mark the protasis (prepositionally) with a word meaning ‘if’. Both *thaa5* and *khan2* mean ‘if’, and display no identifiable semantic or grammatical difference:

- (1339) *thaa5 kaj1 haw2 laaj3, haw2 kaø hêt1 khuam2-kuang4*
 if chicken 1.FA many 1.FA T.LNK do NZR-wide
khuam2-ñaj1 laaj3 nòq1
 NZR-big much QPLR.AGREE
 ‘If our chickens are many, then we’d make the width and size (of the pen) great, wouldn’t we?’
- (1340) *khan2 bòø daj4, phòø-tuu4 siø bòøk5*
 if NEG CAN CT.Fa-PaPa IRR tell
 ‘If (you) can’t (read it), I’ll tell (you).’

The next example shows that the reverse order is also possible. And as (1342) shows, *thaa5* ‘if’ may combine with the complementizer *vaa1*:

- (1341) *phuø-nan4 juu1 bòø daj4, khan2 bòø dajø*
 MC.HUM-DEM.NONPROX be.at NEG CAN, if NEG ACHV
qòøk5
 exit
 ‘That person couldn’t live, if (she) didn’t get out (of there).’
- (1342) *thaa5 vaa1 khòøk4 kaj1 khaw3 hanø dajø pin1*
 if COMP pen chicken 3PL.B TPC.DIST ACHV turn
naa5 paj3 thaang2 thit1 tavên2-qòøk5 hanø caø
 face go direction face sun-emerge TPC.DIST IRR
qòøk5-mèè1-phèè1-luuk4 dajø dii3 nòq1
 exit-mother-propogate-child ACHV good QPLR.AGREE
 ‘If their chicken pen is turned to face the East, then (they’ll) propogate well, won’t they.’

Counterfactual expressions are not formally distinguished from conditionals in general, and specific counterfactual readings are pragmatically determined (based on tense/aspect reading of the predicate, and real-world knowledge of whether or not the protasis has been actualized or is the case). Thus, in the following example, the relationship between two unmarked coordinate clauses has several readings out of context:

(1343) *dam3 pajø têq2-baan3, luuk4 com1*

D DIR.ABL kick-ball children complain

i. '(If) Dam goes to play soccer, (his) kids complain.'

ii. '(Even if) Dam goes to play soccer, (his) kids complain.'

iii. '(If) Dam has gone to play soccer, (his) kids will be complaining.' (i.e., I don't know what the situation is right now).

iv. '(If) Dam had gone to play soccer, (his) kids would have complained.' (i.e., I know that Dam didn't go.)

Chapter 21

Adverbial constructions

21.1 Adverbial complementation

Adverbial complementation, either left- or right-marking, shows relatively loose syntactic organization. In adverbial complementation of the right-marking type, an adverbial V2 follows a main VP, whereby headship properties are split between V1 and V2. In adverbial complementation of the left-marking type, certain verbs (for example *faaw4* ‘hurry’ and *lòòng2* ‘try out’) behave grammatically like control complement-taking predicates (Chapter 19), but have adverbial scope (in semantic terms) over their subordinate predicates. Adverbial complement constructions of the right-marking type allow either initial or medial negation, as well as initial or medial insertion of the topic linker *kaø*. This choice appears to be associated with two alternative underlying structures (as shown for resultative constructions in Chapter 17).

21.1.1 Right-headed stative adverbial complementation

In right-headed stative adverbial complement constructions, V2 is a stative verb with semantic scope over preceding material, predicating some evaluation of manner or style about the phrase headed by V1. An example involves the verb *kêng1* ‘adept, clever, good at things’, given as a main verb in the following example:

- (1344) *laan3 caw4 niø, man2 bòø kêng1 bòð3*
nephew 2SG.P TPC 3.B NEG adept QPLR
‘Your nephew, is he not adept?’

In the following examples, *kêng1* ‘adept’ appears immediately after a verb phrase over which it has adverbial scope, giving the meaning ‘does VP well, is good at VP’:

- (1345) *son2 kêng1, faaj1 son2*
fight adept side fight
‘(They) fought well, the fighting team.’

- (1346) *kin3 kêng1*
eat adept
'(Geese) are good at eating (vegetables).'
- (1347) *haaj4 kêng1 juu1*
angry adept FAC.WEAK
'(She's) pretty good at being angry.'
- (1348) *khòj5 lom2 kêng1*
1SG.P converse adept
'I'm good at conversing.'

In each case, the topic linker *kaø* may be inserted in either of two different positions: immediately before the right-marking adverbial *kêng1* 'adept', or between main subject and predicate (i.e., after the subject noun phrase, and before V1). Compare the following, based on (1348):

- (1349) a. *khòj5 kaø lom2 kêng1*
1SG.P T.LNK converse adept
'I'm also good at conversing.'
- b. *khòj5 lom2 kaø kêng1*
1SG.P converse T.LNK adept
'I'm also good at conversing.'

Further, it is *kêng1* 'adept' which is head for yes-answer purposes:

- (1350) Q *khòj5 lom2 kêng1 bòj3*
1SG.P converse adept QPLR
'Am I good at conversing?'
- A *(lom2) kêng1*
converse adept
'(Yes, you're) good at (conversing).'

Now consider *ñaaak4* 'difficult', shown here as a main verb (in a relative clause):

- (1351) *phaa2saa3 soo2viat4 kaø pên3 phaa2saa3 thii1 ñaaak4*
language Soviet T.LNK COP language REL difficult
'Russian is a language which is difficult.'

The following examples show *ñaaak4* ‘difficult’ as head of a right-marking adverbial complement construction:

(1352) *namø-man2 niø haa3 ñaaak4 dêj2*
CT.LIQUID-oily TPC seek difficult FAC.NEWS

‘Oil was hard to find, you know.’

(1353) *puuk5 ñaaak4*
plant difficult

‘(They) are difficult to cultivate.’

(1354) *man2 kêp2 ñaaak4*
3.B gather difficult

‘It (coffee) is difficult to harvest.’

(1355) *lot1 paj3 ñaaak4*
vehicle go difficult

‘For cars to go (there) is difficult.’

Different right-marking adverbial complements show different negation tendencies, such that speakers find negation preferable on V1 for some verb-adverb combinations, and on V2 for others. Negation of example (1355), for instance, is more idiomatic medially than initially (for the meaning given in the free translation):

(1356) *lot1 paj3 bðø ñaaak4*
vehicle go NEG difficult

‘(For) cars to go (there) is not difficult.’

(1357) *lot1 bðø paj3 ñaaak4*
vehicle NEG go difficult

‘(For) cars it’s not difficult to go (there).’ (less idiomatic than (1356))

On the other hand, the combination *cêp2 nak2* [be.hurt heavy] ‘seriously hurt/ill’, in the following example, is more naturally negated initially:

(1358) *bðø cêp2 nak2*
NEG hurt heavy

‘(They) weren’t seriously hurt.’

The scope of adverbial modification by V2 (*nak2* ‘heavy’) is different in (1358) to that of V2 (*ñaaak4* ‘difficult’) in (1355-1356). A paraphrase of (1358) into English along lines given (1355-1356) with *ñaaak4* ‘difficult’ would not be felicitous. *Nak2* ‘heavy’ in (1358) modifies *cêp2* ‘hurt’ only, and a translation ‘For them to be injured would be heavy’ is unacceptable. This difference may account for the fact that medial negation is unidiomatic, similar in awkwardness to the English translation given here:

- (1359) ? *cêp2 bðø nak2*
 hurt NEG heavy
 ‘(They were) hurt not seriously.’

Medial negation would be natural with some intonational distancing between V1 and V2, such that they would no longer be in a tight single-unit construction:

- (1360) *cêp2, bðø nak2*
 hurt NEG heavy
 ‘(They were) hurt, not seriously.’

Consider another example of initial negation, this time with the object of V1 present between the two verbs *kam3* ‘clasp’ (V1) and *cam3* ‘reach a limit’ (V2):

- (1361) *khan2 khòj5 bðø kam3 bêek5 cam3*
 if 1SG.P NEG clasp brake reach.limit
 ‘Had I not put on (the) brake hard...’

There may be semantic reasons for some combinations to prefer initial negation. For example, with the right-marking adverbial *khak1* ‘clearly’, a range of cognition and perception verbs almost always take left negation (e.g., *bðø cùù1 khak1* [NEG remember clear] ‘can’t remember clearly’, *bðø hên3 khak1* [NEG see clear] ‘can’t see clearly’, *bðø daj4-ñin2 khak1* [NEG hear clear] ‘can’t hear clearly’, *bðø huu4 khak1* [NEG know clear] ‘don’t know clearly’).

Grammatical behavior of right-headed stative adverbial complement constructions (exactly as for same-subject resultative constructions; Chapter 17) suggests that these right-headed structures have more than one

underlying constituent structure analysis. Consider the following expression—not a tight adverbial construction—involving *ñaaak4* ‘difficult’ in a main-verb function:

- (1362) *vaw4 phaa2saa3 qang3kit2, man2 kaø ñaaak4*
 speak language English 3.B T.LNK difficult
 ‘Speaking English, it’s difficult!’

Here, *ñaaak4* ‘difficult’ is immediately preceded by the topic linker *kaø*. The predication over which it has scope is *vaw4 phaa2saa3 qang3kit2* ‘speak English’, which is referred to by the third-person pronominal subject *man2*. The following structure may be posited for (1362):

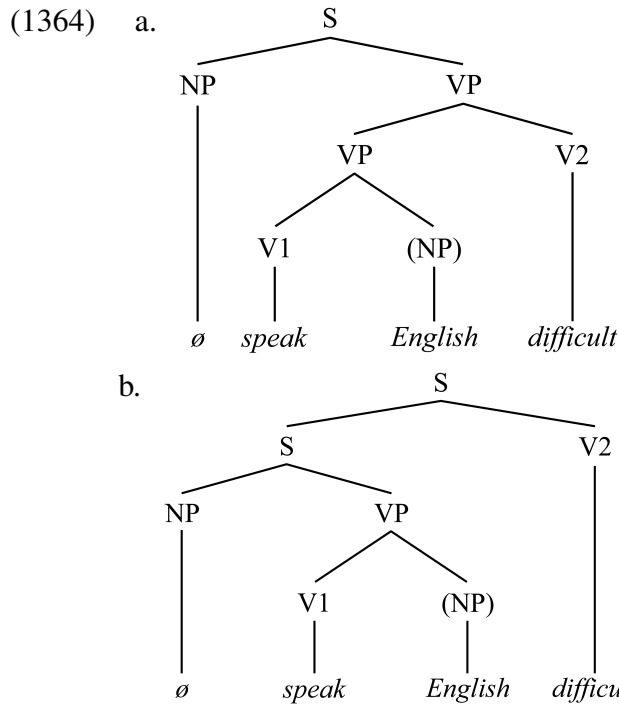
- (1362') [*vaw4 phaa2saa3 qang3kit2*]_{LP, i} [*man2; kaø* <*ñaaak4*>]_{VP}
 speak language English 3.B T.LNK difficult
 ‘Speaking English, it’s difficult!’

In (1362'), the verb *ñaaak4* ‘difficult’ is the main verb of a simple clause whose subject is *man2* ‘it’. This subject is coreferential with a verb phrase occupying the extracausal Left Position. The adverbial interpretation of the overall predication emerges pragmatically from semantic relations between the predicates involved (i.e., ‘speak’ and ‘difficult’).

The right-headed stative adverbial complement construction provides a way to express the same idea with tighter grammatical cohesion, as follows:

- (1363) *vaw4 phaa2saa3 qang3kit2 ñaaak4*
 speak language English difficult
 ‘Speaking English is difficult.’
 (or: ‘It’s difficult to speak English.’)

Now, consider what kind of grammatical structure is entailed by this tighter adverbial construction. Recall the alternative constituent structures suggested for resultative constructions (1166) and (1172) (Chapter 17), closely related to the right-headed adverbial constructions discussed here. The following are alternative analyses of (1363) (using only the direct English glosses, for convenience), along the same lines:



What arguments may be used to select one or other of these possible structures for right-headed adverbial complement structures?

First, irrealis marking on V1 has scope over both verbs:

- (1365) *khaw5 thaang2 nii4 man2 ka∅ si∅ khaw5 ñaak4 lèq1*
 enter way DEM 3.B T.LNK IRR enter difficult FAC.PRF
 ‘Coming in this way, it would be difficult for it (a tiger) to enter.’

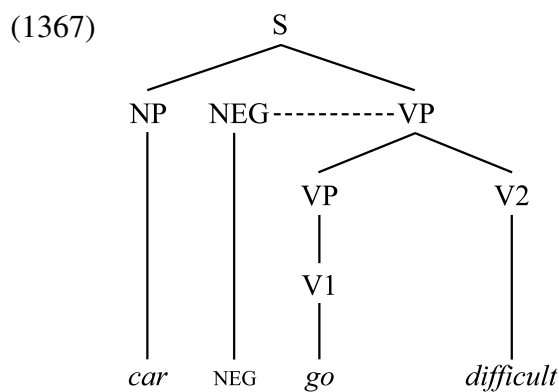
In this example, initial irrealis marking on *khaw5 ñaak4* [enter difficult] ‘difficult to enter’ results in an interpretation that it would be (or in another context will be) difficult for the tiger to enter. Both the ‘entering’ and the ‘difficulty’ are situated, by *si∅*, in the future or irrealis mode. If scope of aspectual-modal marking is a function of constituent structure organization, then (1364a) is the likely structure underlying (1365), since the aspectual-modal marker *si∅* would attach to the highest level VP, which dominates both V1 and V2.

The next issue is negation. As already noted, with right-headed stative adverbial complements, as with resultative constructions generally, negation is possible either preceding V1, or preceding V2. Negation

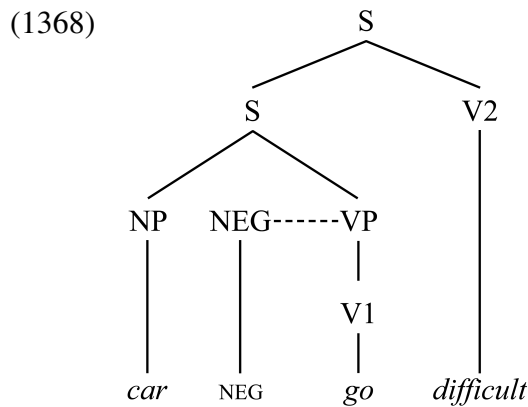
properties of right-headed stative adverbial complement constructions, discussed above, are revealing. The following sentence (repeated from (1357) above) is ambiguous, which may be taken as resulting from ambiguous scope of modification by the adverb, and diagnostic of alternative constituent structures:

- (1366) *lot1 bə̀ð paj3 ñaak4*
 car NEG go difficult
- i. ‘(For) cars it’s not difficult to go (there).’
 - ii. ‘For cars not to go (there) would be difficult.’

The (1366i) reading has *ñaak4* ‘difficult’ scoping over *paj3* ‘go’ only, with the resultant adverbial construction—meaning ‘difficult to go’—under the scope of negation. For this I suggest a constituent structure like (1364a) in which negation attaches to the highest VP, such that adverbial modification is complete within the scope of negation. Thus, the (1366i) reading suggests the following structure:



The (1366ii) reading, however, has negation scoping over *paj3* ‘go’ only, with *ñaak4* ‘difficult’ scoping over this negated predicate. If these scope distinctions emerge from differences in constituent structure, we may assume that the (1366ii) interpretation has a structure along the lines of (1364b), as follows:



This analysis is supported by the fact that insertion of the topic linker *kaø* before *ñaaak4* ‘difficult’ forces the (1366ii) reading (and is indeed the most idiomatic way of expressing the meaning given in (1366ii)). It does this by preventing V1 and V2 from having a single dominant VP node whose all-in-one-go negation could otherwise result in the (1366i) reading:

- (1369) *lot1 bðø paj3 kaø ñaaak4*
 car NEG go T.LNK difficult
 ‘For cars not to go (there) would (also) be difficult.’
 (NOT: ‘For cars it’s not difficult to go (there).’)

Consider now a verb—*dii3* ‘good’—which due to its semantics does not have the same possibility as, say, *ñaaak4* ‘difficult’ to vary in adverbial scope, and accordingly shows different behavior in its role as a right-headed stative adverbial complement V2. *Dii3* ‘good’ can be used to comment adverbially on a whole predication (‘It is good that S’). The following structure, with the topic linker *kaø* directly marking *bðø dii3* ‘no good’ and putting V2 ‘good’ alone into the highest VP node (as in (1364b), above), is allowed:

- (1370) *khaw3 kin3 makø-muang1 kaø bðø dii3*
 3PL.B eat CT.FRUIT-mango T.LNK NEG good
 ‘It’s (also) no good that she eats mangoes [or: ate the mangoes].’

However, *dii3* ‘good’ does not function adverbially at a lower level, and cannot be used with a meaning akin to English *well*. (Other verbs and

constructions are used for this.) The following example is ungrammatical because the topic linker *kaø* forces a reading in which ‘eat mangoes’ combines with ‘good’ under a single highest VP node, barring *dii3* ‘good’ from having its required sentential scope:

- (1371) * *khaw3 kaø kin3 makø-muang1 bðø dii3*
 3PL.B T.LNK eat CT.FRUIT-mango NEG good
 (She also ate (the) mangoes no good.)

The constituent structure alternatives shown in (1364) (cf. (1166) and (1172) in Chapter 17) account for the variant grammatical behaviors of both adverbial and resultative constructions shown here.

21.1.2 Comparison with resultative constructions

Compare these properties of right-headed stative adverbial complement constructions with same-subject resultative constructions such as the following, repeated from (1176) above:

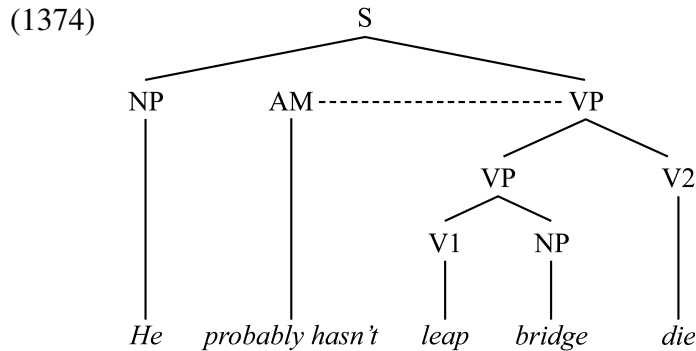
- (1372) *laaw2 doot5 khua3 taaj3*
 3SG.FA leap bridge die
 ‘He leapt from a bridge and died.’

In the next example (1373), verb-initial aspectual-modal marking (e.g., the string *khùù2 siø bðø dajø* [PROB IRR NEG ACHV] ‘probably hasn’t’) on V1 *doot5* ‘leap’ results in an ambiguity parallel to that of the English translation, namely that while *taaj3* ‘die’ is clearly under the scope of the aspectual-modal marking (entailing that ‘she probably hasn’t died’), *doot5* ‘leap’ may or may not be under the same scope:

- (1373) *laaw2 khùù2 siø bðø dajø doot5 khua3 taaj3*
 3SG.FA PROB IRR NEG ACHV leap bridge die
 ‘He probably hasn’t leapt from a bridge and died.’

In other words, (1373) entails nothing about whether a ‘leaping from a bridge’ event has occurred. It is ambiguous between ‘He leapt from the bridge, but probably didn’t die from it’ and ‘It’s probably not the case that he leapt from a bridge (to his death)’. That this aspectual-modal marking scopes specifically over V2 supports the claim that V2 is head.

(Also, only *taaj3* ‘die’ is necessary and sufficient as a yes-answer.) This construction has a structure like that in (1364a), above, where the rightmost V is head, as follows:



Accordingly, the interpretation with this structure allows insertion of the topic linker *kaø* immediately after the main subject (1375), and not in the position before V2 (1376):

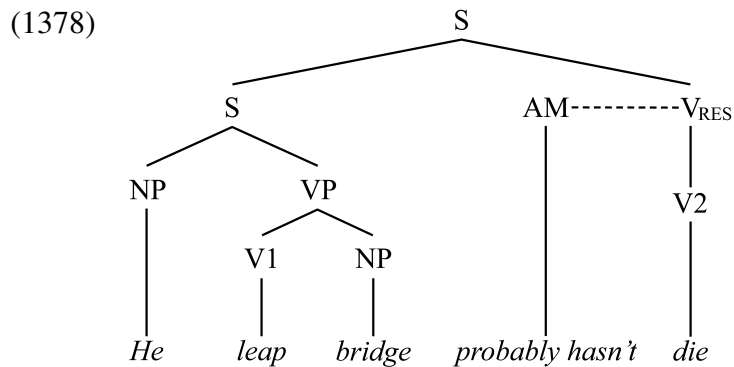
(1375) *laaw2 kaø khùù2 siø bðø dajø doot5 khua3 taaj3*
 3SG.FA T.LNK PROB IRR NEG ACHV leap bridge die
 ‘He (too) probably hasn’t leapt from a bridge and died.’

(1376) **laaw2 khùù2 siø bðø dajø doot5 khua3 kaø taaj3*
 3SG.FA PROB IRR NEG ACHV leap bridge T.LNK die
 (He probably hasn’t leapt from a bridge and then died.)

Now, compare (1373) to the following, in which the same aspectual-modal marking appears not on V1, but on V2:

(1377) *laaw2 doot5 khua3, khùù2 siø bðø dajø taaj3*
 3SG.FA leap bridge PROB IRR NEG ACHV die
 ‘(When) he leapt from a bridge, he probably didn’t die.’
 (Also: ‘If he were to leap from a bridge, he probably wouldn’t die.’)

This has a kind of topic-comment style, such that the translation could also be ‘Speaking of his leaping from a bridge, he probably didn’t die’. In contrast to (1373), this suggests a constituent structure like (1364b), as follows:



Accordingly, the topic linker *kaø* is insertable before V2 (and its attendant aspectual-modal marking):

- (1379) *laaw2 doot5 khua3, kaø khùù2 siø bðø dajø taaj3*
 3SG.FA leap bridge T.LNK PROB IRR NEG ACHV die
 ‘(When) he leapt from a bridge, he probably didn’t die.’
 (Also: ‘(Even if) he leapt from a bridge, he probably wouldn’t die.’)

Furthermore, the subject *laaw2* ‘he’ may be repeated before V2, as follows:

- (1380) *laaw2 doot5 khua3, laaw2 khùù2 siø bðø dajø taaj3*
 3SG.FA leap bridge 3SG.FA PROB IRR NEG ACHV die
 ‘He leapt from a bridge, he probably hasn’t died.’

This, indeed, is ruled out by the structure shown in (1373-1374), above:

- (1381) **laaw2 khùù2 siø bðø dajø doot5 khua3 laaw2 taaj3*
 3SG.FA PROB IRR NEG ACHV leap bridge 3SG.FA die
 (He probably hasn’t leapt from a bridge and then he died.)

21.1.3 Right-headed active adverbial complementation

Another type of right-headed adverbial complementation involves an active verb—such as *lin5* ‘play’—in V2 position, as shown in the following example:

- (1382) *man2 qaan1 pùm4 lin5*
 3.B read book play
 ‘He’s reading a book for fun.’

These constructions contrast grammatically with right-headed stative adverbial complementation in that they allow neither medial negation nor insertion between V1 and V2 of the topic linker *kaø*:

- (1383) * *man2 qaan1 pùm4 bðø lin5*
 3.B read book NEG play
 (He’s not reading a book for fun; He’s reading a book not for fun.)
- (1384) * *man2 qaan1 pùm4 kaø lin5*
 3.B read book T.LNK play
 (He’s reading a book for fun.)

Right-headed active adverbial complementation is not especially productive, with relatively few verbs available to fulfil the role performed by *lin5* ‘play’ in (1382).

21.1.4 Left-headed adverbial complementation

Some verbs may appear as V1 complement-taking predicates with a semantically adverbial function, behaving grammatically like same-subject complement constructions (Chapter 19). Consider the following uses of the otherwise intransitive active verb *faaw4* ‘to hurry’:

- (1385) *faaw4 khian3 nangsùù3 teen3*
 hurry write letter announce
 ‘(They) hurriedly wrote a letter of announcement.’
- (1386) *faaw4 ñap2 saphaw3 khaw5 maa2*
 hurry shift.across boat enter come
 ‘(They) hurriedly shifted their boats across in (to the shore).’
- (1387) *faaw4 lèèn1 kap2 khùùn2*
 hurry run return go.back
 ‘(They) hurriedly ran back.’

The initial verb *faaw4* ‘hurry’ is head of the expression, and may appear alone as a yes-answer. Other properties of adverbial complementation are not observed, since the headedness is opposite to what we have seen so far.

21.2 Adverbial compounds

In contrast to these adverbial complement constructions (both left- and right-headed), multi-verb adverbial compounds are syntactically more tightly bound, allowing in the medial position neither negation nor insertion of the topic linker *kaø*. Neither verb alone appears to be grammatical head. Adverbial compounds may be either left-marking (mostly expressing posture and manner) or right-marking (mostly expressing manner and purpose).

21.2.1 Left-marking adverbial compounds

In left-marking adverbial compounds, neither verb may appear alone as a yes-answer, and no aspectual-modal marking may appear in the slot between the adverbial and the following VP. An example involves the verb *lak1* ‘steal’, which appears as a regular transitive verb in the following example:

- (1388) *haw2 bəø dəjə lak1 ñang3 phaj3 naa3*
 I.FA NEG ACHV steal INDEF.INAN INDEF.HUM FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘I didn’t steal anything of anyone’s, you must understand!’

In the next three examples, *lak1* ‘steal’ appears in V1 position of a V1-V2 left-marking adverbial compound, giving the meaning ‘stealthily V2’:

- (1389) *fang2 kaø dəj4 juu1 tətəl tòng4 dəjə lak1 fang2*
 listen T.LNK CAN FAC.WEAK but OBLIG ACHV steal listen
 ‘One could listen to (the radio), but one had to listen secretly.’
- (1390) *lak1 khaam5 saaj2-dèn3*
 steal cross border
 ‘(They) crossed the border secretly.’

- (1391) *jaan4 khaw3 pajø lak1 tii3*
 afraid 3PL.B DIR.ABL steal hit
 ‘(They) were afraid (he) would secretly attack.’

Using (1391) as an example, we may show that medial negation in this kind of adverbial construction is ungrammatical (1392), and that clause separation by the linker *lèkaø* changes the semantic relation between the verbs, ruling out an adverbial reading, and forcing a simple transitive-verb reading for *lak1* ‘steal’, with the two verbs predicating separate events (1393):

- (1392) **jaan4 khaw3 pajø lak1 bøø tii3*
 afraid 3PL.B DIR.ABL steal NEG hit
 ((They) were afraid (he) would secretly not attack.)
- (1393) *jaan4 khaw3 pajø lak1 lèkaø tii3*
 afraid 3PL.B DIR.ABL steal C.LNK hit
 ‘They were afraid he would steal (it) and attack.’

In examples (1389-1391), *lak1* ‘steal’ does not have headship properties (in particular it cannot appear alone as a yes-answer). The head of the expression is the V1-V2 compound as a whole.

While this contrasts with the less restricted behavior of left-marking adverbial complementation (e.g., involving *faaw4* ‘hurry’), semantically it is hard to tell in what way the modification is different. Notably, the adverbial complement-taking predicate *faaw4* ‘hurry’ is not a transitive verb, appearing either as a complement taking predicate, or an intransitive verb. By contrast, the adverbial compounding verb *lak1* ‘steal’ is common as a transitive verb. The only behavioral difference between left-headed complementation and left-marking adverbial compounds seems to be that left-headed complement V1s such as *faaw4* ‘hurry’ can appear alone as yes-answers.

A productive area of left-marking adverbial compounding involves posture verbs such as *nòòn2* ‘lie’, *jùùn3* ‘stand’, and *nang1* ‘sit’ in V1 position (see Enfield 2002b, c):

- (1394) *mèø-paa4 nan4 laaw2 kaø nang1 khaaj3*
 CT.Mo-Pa.eZ DEM.NONPROX 3SG.FA T.LNK sit sell
saj5-kòøk5 juu1
 sausage CONT
 ‘So that aunty, she was sitting selling sausages.’

- (1395) *nang1 lom2 kan3 lin5 juu1 naj2 paa1*
 sit chat COLL play be.at in forest
 ‘(We’d) sit and chat together for fun in the forest.’
- (1396) *laaw2 kaø pajø jùùn3 lòò2-thaa5 lot1-mèè2*
 3SG.FA T.LNK DIR.ABL stand wait CT.VEHICLE-bus
juu1
 CONT
 ‘So he went and stood waiting for the bus.’

If both verbs in such a construction are postural, then either order is possible:

- (1397) *mùùn2 taa3 nòòn2*
 open eye sleep
 ‘Have (one’s) eyes open (while) sleeping.’
- (1398) *nòòn2 mùùn2 taa3*
 sleep open eye
 ‘Sleep (with one’s) eyes open.’

Another productive area of left-marking adverbial compounding involves regular combination of a set of activity verbs with the collaborative marker *kan3*, forming a complex V1 adverbial element:

- (1399) *phaa2-kan3 V* ‘V together’
 (*phaa2* = ‘to lead someone along in doing something’)
 e.g., *phaa2-kan3 khùn5*
 lead.along-COLL ascend
 ‘(They) went up (the bank) together.’
- (1400) *sòòj1-kan3 V* ‘help each other to V’
 (*sòòj1* = ‘help’)
 e.g., *khaw3 sòòj1-kan3 tềng1 kin3*
 3PL.B help-COLL prepare eat
 ‘They helped each other to prepare the meal.’
- (1401) *ñaat4-kan3 V* ‘compete with each other in V-ing’
 (*ñaat4* = ‘snatch something away, fight over something’)
 e.g., *khaw3 ñaat4-kan3 kin3 khaw5*
 3PL.B snatch-COLL eat rice
 ‘They fought with each other to eat the meal.’

Note that the left-marking adverbial element marks the whole VP which follows it, not just the following verb. That is, the structure is [V1_{ADVERBIAL}]-[V2-NP], rather than [V1_{ADVERBIAL}-V2]-[NP]. This is clear from the pattern of entailment of these sentences:

- (1402) NP1 V1 V2 NP2 → NP1 V2 NP2
 ↗ NP1 V1 NP2

Thus, the following left-marking adverbial compound construction entails ‘I watched television’, and does not entail ‘I lay down on the television’.

- (1403) *khòj5 nòn2 beng1 thoo2lathat1*
 1SG.P lie watch television
 ‘I watched television lying down.’

21.2.2 Right-marking adverbial compounds

In right-marking adverbial compounding, V2 is a semantically general active verb whose meaning is subsumed by a V1 element with more specific semantics. The following examples show *qaw3* ‘take’ in V2 position, and in each case, V1 can be interpreted as a more semantically specific way of taking or getting something (i.e., *lòk4* ‘peel off’, *cap2* ‘grab, catch’, *khaap4* ‘take or carry in the mouth’), with direct translations along the lines of ‘take by V1-ing’:

- (1404) *lòk4 qaw3 nang3*
 peel.off take hide
 ‘(They) peeled off the (tiger’s) hide.’
- (1405) *naang2 nan4 kaø lèn1 pajø cap2 qaw3*
 girl DEM.NONPROX T.LNK run DIR.ABL grab take
ngaaw4 thii1 tok2 juu1 taam3 deen1
 sword REL fall be.at along ground
 ‘The girl ran off, and grabbed the sword which had fallen on the ground.’

- (1406) *hên3 maa3 to∅ nùng1 khaap4 qaw3 saj5-kòðk5*
 see dog MC.ANIM one carry.in.mouth take sausage
laaw2 lèn1 paj3 lèw4
 3SG.FA run go PRF
 ‘(He) saw a dog running away, carrying his sausages in its mouth.’

In these examples, V1 and V2 combine as effectively a single verb, taking a single set of core arguments, and neither *ka∅*-insertion nor medial negation between these verbs are allowed, as shown by the following ungrammatical examples (based on example (1404)):

- (1407) **lòðk4 ka∅ qaw3 nang3*
 peel.off T.LNK take hide
 ((They) peeled also off the (tiger’s) hide.)
 (1408) **lòðk4 bò∅ qaw3 nang3*
 peel.off NEG take hide
 ((They) peeled not off the (tiger’s) hide.)

In these examples, it is as if the V2 element classifies V1 (as an instance of ‘taking’), in analogous fashion to the relationship between nominal classifiers and the nouns to which they correspond (cf. Chapter 7).

21.3 Adverbial complements marked by *daj∅* ‘ACHV’

One of the regular duties of the achievement marker *daj∅* (see Chapter 9) is to link clauses with adverbial complements of various different semantic types. These complements may express a period of time since the main predication has been the case:

- (1409) *qaw3 paj3 daj∅ sòng3-saam3 mùù4*
 take go ACHV two-three day
 ‘(They) had taken (the child) away for two or three days.’

They may include a numeral classifier phrase expressing the extent to which the main predication is achieved:

- (1410) *puuk5 phoon2 khùn5 daj∅ cêt2 nuaj1*
 plant hillock ascend ACHV seven CLF.UNIT
 ‘(They) planted up seven hillocks.’

- (1411) *laaw2 kin3 khaw5 dajø sòðng3 thuaj5 lèèw4*
 3SG.FA eat rice ACHV two bowl PRF
 ‘She has (already) eaten two bowls of rice.’

They may include an adjective expressing the extent or manner to which the main predication is achieved:

- (1412) *haw2 hêt1 dajø nòðj4 tamø-tam1*
 1.FA make ACHV small RDP.A-low
 ‘I built (the house) small, quite low.’

- (1413) *sùang1 bòø dajø kaj3*
 conceal NEG ACHV far
 ‘(They) hid (him) not far away.’

- (1414) *com1 thòðng1-khùn5-caj3 dajø lian2-laj3 kua1*
 mutter by.heart ACHV in.a.row-flowing more.than
muul
 peer
 ‘(I) could mutter (the chants) by heart more fluently than others.’

- (1415) *man2 lèèn1 dajø vaj2*
 3.B run ACHV fast
 ‘She runs fast.’

See Enfield (2003c:133-140) for further discussion.

Chapter 22

Summary remark on multi-verb constructions

The wide range of possible relationships between verbs and verb phrases, as presented in Chapters 14-21, means that many decontextualized surface sequences are ambiguous. Consider the following example, in which *haj5* ‘give’ has three possible structural and semantic roles—as full verb in a verb phrase string, as subordinate verb in a purposive complement, and as deverbal preposition with benefactive meaning:

(1416) *laaw2 nùng1 khaw5 haj5 khòj5*
3SG.FA steam rice give 1SG.P

- i. ‘She steamed rice (and then) gave (it) to me.’
- ii. ‘She steamed rice to give me.’
- iii. ‘She steamed rice for me.’ (either ‘for my benefit’, or ‘on my behalf’)

The (i) and (ii) readings in (1416) may be forced with overt marking by the clause linker *lèkaø* and the subordinating marker *phùal* ‘in order to’, respectively:

(1417) *laaw2 nùng1 khaw5 lèkaø haj5 khòj5*
3SG.FA steam rice C.LNK give 1SG.P

- i. ‘She steamed rice and then gave (it) to me.’
- ii. (*She steamed rice to give me.)
- iii. (*She steamed rice for me.)

(1418) *laaw2 nùng1 khaw5 phùal haj5 khòj5*
3SG.FA steam rice in.order.to give 1SG.P

- i. (*She steamed rice (and then) gave (it) to me.)
- ii. ‘She steamed rice to give me.’
- iii. (*She steamed rice for me.)¹

¹Clearly, the reading in (ii) allows ‘She steamed rice for me’ if we only consider the benefactive reading of this English gloss. The point here is that (1418) cannot permit the usual broader reading of the benefactive *haj5* in Lao, namely the one that includes ‘on my behalf’.

Such ambiguities are common, but are easily resolved by the constraints of grammatical and pragmatic context.

The patterns reviewed in preceding chapters may be nested together in more complex constructions. Consider the following example, taken from (1330), above, showing four verbs in sequence:

- (1419) *ñaaŋg1 paj3 qaw3 nam4 juu1 kakhuq1*
 walk go take water be.at bucket
 ‘(He) walks (to) get water in a bucket.’

Here, *ñaaŋg1* ‘walk’ and *paj3* ‘go’ form a manner-direction motion construction, where their respective motion semantics are overlaid facets of a single event. Then, as a unit, these combine with *qaw3* ‘take’ in a verb phrase chain. Finally, the verb *juu1* ‘be at’ hosts the oblique nominal *kakhuq1* ‘bucket’ as a modifier of the object argument of *qaw3* ‘take’, namely *nam4* ‘water’.

Here is another example, with five verbs in sequence:

- (1420) *bðø jaak5 haj5 nii3 kaj3 caak5 phòð1-mèè1*
 NEG want give flee far separate.from father-mother
 ‘(They) don’t want (their children) to go far from (their) parents.’

The verb *jaak5* ‘want’ is a same-subject control complement verb. In the complement clause, *haj5* ‘give’ performs a switch-reference function to accommodate the different subject in the lower, complement verb. The central verb of the lower complement is *nii3* ‘flee’, followed by *kaj3* ‘far’ as a right-marking (resultative) descriptive complement, and finally with *caak5* ‘separate.from’ hosting the adjunct meaning ‘from (their) parents’.

Finally, recall the example with six verbs in sequence presented at the beginning of Chapter 12, repeated here:

- (1421) *caw4 lòðng2 qaw3 paj3 hêt1 kin3 beng1 mèè4*
 2SG.P try.out take go make eat look IMP.UNIMPD
 ‘You go ahead and take (them) and try cooking (them) to eat!’

The verb *lòðng2* ‘try out’ acts here as a left-marking complement-taking adverbial, and combines with *beng1* ‘look’, a right-marking adverbial, to bracket a four-verb phrase containing a ‘disposal’ construction (*qaw3 hêt1* ‘take (and) do/make’), with *paj3* ‘go’ as a directional, and forming a purposive clause chain with *kin3* ‘eat’.

The examples just presented should give a sense of the way in which surface strings of verbs are not mere strings of verbs, but are hierarchically structured (usually binary) nestings of V1-V2 constructions.

Table 32 (overleaf) summarizes a range of distinguishing features of the structures surveyed in Chapters 14-21.

Table 32. Properties distinguishing a range of V1-V2 structures

See key ^a	Yes-answer head?	Clause-separable?	Which V omissible in relative clause?	Medial negation OK?	With medial negation, V1 entailed?	<i>kaφ</i> insertable without major semantic change?
A	V2	no	V1	%	no	no
B	V2	%	V1	no	n/a	no
C	V2	%	V1	no	n/a	no
D	V1-V2-V3	no	neither	no	n/a	no
E	V2	yes	% V2	yes	yes	yes
F	V2	yes	% V1	yes	yes	yes
G	V2	yes	%	yes	yes	yes
H	V1	% yes	%	yes	no	yes
I	V2	no	V2	yes	yes	yes
J	V1-V2	no	neither	no	n/a	no
K	V1	%	% V2	no	n/a	no
L	V1-V2	no	neither	no	n/a	no
M	V1-V2	no	either	no	n/a	no
N	V1	no	V2	yes	yes	yes
O	V1	no	V2	no	n/a	no
P	V1 or V2	no	V2	yes	yes	yes
Q	V1	no	V2	no	n/a	no
R	V1-V2	no	neither	yes	yes	no
S	V1	no	% V2	no	n/a	no
T	V1	no	V2	yes	yes	no
U	V1	no	V2	yes	yes	no
V	V1-V2	yes	neither	no	n/a	no
W	V1-V2	%	neither	no	n/a	no

% = questionable

^aA. Left aspectual-modal markers, deverbal; B. 'Despatch' 3-place expressions; C. 'Disposal' constructions; D. Manner-path-direction constructions; E. Different subject resultatives; F. Same-subject resultatives; G. Projected resultatives; H. Reiterative resultatives; I. Right-headed stative adverbial complements; J. Right-headed active adverbial complements; K. Left-headed adverbial complements; L. Left-marking adverbial compounds; M. Right-marking adverbial compounds; N. Depictive complement constructions; O. *pên3*-adjunct constructions; P. *daj4*-complement constructions; Q. Oblique phrase constructions; R. 'Give', 'make', 'make-give' causative constructions; S. Control complements, same-subject; T. Control complements, different subject; U. Non-control complements; V. VP chains; W. Verb compounds.

Part VI

Texts

Chapter 23

Texts

The texts supplied in this chapter illustrate the kind of discourse in which Lao grammar emerges. The texts are from video-recorded conversations. These were not staged conversations, which is to say that they would have occurred in more or less the same form had the researcher not been there with his video-recorder. As such, they are a faithful representation of what Lao conversation looks like. The choice to concentrate exclusively on conversation here is a form of affirmative action. Conversation as a structured domain is under-studied in linguistics compared to research on structure in semantics and sentence-level syntax. Yet conversation is by far the dominant, unmarked genre in language usage, and in language acquisition. This chapter reverses the usual balance in the ‘texts’ section of grammars: elicited monologues, with a very occasional fragment of conversation. This is not to deny the importance of narrative performances for both ethnographic and linguistic interest. And elicited narratives provide a far cleaner and more controlled source of data for analysis. But with a large enough sample, conversation yields the full complement of a language’s structural resources, including embedded narratives, procedural descriptions, and similar genres more familiar to descriptive linguistics.

In these transcriptions, overlapping talk is indicated using vertically aligned square brackets. Numerals in brackets indicate silences (e.g. “(0.7)” means a silence of seven tenths of a second; (.) represents a ‘micro-pause’). The media file sources for the texts are: A=020727a, B-C=030806a, D=030806b, E=030806k, F=010707.

23.1 TEXT A

This conversation takes place in the main inside room of a village house. The village HPI is some 30 kilometers from Vientiane. Speakers P and M are the man and woman of the house, respectively. They are now elderly, with children and grandchildren. Speakers K and A are another couple, also older (with grandchildren). K and A live in the city of Vientiane. K’s

younger sister Daaw is married to one of P and M's sons H. Daaw (the younger sister) and H (the son, Daaw's husband) live abroad, and have been sending money for improvements to the temple in the village of HPI. The arrangements have been made through K, who has a telephone and is in regular touch with Daaw. This conversation takes place in the early minutes of a visit by K to the village to check up on progress of the temple construction. The opening line of this selection comes after about ten minutes of casual talk at the very beginning of the visit. The main topic of conversation is an accident that P had a few days earlier: he fell from the stairs going up into his house, and is still recovering. There is a brief hiatus in the flow of conversation, and K takes the opportunity to initiate a shift towards the business of the visit. She does this in the first line, by announcing that Daaw telephoned the evening before.

- A1 K *mùø-khùùn2 phen1 kaø thoo2 maa2, saaw3 daaw3 hanø*
 last.night 3.P T.LNK call come, Mo.yZ D TPC.DIST
 'So last night she called, that Aunty Daaw.'
- A2 P *mbòq5*
 PCL
 'Is that right?'
- A3 K *mm5*
 INTJ
 'Uh-huh.'
- A4 (.)
- A5 M [*phen1 vaal ñang3*]
 3.P say INDEF.INAN
 'What did she say?'
- A6 P [*qee5*]
 INTJ
 'Uh-huh.'
- A7 (0.2)
- A8 K *bòø vaal ñang3*
 NEG say INDEF.INAN
 '(She) didn't say anything.'

- A9 *thaam3 beng1 duu2, juu1 dii3 mi2 hènng2 bòð3*
ask look IMP.PLEAD live good have strength QPLR
'(She said) please ask (them) and see, (are they) healthy and well?'
- A10 *qee5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh (I said).'
- A11 *khòj5- khòj5 siø mùa2*
1SG.P 1SG.P IRR return
'I- I'm going to return (to HPI village, I said).'
- A12 (0.7)
- A13 P *mm5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- A14 K *khòj5 siø mùa2 nam2 phòø-luong2*
1SG.P IRR return with CT.Fa-Pa.eBr
'I'm going to return with Uncle (I said).'
- A15 *phòø-luong2 siø maø hap1 kap2 qaw3 saaw3 daa3*
CT.Fa-Pa.eBr IRR DIR.ALL pick.up with take Mo.yZ D
'Uncle's going to pick (me) up, and take Aunty Da (I said).'
- A16 *siø mùa2 thaaj1 qaw3 vat1*
IRR go photograph take temple
'(We're) going to go and photograph the temple (I said).'
- A17 (0.3)
- A18 P *qee5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- A19 (0.5)
- A20 K *mm5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'

- A21 *vaang1 caw4 mùa2 nam2 phen1 dee4 mètø-paa4*
 when 2SG.P return with 3SG.P FAC.ONRCD CT.Mo-Pa.eZ
dee4 haw2 siø-
 FAC.ONRCD 1.FA IRR
 ‘(Daaw said) When you go with them, y’hear, Aunty y’hear, I’ll-’
- A22 *qee5 mùø-qùùn1 haw2 thoo2 maø haa3 caw4 qiik5*
 INTJ tomorrow 1.FA call DIR.ALL seek 2SG.P more
 ‘Uh-huh, tomorrow I’ll call you again (Daaw said).’
- A23 (0.2)
- A24 P *mm5*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’
- A25 (2.0)
- A26 K *thit1 nùng1 sòng3 thùa1, thit1 laø thùa1, thoo2 maa2*
 week one two time week per time call come
hanø naa3
 TPC.DIST FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘One week two times, (or) once a week, (Daaw) calls (me) you know.’
- A27 P *qee5*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’
- A28 K *thoo2 maa2 hùan2 haw2 hanø lèq5*
 call come house 1.FA TPC.DIST FAC.PRF
 ‘(She) calls our house.’
- A29 P *qee5 thaam3 khaaw1 haa3 lùajø-lùaj4 tii4*
 INTJ ask news visit REG QPLR.PRESM
 ‘Uh-huh, (she) asks after news regularly, I presume?’
- A30 K *mm5*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’

- A31 *thaam3 khaaw1*
ask news
'(She) asks after news.'
- A32 *khan2 caw4 mùa2 laø*
if 2SG.P return PRF
'(Daaw said) If you return (to HPI Village),'
- A33 *caw4 mùa2 beng1 dèè1, man2 siø paj3 pên3 cang1 daj3*
2SG.P return look IMP.SOFT 3.B IRR go COP way INDEF
'Please return and take a look, how is it going?'
- A34 P *mm3*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- A35 K *laaw2 vaal hanø naa3*
3SG.FA say TPC.DIST FAC.EXPLIC
'(This is what) she said, you must understand.'
- A36 P *qee5 san4 lèq5*
INTJ so FAC.PRF
'Uh-huh, (in answer to her question, the building project's going) just like that.'
- A37 K *qee5 vaal haw2 siø (.) ma- (.) maø thaam3 caw4*
INTJ say 1.FA IRR DIR.ALL DIR.ALL ask 2SG.P
'Uh-huh, (I) said (to Daaw that) we would come- come and ask you (about the project).'
- A38 *cang1 daj3, vaw4 suu1 haw2 fang2, man2 vaal*
like INDEF speak reach 1.FA listen 3.B say
'How is it going? Tell me (about it), she said.'
- A39 P *mm5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'

- A40 M *cang1 daj3, kaø pên3 cang1 san4 lèq5*
 like INDEF T.LNK COP like so FAC.PRF
 ‘How is it? It’s just like that.’
- A41 (7.5)
- A42 K *caw4 hanø bðø dajø pajø thoo2 haa3 phen1*
 2SG.P TPC.DIST NEG ACHV DIR.ALL telephone seek 3.P
bðð3
 QPLR
 ‘You haven’t been and telephoned her?’
- A43 (0.5)
- A44 P [*bðð1*
 NEG
 ‘No.’
- A45 M [*vaaj5*
 INTJ
 ‘Gee!’
- A46 P *qooj4 bðø dajø pajø kaj4 cak2 thùal*
 INTJ NEG ACHV go near how.many occasion
 ‘Oy, (we) haven’t even been near (to phoning her)!’
- A47 (1.5)
- A48 K *khan2 jaak5 thoo2, mùa2 baan4 khòj5 hanø*
 if want telephone return home 1SG.P TPC.DIST
 ‘If (you) want to call (Daaw et al), go to my home there (and call them).’
- A49 *thoo2 hùan2 khòj5 hanø*
 telephone house 1SG.P TPC.DIST
 ‘Telephone (them from) my house there.’
- A50 (1.5)
- A51 M *man2 siø qaw3 ngen2 saj3 thoo2*
 3.B IRR take money INDEF.PLACE telephone
 ‘Where (would we) get money to telephone (them)?’

- A52 P *man2 bòø mii2 dee4*
 3.B NEG there.is FAC.ONRCD
 ‘There isn’t any (money), y’hear!’
- A53 M *thèè4*
 real
 ‘Really!’
- A54 *qanø-nan4* *kaø* (.) *haw2 qaw3 haj5* (.)
 MC.INAN-DEM.NONPROX T.LNK 1.FA take give
 ‘That (money), it’s- we gave it-’
- A55 *phòø-dii3 pua3 phòø-tuu4 niø met2 laø dêê4*
 right.then treat CT.Fa-Pa.Pa TPC finished PRF FAC.FILLIN
 ‘Right when we treated grandpa here (K, for his recent accident),
 (the money we had) was finished.’
- A56 K *qee5 phòq1 vaa1-*
 INTJ because COMP
 ‘Uh-huh, because-’
- A57 P *khan2 khòðj5 khaw5 loong2-mòð3 niø hènng1 siø puk2*
 if 1SG.P enter hall-doctor TPC even.more IRR strong
 ‘If I had gone into hospital, it would have been even more serious.’
- A58 *qee2*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’
- A59 *qaw3 nèèw2 kin3 jaa3 lèèw4 thon2-thaan2 cang1 sii4*
 take stuff eat medicine PRF withstand like this
dêj2
 FAC.NEWS
 ‘(I) took things to consume as medicine, and (I) have just withstood (the discomfort of my illness) like this, you must realize.’
- A60 A *mm5*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’

A61 P *man2 paj3 loong2-mòdò3 niø qooj4*
 3.B go hall-doctor TPC INTJ
 ‘(Had I) gone to the hospital, oh dear (we would have lost even more money)!’

A62 *bòø vaw4 lèq5* (.) *pên3 laan4 phunø lèq5*
 NEG say FAC.PRF COP million TPC.FAR FAC.PRF
 ‘Don’t speak (of it) - it (would have) been (a cost of) millions.’

(M leans forward, trying to reach a basket of betel-chewing paraphernalia which K has just finished with. K sees this and takes the basket in hand, passing it to P, and addressing her.)

A63 K *caw4 khiaw4 vaa3*
 2SG.P chew QPLR.INFER
 ‘Are you going to chew (betel nut)?’

A64 (.)

A65 *Mmm4*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’ (*Receiving the basket from K.*)

A66 K *mm2*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’

A67 (.)

A68 *daj4-ñin2 bakø-mòdòn3*
 hear M.B-M
 ‘(I) heard (from) Mone (son of P and M),’

A69 *man2 mùa2 qaw3 ngen2 nam2 khòj5*
 3.B return take money with 1SG.P
 ‘He went to get money from me.’

A70 *vaa1 qiø-phòd1 kaø tok2 khan2daj3 vaa1 san4*
 say F.B-Fa T.LNK fall stairs say thus
 ‘(He) said, Dad fell (from) the stairs, so (he) said.’

- A71 P *m[mm5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- A72 K [*bòø mèèn1 maw2 law5 bòð3*
NEG COP drunk liquor QPLR
'Is it not the case that (you) were drunk?'
- A73 *Mkhaw3 bòø juu1*
3PL.B NEG be.at
'They (the children who live with P and M) weren't in.'
- A74 *dêk2-nòðj4 hanø khaw3 pajø nòðn2 naa2, haa3-kòð1*
child-small TPC.DIST 3PL.B DIR.ABL sleep paddy PST.RCNT
maa2
come
'The children, (they) went to sleep (at the) paddy, (they have) just come.'
- A75 K *sùù4 maa2 vaa3, pu3*
buy come QPLR.INFER fertilizer
'Have (you) bought it, the fertilizer?'
- A76 *Mkhaw3 sùù4 maa2 laø dêê4*
3PL.B buy come PRF FAC.FILLIN
'They've bought (it), you should know.'
- A77 *Mkhaw3 kaø pajø vaan1, phuø khaw3 mii2 laø dêê4*
3PL.B T.LNK DIR.ABL spread MC.HUM 3PL.B have PFV PCL
'They've gone and spread (the fertilizer already), those who have (some).'
- A78 *Mphuø bòø than2 paj3 kaø mii2*
MC.HUM NEG YET go T.LNK there.is
'There are also some people who haven't gone (to spread fertilizer) yet.'
- A79 *Mphuø vaan1 laø kaø mii2*
MC.HUM spread PRF T.LNK there.is
'And there are those who have spread (fertilizer).'

- A80 K *phòq1 vaa1 qanø-*
because COMP HES
'Because um-'
- A81 M [*man2 siø pajø*] *si-*
3.B IRR DIR.ABL IRR
'It's going to-'
- A82 K [*sùù4 haj5 dajø*] *kaw4 paw3*
buy give ACHV nine bag
'(I) bought for you nine bags (of fertilizer).'
- A83 M *man2 bòø dajø-*
3.B NEG ACHV
'It didn't-'
- A84 *baat4 dêê2- khaal lot1 khaal hùà2 haw2 dêê2 san4*
when Q.THEME price car price boat 1.FA Q.THEME thus
baat5-niø qaw2
THZR INTJ
'What about when- there's the price of the car and the boat, what about that now, huh?!'
- A85 A (laughs)
- A86 M *qaw3 saj3 laø sia3 baat5-niø qaw2*
take INDEF.PLACE PRF pay THZR INTJ
'(From) where are we to get money to pay for that, huh?'
- A87 K *kaw4 paw3 kaø ñang2 lùà3 juu1 paaj3 man2*
nine bag T.LNK STILL over be.at end 3.B
'(From) nine bags, there's still (only) the end of it left over.'
- A88 *vaa1 qaw3 khaal lot1 khaal hùà2 maa2*
say take price vehicle price boat come
'(I'm) talking (about) the price of (transporting the fertilizer on) the bus and the boat to come (here).'
- A89 M *qeej2 paw3 nùng1 sii1 phan2 (.) qaw2*
INTJ bag one four thousand INTJ
'Oy, one bag four thousand, huh?'

- A90 A *khaa1 qanø lot1 khaw3 kaø qaw3 phèng2*
price HES vehicle 3PL.B T.LNK take dear
'The price um (of transporting the fertilizer on the) bus, they
charge a high rate, too.'
- A91 *Mqee2*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- A92 A *vaw4 tèl phun4 maa2 phii4*
speak from DEM.FAR come DEM.PROX
'(We're) speaking (of the cost of bringing the fertilizer) from over
there (in the town) to here (in the village).'

23.2 TEXT B

This is a conversation between two men, K and S. They are in their home village, about 35 km outside of Vientiane. K is about 65 years old, S is about 40. They are not related. The conversation takes place outdoors, at the front of K's house. The two men are leaning against a utility truck parked in front of the house. The truck has been borrowed in order to travel to a neighboring area in search of a particular kind of fish trap, a *tum4-thoong2*, a type of giant upright basket trap for use in very large rivers such as the Mekong. K has arrived in the truck from the city some minutes earlier, with a large number of children in tow, who have come for the ride. They are playing nearby. One small child is sleeping in the back tray of the truck. N is the driver of the truck, and is standing by. At one point in this text N speaks, but the conversation here is mostly between K and S. The selection begins just after S arrives on the scene, his curiosity piqued by the action of a car arriving. After a few lines of small talk, there is a brief hiatus, after which K instigates a new topic, namely the destination of the planned trip.

B1 K *cak2-nòj5 kaø siø paj3-phun5*
 soon T.LNK IRR go DEM.FAR
 'Soon, (we're) going to go- over there.'

B2 (0.6)

B3 *saj3*
 INDEF.PLACE
 'Where?'

B4 (1.6)

B5 S *thaa1-saang4 vaa3*
 T-S QPLR.INFER
 'Thaa Saang, you mean?'

B6 (0.8)

B7 K *bòj1*
 NEG
 'No.'

B8 (1.2)

- B9 *paj3* (.) *naa2-lòòm4 naa2-lèèm4*
 go N-L N-ECHO
 ‘(We’re) going to Naa Lòòm and such.’
- B10 *vaa1 siø khaw5 phun5 lèq1*
 say IRR enter DEM.FAR FAC.PRF
 ‘(We) were intending to go in (to the area) over there.’
- B11 S [*paj3 saj3*
 go INDEF.PLACE
 ‘To go where?’
- B12 K [*paj3- khòòng3 qanø nii4 paj3 saj3 man2 siø*
 go thing MC.INAN DEM go INDEF.PLACE 3.B IRR
kaj4, haw2 vaa1 khaw5 phun4 dajø kaj4
 near 1.FA say enter DEM.FAR ACHV near
 ‘To go- (For) this stuff (this type of fish trap), where (could we) go that would be near?, I’d say going in over there would be near.’
- B13 *khaw5 lak2 sii1-sip2 hanø lèq2, kaj4 hanø*
 enter km four-ten TPC.DIST FAC.PRF near TPC.DIST
lèø nòq1
 FAC.PRF QPLR.AGREE
 ‘It’s at Kilometer 40 (that you should) enter, (that’s) near right?’
- B14 S (*S responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- B15 K *siø pajø- thaaj1 huup4 qaw3 qanø nan4*
 IRR go snap photo take MC.INAN DEM.NONPROX
hanø dêê4
 TPC.DIST FAC.FILLIN
 ‘(We’re) going to go- and take photos of that thing, you see.’
- B16 S *qaw3 ñang3*
 take INDEF.INAN
 ‘Take (photos of) what?’
- B17 K *thaaj1 huup4 qaw3 tum4 qanø- cook5 tum4*
 snap photo take basket.trap HES C basket.trap
qanø nan4 hanø naa3
 MC.INAN DEM.NONPROX TPC.DIST FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘(We will) take photos of the basket trap um- the *cook5* (type basket trap), that basket trap, you know.’

500 *Texts*

B18 (0.7)

B19 S (*S responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)

B20 (5.0)

B21 N *tum4 thoong2 tii4, khacaw4 hòong4*
 basket.trap T QPLR.PRESM 3PL.P call
 ‘A *thoong3* basket trap, isn’t it?, (that’s what) they call (it).’

B22 K *kathoong2*
 K-T
 ‘(A) *kathoong2* (type basket trap).’

B23 (1.5)

B24 K *thoong2 sajl paa3 ñòòn4 paa3 ñang3 hanø*
 T put fish sp. fish INDEF.INAN TPC.DIST
naa3
 FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘A *thoong* for putting in *ñoon4* fish and such-like fish, you see.’

B25 (0.3)

B26 S (*S responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)

B27 (0.3)

B28 S *paj3 hua3-naa2-lèèm4 vaa3*
 go H-N-L QPLR.INFER
 ‘(You’re) going to Hua Na Laem, I gather?’

B29 (2.2)

B30 K *siang2-khuan3*
 S-K
 ‘(We’re going to) Siang Khuan.’

B31 (1.2)

B32 K *tuu4 nan4 vaa1, man2 hanø maø kaj3*
 Pa.Pa DEM.NONPROX say 3.B TPC.DIST DIR.ALL far
thèè4, siang2-khuan3 nòq1, bðø mèèn1 kaj4
 really, S-K QPLR.AGREE NEG be.so near
 ‘That grandpa said it is really far, Siang Khuan right? It’s not near.’

B33 (1.0)

- B34 S *siang2-khuan3 khaw5-*
S-K enter
'(To go to) Siang Khuan, (you have to) enter-'
B35 (2.3)
- B36 S *khaw5 laø dêê4-*
enter FAC.PRF FAC.FILLIN
'(You) enter, you know (um)-'
B37 (0.7)
- B38 S *thong1-hua3-siang2 ñang2 jaak5 kaj4*
T-H-S STILL want near
'Thong Siang is still somewhat close.'
B39 (0.5)
- B40 K *thong2-hua3-siang2 kaj4, man2 siø pajø daj4, bòn1 (.)*
T-H-S near 3.B IRR DIR.ABL CAN place
qòðk5 caak5 qanø-
exit from HES
'Thong Hua Siang is near, (but) it would be impossible¹(to get through), (at) the place where (you) come out from um-'
B41 (0.5)
- B42 K *nan4 paj3 han5*
DEM.NONPROX go DEM.DIST
'there going over there.'
B43 (0.6)
- B44 S *mii2 naa2 bòn3, juu1 han5*
there.is paddy QPLR be.at DEM.DIST
'Is there paddy there?'
B45 (0.3)
- B46 K *qee2*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
B47 (0.4)

¹The expression *siø pajø daj* (literally: 'will go and be possible') is an idiom meaning 'as if it would be possible', 'it is impossible'.

- B48 K *qòðk5 caak5 baan4 naa2-haj1 còðm3-sii3- baan4 còðm-3sii3*
 exit from village N-H C-S village C-S
nòq1
 QPLR.AGREE
 ‘(You) go out from Na Hai village, Coom Sii- Coom Sii Village,
 right?’
- B49 S (*S responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- B50 (0.4)
- B51 K *qòðk5 caak5 còðm3-sii3 paj3 han5, man2 dajø luj2*
 exit from C-S go DEM.DIST 3.B ACHV wade
khiø-tom3, bððn1 han5
 CT.SHIT-mud place DEM.DIST
 ‘Going out from Coom Sii to there, (you) have to wade (in) mud,
 (at) that place.’
- B52 (0.1)
- B53 K *kuu3 paj3 lèèw4*
 1SG.B go PRF
 ‘I (have) been (there) already.’
- B54 (0.5)
- B55 K *luj2 khiø-tom3 cang1 pajø khùn5 thaang2 vaang1*
 wade CT.SHIT-mud then DIR.ABL ascend way area
baan4- qanø-
 village HES
 ‘(You) wade in mud, and then go up along the area of the village
 of um...’
- B56 (1.7)
- B57 K *bakø-laa2, baan4 qanø- ñang3 (.) baan4-*
 M.B-L village HES INDEF.INAN village
 ‘...that bloke Laa, the village of um- what is it - the village of...’
- B58 (1.1)
- B59 K *nòðng3 pèèn3 nòðng3 ñang3 han5*
 swamp P swamp INDEF.INAN DEM.DIST
 ‘Paen Swamp (or) Whatever-it’s-called Swamp, there.’
- B60 S (*S responds affirmatively with head toss.*)

- B61 K [cang1 mii2 thaang2 ñaj1 cang1 dii3 paj3 baat5-niø
 then there.is way big then good go THZR
 ‘Then there’s a major road, then (the road) is good, now.’
- B62 S mm5
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’
- B63 (0.1)
- B64 K juu1 vaang1 nii4 paj3 nii4 niø, dong3-laata4-phii3 [niø, man2-
 be.at area DEM go here TPC D-L-P TPC 3.B
 ‘At this area going here, at Dong Laat Phii here, it’s-’
- B65 S [(S responds
 affirmatively with head toss.)
- B66 (0.7)
- B67 K bəø mii2 bəøn1 paj3 niø
 NEG there.is place go TPC
 ‘There’s no place to go.’

23.3 TEXT C

This segment is from the same conversation as Text B, a few minutes later. It begins where there is a hiatus in the talk, and after an 11 second silence, S asks after Loy, K's son, who lives in the same village, DI. Loy has been in the city with K, and S has reason to think that Loy has returned to the village with K, particularly since some of the children who have returned with K are Loy's. S doesn't see Loy around, and so asks after him. After a brief discussion of Loy's not coming, there is another long silence (20 seconds). After this, the speakers resume their earlier discussion (see Text B, above) of their planned day journey to riverside villages, with the aim to find a *kathoong* fish trap.

- C1 (11.0)
- C2 S *bakø-looj3 kaø maa2 phòdm4- niø vaa3*
 M.B-L T.LNK come together TPC QPLR.INFER
 'Loy came with- this (lot), I gather?'
- C3 K *bakø-looj3 hanø bðø maa2*
 M.B-L DEM.DIST NEG come
 'Loy didn't come.'
- C4 (0.2)
- C5 S *qaw2*
 INTJ
 'Oh.'
- C6 (0.2)
- C7 K [*qanø*]-
 HES
 'Um-'
- C8 S [*dêk2*]-*nððj4 sanø naø*
 child-small so TPC.PERIPH
 'Then the kids?' (Then how is it that his kids are here?)
- C9 K *dêk2-nððj4 niø maa2, tèt1 mia2 man2 maa2*
 child-small TPC come only wife 3.B come
 'These kids (of Loy's) came, only his wife came (with them).'
- C10 (0.9)

- C11 *maa2 hòt4* (.) *baan4 noon2 laø m-*
 come reach village N PRF
 ‘Came to None Village, and he-’
- C12 (0.5)
- C13 *phòø-dii3 vaa1 khùn5 lot1 juu1 han5, bakø-looj3*
 right.when say ascend vehicle be.at DEM.DIST M.B-L
phen1 bðø maa2 baat5-niø
 3.P NEG come THZR
 ‘Right when the intention was to get in the car (when we were)
 there (in the city, about to come here), Loy, he didn’t come, now.’
- C14 (0.8)
- C15 S *khaa2 viak4*
 stuck work
 ‘(Was he) tied up with work?’
- C16 (0.7)
- C17 K *kaø bðø khaa2 lèq2*
 T.LNK NEG stuck FAC.PRF
 ‘(He) wasn’t tied up.’
- C18 (0.2)
- C19 *tang4 bðø maa2 sùø-sùù1 niø lèq2*
 intend NEG come NOT.MORE TPC FAC.PRF
 ‘He just purposely didn’t come, that’s all.’
- C20 (1.5)
- C21 K *siø khaa2 ñang3*
 IRR stuck INDEF.INAN
 ‘What would (he) be tied up with?’
- C22 (20s)
- C23 K *khaw3 hêt1 nèèw2-kin3 kin3 khaw5*
 3PL.B make stuff-eat eat rice
 ‘They’re making food, to eat (with) rice (before we go on this trip,
 which is why we’re waiting).’
- C24 *bðø than2 kin3 khaw5-saw4 naa3*
 NEG YET eat breakfast FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘(They all) haven’t yet had breakfast, you know.’

- C25 *phuak4 niø, beng1 song2 hanø*
group TPC look form TPC.DIST
'these lot, by the looks (of them).'
- C26 *kin3 khaw5 lèkaø paj3*
eat rice C.LNK go
'(We will) eat (first) and then go.'
- C27 *qee5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- C28 *sip2-sòng3 moong2 phunø lèqø (.) cùng1 paj3*
ten-two hour TPC.FAR FAC.PRF then go
'(At) 12 o'clock, then (we'll) go.'
- C29 (0.7)
- C30 *sòng3 moong2 kaø (.) siø bøø hòt4 vaa3*
two hour T.LNK IRR NEG reach QPLR.INFER
'(By) two o'clock, (we) won't have reached (there), I gather?'
- C31 (0.7)
- C32 *S hòt4*
reach
'(You will have) reached (there by two o'clock).'
- C33 *K siø bøø dajø kap2 maa2 vaa3*
IRR NEG ACHV return come QPLR.INFER
'Will (we) not have come back (by then)?'
- C34 (6.0)

(After a hiatus of six seconds, N addresses S, asking if he has ever been to the places that K is proposing going to.)

- C35 *N caw4 kaø kheej2 paj3 bòð3, thaang2 laaw2 siø paj3*
2SG.P T.LNK EXP go QPLR way 3SG.FA IRR go
naø
TPC.PERIPH
'Have you ever been (there), the direction he (K) is going?'
- C36 (1.3)

- c37 K *caang4 kaø bðø hên3 cak2 thùal*
 pay T.LNK NEG see how.many time
 ‘(Even if) you paid (him), (he’s) never seen it.’
- c38 (0.7)
- c39 [(laughs)]
- c40 S [*mii2 tèè1 thaang2 lat1 phii4, qanø niø*
 there.is only way short.cut DEM.PROX MC.INAN TPC
 ‘There’s only the short cut here, this one.’
- c41 (1.0)
- c42 *khaw5 lak2 sii1-sip2 niø*
 enter km four-ten TPC
 ‘(You) go in (there) at Km 40.’
- c43 (6.0)
- c44 *paj3 thaang2 hua3-siang2-*
 go way H-S
 ‘(You) go in the direction of Hua Siang-’
- c45 (0.7)
- c46 K *paj3 bðø daj4*
 go NEG CAN
 ‘It’s not possible to go (that way).’
- c47 *thaang2 hua3-siang2 paj3 bðø daj4*
 way H-S go NEG CAN
 ‘In the direction of Hua Siang, it’s not possible to go.’
- c48 (0.8)
- c49 K *kaj3 kaø kaj3 qiik5*
 far T.LNK far more
 ‘(As for being) far, it’s far too.’
- c50 (0.8)
- c51 S *bðø kaj3, kaj4*
 NEG far near
 ‘It’s not far, it’s near.’
- c52 (0.3)

- c53 *paj3 thaang2 lat1*
go way shortcut
'(You) go via the short cut.'
- c54 (0.4)
- c55 **K** *kaj4 vaa3*
near QPLR.INFER
'Oh it's near, is it?'
- c56 (1.2) (*S responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- c57 *qoo4-hoo4 jaa1 vaa1 thaø-veej5*
INTJ NEG.IMP say PCL-FAC.EMPH
'Oho, don't bloody give me that.'
- c58 (1.0)
- c59 **S** *sum1 bakø-tia4 ñang2 lat1 paj3 hanø nòq1*
group M.B-T STILL shortcut go TPC.DIST QPLR.AGREE
'Tia's lot still take a shortcut that way, right?'
- c60 (1.0)
- c61 **K** *paj3 haa3 baan4 bak2-laa2 hanø*
go seek village M.B-L TPC.DIST
'(They) go toward the village of Laa there.'
- c62 (0.7)
- c63 **S** *qaw3 lot1-cak2 lat1 paj3 hanø*
take CT.VEHICLE-motorbike shortcut go TPC.DIST
'Take a motorbike and cut to there.'
- c64 (1.2)
- c65 *muat4 lot1-thaj3, khaw3 ñang2 vaa1 pajø*
group CT.VEHICLE-plough 3PL.B STILL say DIR.ABL
lat1 ñang2 kaj4
shortcut STILL near
'The plough-tractor guys, they still say going (by the) short cut is still near.'
- c66 (2.8)

- c67 K *man2 hanø, man2 thaang2 bðø dii3 laaj3, hon3-thaang2*
 3.B TPC.DIST 3.B way NEG good very roadway
 ‘It, it’s a very bad road, (that) roadway.’
- c68 (1.0)
- c69 S *khòj5 vaa1 thaang2 dii3 dêj2, khòj5 vaa1*
 1SG.P say road good FAC.NEWS 1SG.P say
 ‘I say the road’s good you know, I say.’
- c70 (0.5)
- c71 K *mbòq5*
 INTJ
 ‘Is that right?’
- c72 S *mm5*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’
- c73 (3.0)
- c74 K *khaw3 hêt1 laø bðð3, tang4-tèè1 qanø (.) baan4-*
 3PL.B make PRF QPLR from HES village
 ‘Have they fixed (it) already (I wonder), from um the village of...’
- c75 (0.5)
- c76 S *baat5 caw4 [vaa1 song1-*
 when 2SG.P say send
 ‘When you said (you) sent’
- c77 K [*som3-sii3 paj3*
 S-S go
 ‘...Som Sii and further on.’
- c78 (0.2)
- c79 S *sum1 caw4 phèè1 khaw5*
 group 2SG.P distribute rice
 ‘-(when) you lot (were) distributing rice.’
- c80 (0.2)

- c81 K *nan4* *laø*
DEM.NONPROX PRF
'That's right (We did go that way when we went distributing rice).'
- c82 (0.5)
- c83 *man2 pên3 khiø-tom3 khiø-saaj2 lot1* (.)
3.B COP CT.SHIT-mud CT.SHIT-sand vehicle
'It's muddy (and) sandy, the vehicle-'
- c84 (0.3)
- c85 *lèèn1 lot1 l- (.) paj3 thaang2 khiø-saaj2 vaang1*
run vehicle r- go way CT.SHIT-sand time
hanø
TPC.DIST
'Going by car, (we) w- went on a sand road at that time.'
- c86 S (*S responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- c87 (0.5)
- c88 S *khaw3 khùù2 vaa1 man2 khaw5 juu1 hanø dii3 lèèw4*
3PL.B why say 3.B enter be.at TPC.DIST good PRF
'(So) why did they say going in there it's very good?'
- c89 K *qmø2*
nope
'Nope (that road's not good).'
- c90 (2.0)
- c91 K *pajø phèè1 khaw5, phuø paj3 hanø lèq5*
DIR.ABL distribute rice MC.HUM go TPC.DIST FAC.PRF
'(They) went distributing rice, those ones who went (along that road).'
- c92 *cang1 vaa1 man2 pên3 thaang2 khiø-saaj2*
thus say 3.B COP way CT.SHIT-sand
'So they said it was a sand road,'
- c93 [*vaang1 hanø*
time TPC.NONPROX
'at that time.'

- c94 S [maa2 phii4 maa2 phii4 lak2 sii4-sip2 phii4
 come DEM.PROX come DEM.PROX km four-ten DEM.PROX
 sabaaj3
 easy
 ‘(You should) come here, come here, at Km 40 here, (it’s an) easy
 (way).’
- c95 K khaw5 lak2 sii1-sip2 niø lèq5
 enter km four-ten TPC FAC.PRF
 ‘(Yes) it’s at Km 40 (that you should) enter.’
- c96 (3.0)
- c97 S khaw3 kaø qòòk5 maa2 nòòng3 bùk2 phii4
 3PL.B T.LNK exit come N B DEM.PROX
 ‘They come out at Nòòng Bùk (Village) here.’
- c98 baan4 nòòng3 [bùk2
 village N B
 ‘Nòòng Bùk Village.’
- c99 K [qòòk5 paj3 baan4- (.) makø-hiaw2
 exit go village M-H
 ‘(It) goes out to (the) village (of)- Mak Hiaw.’
- c100 S makø-hiaw2 naa2-lòòng4
 M-H N-L
 ‘(The villages of) Mak Hiaw (and) Naa Lòòng.’
- c101 K baan4 makø-hiaw5 hanø lèq5
 village M-H TPC.DIST FAC.PRF
 ‘It’s Mak Hiaw Village (where we should go in order to find that
 fish trap).’
- c102 (0.1)
- c103 qanø
 HES
 ‘um’
- c104 (0.6)

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- C105 *tuu4 qanø-nan4* *vaa1 baan4 phamaa4*
 Pa.Pa MC.INAN-DEM.NONPROX say village P
makø-hiaw5, vaa1 san4
 M-H say thus
 ‘That grandpa said (to go to) Phama Village (and) Mak Hiaw, so (he) said.’
- C106 (1.0)
- C107 *tuu4-tiw3 vaa1-*
 Pa.Pa-T say
 ‘Grandpa Tiw said-’
- C108 *kuu3 pajø thaam3 tuu4-tiw3 beng1 lèw4*
 1SG.B DIR.ABL ask Pa.Pa-T look PRF
 ‘I went and asked Grandpa Tiw already.’
- C109 (1.2)
- C110 *thaam3 vaang1 niø, tòong4 mii2 lèq5, laaw2 vaa1*
 ask time TPC OBLIG there.is FAC.PRF 3SG.FA say
 ‘(I) asked (him) just now, (he said) there must be (some of those traps there), he said.’
- C111 (20.0)

23.4 TEXT D

This segment is yet later in the same conversation as Texts B and C. A third interlocutor has arrived, an older man called M. M has heard about the planned trip to find the special fish trap, and just as he has arrived on the scene, he opens this segment to ask who all is actually going on the trip.

- D1 Mmè̀n1 phaj3 dè̀1 siø paj3 niø
 COP INDEF.HUM all IRR go TPC
 ‘Who all is going?’
- D2 K sò̀ng3 khon2 saam3 khon2
 two CLF.PERSON three CLF.PERSON
 ‘Two (of us), three (of us).’ (*Points toward S, signaling that S is the third person going along.*)
- D3 Mbakø-saj2 kaø siø paj3
 M.B-Sai T.LNK will go
 ‘Sai (S) is going also?’
- D4 S khii1 lot1 lèn4
 ride car for.fun
 ‘(Yes, I’m) going for a ride in the car for fun.’
- D5 Mqooj4 paj3 nak2 lot1 khaw3 ñang3 laø baat5-niø
 INTJ go heavy car 3PL.B INDEF.INAN PRF THZR
 ‘Oy, what’s the point of just weighing down their car, now?’
- D6 S bðø nak2 hanø
 NEG heavy TPC.DIST
 ‘(I) won’t weigh (it) down.’
- D7 man2 lè̀n1 dii3
 3.B run good
 ‘It (the car) runs well.’
- D8 K caw4 jaak5 paj3 nam2 bðð3
 2SG.P want go with QPLR
 ‘Do you want to come along?’ (*K is addressing M.*)

514 *Texts*

- D9 M *mqm2*
nope
'Nope.'
- D10 *jaan4 puaj1 lot1*
afraid ill car
'(I'm) afraid (I'll) be car sick.'
- D11 K (*laughs*)
- D12 S *maa2 laø phòø-dii3-*
come and right.then-
'(If M) comes (along), then right away (he'll)-'
- D13 (*laughs*)
- D14 *puaj1*
ill
'-be ill.'
- D15 (*laughter; mutual gaze, S and K.*)
- D16 (s)
- D17 K *tum4 kathoong2*
basket.trap kathoong
'A *kathoong* (type) basket trap (is what we are after).'
- D18 M *tum4 paa3 ñðòñ2 tum4 paa3 ñðòñ2*
trap fish sp. trap fish sp.
'(It's) a trap for ñðòñ2 fish, a trap for ñðòñ2 fish.'
- D19 (1.0)
- D20 *thoong2 paa3 ñðòñ2*
trap.type fish sp.
'A *thoong* trap for ñðòñ fish.'
- D21 (17s)
- D22 *siang2-khuan3 juu1 hùan2 laaj3-*
S-K be.at house nephw-
'(At) Siang Khuan (Village), at the village of (my) nephw-'
- D23 (0.2)

- D24 *laan3 khòðj5 mii2*
nephew 1SG.P there.is
'-my nephew there are (these traps).'
- D25 (0.5)
- D26 *mii2 khuu1 bak2*
have every M.B
'Every bloke has one.'
- D27 (1.6)
- D28 **K** *khan2 hòðt4 siang2-khuan3 hanø* *bòø qùt2, vaal san4*
if reach S-K TPC.DIST NEG lacking say thus
saa3
IMP.SUGG
'If (you) reach Siang Khuan, (those traps will) not (be) lacking,
put it that way.'
- D29 **Mmm5**
intj
'Uh-huh.'
- D30 *haak5 bòø mii2 laaj3*
but NEG there.is much
'But there aren't many (of those traps).'
- D31 *mii2 phuø- (.) sii1 lang3 haa5 lang3*
there.is MC.HUM four CLF.FRAME five CLF.FRAME
'There is (per) person- four or five of them.'
- D32 (6.0)
- D33 **K** *laang2 thùal kaø siø sùù4 qaw3 nam2 naa3*
some occasion T.LNK IRR buy take with FAC.EXPLIC
'Maybe (we) are going to buy one to take (away) too, you see.'
- D34 (1.2)
- D35 *siø sùù4 qaw3 pajø vaj4*
IRR buy take DIR.ABL keep
'(We) will buy (one) and go and keep (it).'
- D36 (0.7)

516 *Texts*

- D37 *kuu3dang3 phen1 vaa1*
storehouse 3.P say
'(A) storehouse, they say.'
- D38 (1.3)
- D39 *qaw3 pajø vaj4 pê3-*
take DIR.ABL keep COP
'(We'll) take (it) and go and keep (it) as-'
- D40 (1.6)
- D41 *juu1 (.) kom3 pamong4 hanø lèq5*
be.at department fishery TPC.DIST FAC.PRF
'At the Fishery Department there.'
- D42 (0.4)
- D43 *Mthii1lanùk1 tii4*
souvenir QPLR.PRESM
'(As) a souvenir, you surely mean?'
- D44 (0.1)
- D45 **K** *mm4*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- D46 (5.0)

23.5 TEXT E

This conversation takes place in the village of DI, 35 km outside of Vientiane. A group of middle-aged women are chatting as they take a break from weaving large reed mats. This fragment begins when M notices that a car has just driven into the compound of a house near to them.

- E1 *Mkhùu2 vaa1 hên3 lot1 lèn1 khaw5 paj3 han5*
like COMP see vehicle run enter go DEM.DIST
'(It's) like (I) saw a vehicle run in there.'
- E2 *song1 khaw5-caaw4 qiø-taa3 vaa3*
deliver rice-sp. F.B-T QPLR.INFER
'(They're) delivering rice to Taa, are they?'
- E3 (1.3)
- E4 *J song1 qaajø-kham2laa5*
deliver eBr-K
'(No, they're) dropping off (the classificatory elder brother whose name is) Khamlaa.'
- E5 (1.5)
- E6 *Mqee5 pajø song1 bakø-kham2laa5*
INTJ DIR.ABL deliver M.B-K
'Oh I see, they're delivering Khamlaa.'
- E7 *phii1-nòng4 maa2 tèl taang1-pathêêt4 nòq1*
eG-yG come from other-country QPLR.AGREE
'(His) relatives have come from abroad, right?'
- E8 *qaaj4 man2 maa2 tèl taang1-pathêêt4*
eBr 3.B come from other-country
'His (Khamlaa's) elder brother has come (here) from abroad.'
- E9 *Q khaw3 pajø sùu4 baan3 patuu3-pa[tii3*
3PL.B DIR.ABL buy frame cupboard-ECHO
pòng1-qiam4]-pòng1-qeem4
CT.OPENING-window-CT.OPENING-ECHO
'They have been to buy frames for cupboards, windows and such.'

- E10 T [*kham2laa5 saj3*]
 K INDEF.PLACE
 ‘Which Khamlaa (are you talking about)?’ (i.e., ‘Khamlaa from where?’)
- E11 J *nòng4-saaj2 laaw2*
 yG-male 3SG.FA
 ‘(It’s) his (Khamlaa’s) younger brother (not his older brother as you said before).’
- E12 V *kham2laa5 phêt1*
 K P
 ‘Phet’s khamlaa’
- E13 M *qee5 nòng4-saaj2 man2*
 INTJ yG-male 3.B
 ‘Oh (I see), his younger brother.’

23.6 TEXT F

This conversation takes place in a hotel room in the city of Vientiane. The speakers are D and S, two women in their early twenties. The two used to work together as assistant staff at the Japanese embassy. D has been away from Vientiane for a few years, and she is now visiting. S is paying her a social visit. It is the first time in a few years that the two have seen each other. The conversation consists mostly of gossip about their place of work.

F1 S *caw4 qòðk5 naø*
 2SG.P exit TPC.PERIPH
 ‘(When) you left (working at the embassy).’

F2 (.)

F3 S *qùajø-qèèt5 khaw5 maa2 dêê4*
 eZ-Q enter come FAC.FILLIN
 ‘Qèèt came in, you know (to take over your job).’

F4 (0.5)

F5 S *laaw2 bòø mak1 qùajø-qèèt5*
 3SG.FA NEG like eZ-Q
 ‘She (your old boss) didn’t like Qèèt.’

F6 (0.2)

F7 S *saj4*
 use
 ‘(She) used (her).’

F8 (0.4)

F9 S *saj4 qùajø-qèèt5*
 use eZ-Q
 ‘(She) used Qèèt...’

F10 (0.3)

F11 S *khùn5 pajø laang4 theng3 qanø-*
 ascend DIR.ABL wash above HES
 ‘...to go up and wash above um-’

F12 (2.0)

- F13 D *labiang3*
balcony
'(the) balcony?'
- F14 (2.0)
- F15 S *phêdaan3* (.) *hùan2 khua2*
ceiling house prepare.food
'the ceiling (.) (of) the kitchen.'
- F16 (0.5)
- F17 D *qee5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- F18 (0.3)
- F19 S *laaw2* *bòø mak1 lèèw4 hanø* *naø*
3SG.FA NEG like PRF TPC.DIST TPC.PERIPH
'She (the boss) didn't like (Qèèt).'
- F20 (1.0)
- F21 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- F22 (0.5)
- F23 S *laaw2 sang1*
3SG.FA hate
'She hated (her).'
- F24 (0.2)
- F25 S *bèèp5*
like
'(It's) like,'
- F26 (.)
- F27 S *khacaw4* *bòø khòj1 mak1 juu1 hùan2 hanø* *naa3*
3PL.P NEG much TEND be.at house TPC.DIST FAC.FILLIN
'They (the boss and her colleagues) didn't tend to be at home, you see.'

- F28 D *qee5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.' (*D accompanies this spoken affirmative response with head toss gesture.*)
- F29 (1.0)
- F30 S *laaw2 kaø haj5 qòðk5*
3SG.FA T.LNK give leave
'She (the boss) was making (Qèèt) leave (the job).'
- F31 (2.5)
- F32 S *bèèp5 (.)*
like
'(It's) like.'
- F33 D *khan2 sang2 laø saj4 khùn5 pajø laang4 qanø*
if hate PCL use ascend DIR.ABL wash CLF.INAN
nan4
DEM.NONPROX
'(You mean) if (the boss) hates (Qèèt) then (she) uses (her) to go up and clean that thing?'
- F34 (0.3)
- F35 S *bòø mèn1*
NEG BE.SO
'Not so.'
- F36 (1.3)
- F37 S *bèèp5 khacaw4 hêt1 saj4 (.)*
like 3PL.P do use
'(It's) like, they intentionally use (their employees)...'
- F38 S *saj4 haw2 bèèp5 nèèw2 hêt1 ñaak4 [hanø naa3]*
use 1.FA like way do difficult TPC.DIST FAC.FILLIN
'...use us for things which are difficult to do, you see.'
- F39 D [*mm5*]
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'

- F40 S *lèkaø hêt1-*
and do
'and then (they) act-'
- F41 (1.2)
- F42 S *hêt1 bèèp5 bòø phòò2-caj3 haw2 hanø naa3*
do like NEG full-heart 1.FA TPC.DIST FAC.FILLIN
'...(they) act like (they're) not satisfied (with) us, you know.'
- F43 D *mm5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- F44 D *lèø baat5-niø-*
and THZR
'And so-'
- F45 (0.5)
- F46 S *hêt1 jaak5 haj5 haw2 laa2 qòòk5 qêêng3*
do want give 1.FA depart exit self
'(They) act (like they) want to get us to resign ourselves.'
- F47 (0.6)
- F48 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- F49 S *tèè-*
but
'But-'
- F50 (0.4)
- F51 S *tèè1 quàjø-qèèt5*
but eZ-Q
'But (regarding) Qèèt,'
- F52 (0.3)
- F53 S *khan2 laa2 (.)*
if resign
'if (she) resigned,'

- F54 *khan2 laa2 qòðk5 qêêng3 laø mèèn2 bòø daj4 ngen2*
 if resign exit self PRF COP NEG acquire money
dêê5
 FAC.FILLIN
 ‘if (she) resigned herself then it’s the case that she wouldn’t get
 (any) money (upon leaving her job).’
- F55 (0.2)
- F56 *D qee5*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’ (*D accompanies this affirmative response with head
 toss gesture.*)
- F57 (1.0)
- F58 *S tòòng4 haj5 khaw3 laj1 qòðk5, haw2 cùng1-khòðj1 daj4-*
 OBLIG give 3PL.B chase exit 1.FA so-then acquire
 ‘(One has to) get them to fire (us), and then we get-’
- F59 *haw2 cùng1-khòðj1 daj4 ngen2 hanø naa3*
 1.FA so-then acquire money TPC.DIST FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘...we then get money (upon leaving our job), you must under-
 stand.’
- F60 *D qee5*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’ (*D accompanies this affirmative response with head
 toss gesture.*)
- F61 (0.4)
- F62 *S lèø baat-niø hanø*
 and THZR TPC.DIST
 ‘And so now,’
- F63 (0.5)
- F64 *S quàjø-qèèt5, laaw2 kaø bòø qòðk5*
 eZ-Q 3SG.FA T.LNK NEG exit
 ‘(As for) Qèèt, so she didn’t leave (her job).’
- F65 *S laaw2 kaø thonø-thon2 juu1*
 3SG.FA T.LNK RDP.A-withstand CONT
 ‘She put up with it.’

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F66 (0.8)

F67 S *kaø- qaw3 paj3 qaw3 maa2 khaw3 kaø laj1 qòòk5*
 T.LNK take go take come 3PL.B T.LNK chase exit
 ‘So- Eventually they fired (her).’

F68 (0.5)

F69 D *mm5*

INTJ

‘Uh-huh.’ (*D accompanies this affirmative response with head toss gesture.*)

F70 (1.7)

F71 S *vêlaa2-*
 time
 ‘When-’

F72 (1.0)

F73 S *don3 teep5 maa2, lèkaø-*
 long.time quite come C.LNK
 ‘Quite a long time after (that), then-’

F74 (0.5)

F75 S *mii2 khon2*
 there.is person

‘There was a person,’

F76 (0.3)

F77 S *khon2 ñipun2 qaw3-*
 person Japan take

‘A Japanese person (i.e., embassy staff) (who) took’

F78 (0.6)

F79 S *luuk4-saaw3 khòng3 mèø-baan4 hùan2 muu1 laaw2*
 C-girl of CT.Mo-home house friend 3SG.FA
naø
 TPC.PERIPH

‘the child of the housemaid of a friend’

F80 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)

- F81 S *hêt1*
do
'to do (the job of housekeeper).'
- F82 (0.2)
- F83 S *sùù1 naang2 taa3*
name miss name
'(Her) name (was) Miss Taa.'
- F84 (0.2)
- F85 S *han5 lèq1, khòðj5 mak1 long3 sùù1 caw4 kap2 sùù1*
DEM.DIST FAC.PRF 1SG.P TEND lost name 2SG.P with name
laaw2 hanø lèq1
3SG.FA TPC.DIST FAC.PRF
'There, I tend to mix your name and her name.'
- F86 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- F87 (0.2)
- F88 D *taa3 kap2 daa3*
T and D
'Taa and Daa.'
- F89 S *mm5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- F90 (1.0)
- F91 S *laø naø*
and TPC.PERIPH
'So then,'
- F92 (0.5)
- F93 S *qaw3 paj3 hêt1 viak4*
take go do work
'(The embassy staff member) took (Miss Taa) to work (for her).'
- F94 (0.7)

- F95 S *qanø nan4 naø-*
CLF.INAN DEM.NONPROX TPC.PERIPH
'So anyway,'²
- F96 *qooj4 laaw2 tèèng1 khùang1*
INTJ 3SG.FA dress clothes
'Oh, (the way) she wears clothes,'
- F97 (0.3)
- F98 S (*alveolar click*)
- F99 (0.5)
- F100 S *sutø-sut1 leej2*
RDP.A-extreme NO.ADO
'(She's) quite extreme.'
- F101 (0.7)
- F102 D *paan3 vaal pajø lin5 baaw1 [cang1 sii4 vaal*
extent COMP DIR.ABL play bachelor way thus say
tiø]
QPLR.PRESM
'(It's) like (she's) going out to chase boys, you mean?'
- F103 S [*qùù4*]
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- F104 D (laughs) (1.5)
- F105 S *haak5 tèè1 vaal kapoong1 laaw2 bòø nung1, laaw2 nung1*
but but COMP skirt 3SG.FA NEG wear 3SG.FA wear
tèè1 song5
only trousers
'But skirts she doesn't wear, she wears only trousers.'
- F106 (0.2)
- F107 D *qee5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh'

²The expression 'that thing' is an idiomatic way of raising a new topic for discussion; a bit like English *That reminds me*.

- F108 (0.5)
- F109 S *lèq1-*
FAC.PRF
'And'
- F110 (0.1)
- F111 S [*song-*]
trousers
'Trousers-'
- F112 D [*lèø] hun1 laaw2 [ngaam2, mèn1 bòð3]*
and figure 3SG.FA beautiful BE.SO QPLR
'And her figure is beautiful, right?'
- F113 S [*phom3 niø]*
hair TPC
'Her hair-'
- F114 (0.5)
- F115 S *hun1 ngaam2*
figure look.good
'(Her) figure is beautiful.'
- F116 S [*s-*]
- F117 D [*qee5]*
INTJ
'Uh-huh'
- F118 S *khon2 suung3 qiik5*
person tall more
'(She's a) tall person, too.'
- F119 D *qee5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- F120 (0.2)
- F121 S *khù2 kan3 kap2 naaj2 (.) ñang2 vaal*
like COLL with boss still say
'Like her boss, (.) (I) still say.'
- F122 (0.7)

- F123 S *suung3 khù2 kan3 kap2 naaj2*
tall like COLL with boss
'(She's) tall like her boss.'
- F124 (.)
- F125 D *qee5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh'
- F126 S *haak5 tèè1 vaa1 man2 hun1 ñaj1 kòn1 naaj2*
but but COMP 3.B figure big before boss
'But she (has) a bigger figure than (her) boss.'
- F127 D *qee5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh'
- F128 (1.0)
- F129 S *lèø- qanø*
and HES
'And um-'
- F130 (1.0)
- F131 S *khaw5 paj3 qanø-*
enter go HES
'(When she) goes in um-'
- F132 (.)
- F133 S *hêt1 viak4 hanø*
do work TPC.DIST
'to work there,'
- F134 (1.5)
- F135 S *phom3 laaw2 hanø*
hair 3SG.FA TPC.DIST
'Her hair'
- F136 (0.3)
- F137 S *sii3 daj3 sii3 daj3 mii2 met2, lêp1 mù2 niø sii3 nùng1*
color INDEF color INDEF have all nail hand TPC color one
'(It's) any and every color, the fingernails one color,'

- F138 (0.3)
- F139 S *mùù4-qùùn1 sii3 nùng1* (laugh)
tomorrow color one
'tomorrow another color.'
- F140 D *pèèk5 nòq1*
weird QPLR.AGREE
'Weird, huh?'
- F141 S *qee5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- F142 D *khan2 pên3 mèø-baan4 laø thaa2 lêp1 qaw3 thèè4 qaw3 vaa1*
if be CT.Mo-home prf apply nail take real take say
'(Even) though (she) is household staff, (she) paints (her) nails like crazy.'³
- F143 S *hanø lèq1*
TPC.DIST FAC.PRF
'Indeed.'
- F144 (0.5)
- F145 S *kaø- laaw2- sum1 qùajø-kham2 qaø-*
T.LNK- 3SG.FA- group eZ-K a-
'So- She- Kham and her lot, a-'
- F146 *qi- qiø-taa3*
F.B- F.B-T
'(They said) T- Taa,'
- F147 (0.4)
- F148 S *pên3-ñang3 mùng2 khùù2 maø thaa2 lêp2 nèèw2 nii4*
WHY 2SG.B WHY DIR.ALL paint nail manner DEM
'Why do you paint your nails like this?'
- F149 (0.5)

³The expression *qaw3 thèè4 qaw3 vaa1*, literally 'take real take say' is an idiom meaning 'like crazy, to an extreme'.

- F150 S *khacaw4 vaw4 naø*
 3PL.P say TPC.PERIPH
 ‘(This is what) they said.’
- F151 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- F152 (0.5)
- F153 S *mùng2 bøø jaan4 naaj2 khiø-diat5 vaa3, (.)*
 2SG.B NEG fear boss CT.SHIT-disgusted QPLR.INFER
mùng2 hêt1 kin3
 2SG.B make eat
 ‘(They said) Aren’t you afraid the boss will be disgusted, (when) you are preparing food?’
- F154 (0.8)
- F155 S *cak2 lèq1*
 don’t.know TPC.PRF
 ‘(She said) Who knows?’
- F156 (0.3)
- F157 S *khòj5 thaa2 cang1 sii4 kaø bøø hên3 laaw2 vaw4 cang1*
 1SG.P apply like thus T.LNK NEG see 3SG.FA say like
daj3
 INDEF
 ‘I apply (makeup) like this, (I) don’t see her say anything.’
- F158 S (*laughs*)
- F159 (0.2)
- F160 S *laø baat5-niø baat5 naaj2-*
 PRF THZR when boss
 ‘And so when (her) boss-’
- F161 (0.3)
- F162 S *naaj2- (.) phuø maj1 maa2 baat5-niø naø*
 boss MC.HUM new come THZR TPC.PERIPH
 ‘the boss – (when) a new one came, now,’
- F163 S *phuø-nan4 kap2 (.) baat-niø naø*
 MC.HUM-DEM.NONPROX return THZR TPC.PERIPH
 ‘That person (your old boss) returned (to Japan), you see.’

- F164 S *phuø- (.) phuø caw4 hêt1 nam2 (.) kap2 baat-niø*
 MC.HUM MC.HUM 2SG.P do with go.back THZR
naø
 TPC.PERIPH
 ‘(I mean) the one (.) the one you (used to) work with (.), (she) returned, you see.’
- F165 D *qee5*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’
- F166 (1.0)
- F167 S *kap2 laø baat-niø phuø maj1 maa2*
 go.back PRF THZR MC.HUM new come
 ‘(She, your old boss) returned (to Japan) and now a new person came (to Laos in her place).’
- F168 (1.2)
- F169 D [*laj1 qòðk5 vaa1 tiø*]
 chase exit say QPLR.PRESM
 ‘(So the new boss) fired (Taa, you’re) saying?’
- F170 S [*bèèp5*]
 like
 ‘(It’s) like-’
- F171 (0.2)
- F172 S *laø*
 PRF
 ‘So then,’
- F173 (1.7)
- F174 S *da- daj4 cak2 dùan3 nòð4*
 ACH- ACHV how.many month QPLR.WNDR
 ‘aft- after how many months was it, I wonder?’
- F175 (0.5)

- F176 S *laø bèèp5 laaw2 thoo2 maa2, siø maø sang1 viak4*
 PRF like 3SG.FA phone come IRR DIR.ALL order work
kan3 hanø naa3
 COLL TPC.DIST FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘Then like she (the boss) telephoned, (she) was going to deliver
 some instructions (to Taa), you see.’
- F177 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- F178 (0.2)
- F179 S *kaø bðø daj4*
 T.LNK NEG CAN
 ‘It wasn’t possible.’
- F180 (0.1)
- F181 S *man2 bðø juu1*
 3.B NEG be.at
 ‘She (Taa) wasn’t there.’
- F182 (0.3)
- F183 D *mm3*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’ (*D accompanies affirmative response with head toss
 gesture.*)
- F184 S *man2-*
 3.B
 ‘She-’
- F185 (0.5)
- F186 S *bèèp5 [qððk5 paj3 nððk4] (.) talððt5*
 like exit go outside CONST
 ‘Like (she) would [go out] constantly.’
- F187 D *[qððk5 paj3 nððk4]*
 exit go out
 [go out] (*N responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- F188 (1.7)

- F189 S *lèø baat5-niø (.) laaw2 bðø-*
PRF THZR 3SG.FA NEG
'And (.) she (Taa) hadn't-'
F190 (0.5)
- F191 S *hian2 phasaa3 kaø*
learn language T.LNK
'learnt the language, so-'
F192 (0.5)
- F193 S *phasaa3 m-*
language
'the language m-'
F194 (0.2)
- F195 S *vaw4 nam2 laaw2 bðø daj4 dêê4*
speak with 3SG.FA NEG CAN FAC.FILLIN
'It was impossible (for the new boss) to speak with her, you see.'
F196 (0.2)
- F197 S *vaw4 nam2 laaw2 bðø daj4 dêê4*
speak with 3SG.FA NEG CAN FAC.FILLIN
'It was impossible (for the new boss) to speak with her.'
F198 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture, twice.*)
F199 (0.3)
- F200 S *dajø- (.) tòðng4 dajø saj4 laam1 hanø naa3*
ACHV OBLIG ACHV use interpreter TPC.DIST FAC.EXPLIC
'(They) had to- (They) were forced to use an interpreter, you see.'
F201 (0.4)
- F202 D *mm5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.' (*D accompanies affirmative response with head toss gesture.*)
F203 S *laø baat5-niø laaw2 vaa1*
PRF THZR 3SG.FA say
'And so she (the boss) said,'
F204 (0.5)

- F205 S *caw3 pajø hian2 phasaa2 qangkit2 dee4* (.) *vaa1*
 2SG.P DIR.ALL learn language English FAC.ONRCD say
sii4 naø
 thus TPC.PERIPH
 ‘“You go and study English y’hear!,” so she said.’
- F206 (0.5)
- F207 S *pajø sòðk4 hian2 saa3* (.) *phen1 vaa1*
 DIR.ABL seek study IMP.SUGG 3.P say
 ‘“Go and seek studies,” she said.’
- F208 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- F209 (1.4)
- F210 S *phòq1 vaa1* (.) *caw4 kap2 khòðj5 vaw4 kan3, bðø*
 because COMP 2SG.P and 1SG.P speak COLL NEG
khaw5-caj3 hanø naa3
 enter-heart TPC.DIST FAC.EXPLIC
 ‘Because (when) you and I speak together, (we) don’t understand
 (each other), you see.’
- F211 D *mm5*
 INTJ
 ‘Uh-huh.’ (*D accompanies affirmative response with head toss
 gesture.*)
- F212 S *siø sang1 ñang3 kaø bðø daj4*
 IRR order INDEF.INAN T.LNK NEG CAN
 ‘To give instructions is impossible.’
- F213 *laaw2 vaa1 sii4 lèq1*
 3SG.FA say thus FAC.PRF
 ‘This is what she (the boss) said.’
- F214 (0.5)
- F215 S *laø laaw2 kaø*
 PRF 3SG.FA T.LNK
 ‘And then she (the boss),’
- F216 (2.0)

- F217 S *bòòk5 man2 pajø hian2*
 tell 3.B DIR.ABL study
 ‘told her (Taa) to go and study.’
- F218 (0.2)
- F219 S *qaw3 paj3 sathan3-thuut3 (.) leej2 dèj2 hanø*
 take go embassy NO.ADO FAC.NEWS TPC.DIST
 ‘(The boss) took (Taa) straight to the embassy, you know.’
- F220 *qaw3 paj3 sathan3-thuut3 (.) pajø bòòk5*
 take go embassy DIR.ABL tell
 ‘(She) took (her) to the embassy, (she) went and told (her this).’
- F221 (1.0)
- F222 S *lèèw4 baat5-niø kaø kap2 maa2*
 PRF THZR T.LNK go.back come
 ‘So then (Taa) came back (to work).’
- F223 *maø hêt1 daj4 (.) tòòl qiik5*
 DIR.ALL do CAN connect more
 ‘(She) was able to come back and continue to do (her job).’
- F224 (0.5)
- F225 S *tòòl qiik5 cak2 dùan3*
 connect more how.many month
 ‘(So) after a further few months,’
- F226 (.)
- F227 S *tòòl qiik5 dùan3 paaj3*
 connect more month beyond
 ‘after more than a month (from then),’
- F228 (0.2)
- F229 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture, smiles.*)
- F230 S (*laughter*)
- F231 D *lèkaø qòòk5*
 then exit
 ‘(So) then (she) left (the job)?’
- F232 (1.0)

- F233 S *laø baat5-niø*
PRF THZR
'So then,'
- F234 (0.2)
- F235 S *mùu4 nùng1 laaw2 thoo2 maa2, laaw2 bòø ceeq2*
day one 3SG.FA phone come 3SG.FA NEG meet
'One day she (the boss) phoned and she didn't find (Taa there).'
- F236 (0.2)
- F237 D [*mm5*]
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- F238 S [*bòø ceeq2*] *lèø laaw2 thoo2 khaw5 maa2 hùan2 khòj5*
NEG meet PRF 3SG.FA phone enter come house 1SG.P
'(The boss) didn't find (Taa there) and then she called my house.'
- F239 (0.5)
- F240 S *thoo2 khaw5 maa2 hùan2 khòj5 laø-*
phone enter come house 1SG.P PRF
'(She) called my house and then,'
- F241 (1.0)
- F242 S *khòj5 thaam3- (.) qee5 laaw2 thaam3 khòj5 vaa1*
1SG.P ask INTJ 3SG.FA ask 1SG.P COMP
'I asked- no, she asked me:'
- F243 (0.7)
- F244 S *laaw2 qòøk5 paj3 saj3*
3SG.FA exit go INDEF.PLACE
'Where did she go out to?'
- F245 (0.8)
- F246 S *khòj5 bòø huu4 dêø*
1SG.P NEG know FAC.FILLIN
'I don't know.'
- F247 S *khòj5 vaa1 cang1 sii4 naø*
1SG.P say way thus TPC.PERIPH
'This is what I said.'

- F248 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- F249 D *mm5*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.'
- F250 S *beng1 dee4 khòj5 siø pajø thaam3 khon2 ñaam2*
look FAC.ONRCD 1SG.P IRR DIR.ABL ask person guard
haj5
give
'Look y'hear, I will go and ask the guard for (you).'
- F251 S *khòj5 vaa1 cang1 sii4*
1SG.P say way thus
'This is what I said.'
- F252 (0.6)
- F253 S *lèø*
FAC.PRF
'So then,'
- F254 (0.2)
- F255 S *khòj5 pajø thaam3 khon2 ñaam2*
1SG.P DIR.ABL ask person guard
'I went and asked the guard.'
- F256 *khon2 ñaam2 vaa1 laaw2 qòk5 paj3 talaat5, vaa1 san4*
person guard say 3SG.FA exit go market say thus
'The guard said she'd gone out to the market, so (he) said.'
- F257 (0.8)
- F258 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture, smiles.*)
- F259 S *laaw2 vaa1 qaw2*
3SG.FA say INTJ
'She (the boss) said "Huh?!" '
- F260 S *khòj5 bðø dajø bðk5 haj5 laaw2 qòk5 paj3 talaat5*
1SG.P NEG ACHV tell give 3SG.FA exit go market
'I didn't tell her to go to the market.'

- F261 S *laaw2 vaal cang1 sii4 lèq1*
3SG.FA say like this FAC.PRF
'This is just what she said.'
- F262 (0.2)
- F263 D (*D laughs, smiles.*)
- F264 (1.0)
- F265 S *khan4 thaw1 mùù4-qùùn1 maa2, hòòng4 paj3 sathan3-thuut4*
if reach tomorrow come call go embassy
'Then (when) tomorrow came, (the boss) called (Taa) to the embassy.'
- F266 (0.5)
- F267 S *haj5 sòòng1 khaaw3 leej2* (laughs)
give envelope white NO.ADO
'(She) gave (her) the white envelope without ado.'⁴
- F268 D *Laughs.*
- F269 (0.2)
- F270 D *laj1 qòòk5 phòòm4*
chase out together
'(She) fired (her) as well?'
- F271 S (*S responds affirmatively with head nod gesture.*)
- F272 (0.5)
- F273 D *haj5 ngen2, mèn1 bòø*
give money BE.SO QPLR
'(They) gave (Taa) (separation) money, right?'
- F274 S *mm4*
INTJ
'Uh-huh.' (*S accompanies affirmative response with head toss gesture.*)
- F275 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- F276 (2.3)

⁴To give somebody the white envelope' is to fire them from their job. This figure of speech refers to the envelope containing a letter of dismissal and an amount of money.

- F277 S *laø khòj5 thaam3 laaw2-*
PRF 1SG.P ask 3SG.FA
'So then I asked her,'
- F278 (0.3)
- F279 S *taa3 pên3 ñang3*
T COP INDEF.INAN
'Taa, what is it?'
- F280 (2.3)
- F281 S *qooj4 phen1 haj5 maø qaw3 khùang1 (.) phen1*
INTJ 3.P give DIR.ALL take stuff 3.P
vaa1 (laughs)
say
' "Oh, she (the boss) had (me) come and get some stuff", she said.'
- F282 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture.*)
- F283 (.)
- F284 S *man2 bòø vaw4 phen1 laj1 qòøk5 dêj2*
3.B NEG say 3.P chase exit FAC.NEWS
'She (Taa) didn't say she (the boss) had fired (her), you know.'
- F285 S *man2 vaa1 phen1 haj5 maø qaw3 khùang1*
3.B say 3.P give DIR.ALL take stuff
'She (Taa) said she (the boss) had (her, Taa) come and get some stuff.'
- F286 (0.5)
- F287 S *bèèp5 pajø kêp2 qaw3 khùang1 man2 juu1 naj2 hùan2*
like DIR.ABL collect take stuff 3.B be.at in house
hanø naa3
TPC.DIST FAC.EXPLIC
'Like, to go and get her stuff in the house, you see.'
- F288 (.)
- F289 D (*D responds affirmatively with head toss gesture, twice.*)
- F290 (1.8)

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F291 D *mm5* (looks away)

INTJ

'Uh-huh.'

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