CLAUSE AND SENTENCE TYPES IN MNONG RƠLƠM

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0.   This paper presents the analysis of clause and sentence types in Mnong Rơlơm,[1] a Mon-Khmer language of Vietnam. The data studied for this analysis were a number of texts, which included legends, narratives of current events, and descriptions of customs, together with some elicited material containing sentence types not in the texts.

1.   Clauses in Mnong Rơlơm are grammatical units of predication. There are eight clause types: transitive, object complement transitive, intransitive, stative, fused, nominal equative, adjectival equative, and quotative. The formulae for these types follow:

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[1]Mnong Rơlơm (also known as Rlâm or Lâm) is a dialect of Mnong, a language of the Mon-Khmer family. It is spoken in Lac Thien district, Darlac province, South Vietnam. The data for this paper were collected during our residence among the Mnong Rơlơm people from May 1960 to December 1962. I would like to acknowledge the helpful suggestions of Viola Waterhouse, Darlene Bee, and David Thomas of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and of Sue Albright of the Unevangelized Fields Mission; also the help of my husband, Henry, with his knowledge of the language.

Orthographic symbols used in Mnong Rơlơm represent the following phonemes: (at bilabial, alveolar, palatal, and velar positions) voiceless stops p, t, c, k; voiced stops b, d, j, g; preglottalized stops ɓ, ɗ, dj; prenasalized stops mb, nd, nj, ngg; nasals m, n, ñ, ng; lateral l, trill r; semivowels w, y; fricatives s (-ih), h; glottal (- between vowels, ˘ word final).

Front vowels: i high, î mid-high, ia (-ie-, -ia) glided, ê mid, e low. Central: ư mid-high short, ầ mid short, ơ mid long, ă low short, a low long.   Back: u high long, ŭ mid-high short, û mid-high long, ûa (-uo-, -ua) glided, ô mid long, o low (short).

In this paper the hyphen is used between the syllables of words or between the words in compounds.

Transitive $\pm$ S + P_1 + O

Object Complement Transitive + S + P_{1a} + O + C_1

Intransitive + S + P_2

Stative + $\underline{mau}$ + S $\pm$ P $\pm$ O

Fused $\pm$ S + P_1 + O/S + P $\pm$ O $\pm$ C_1

Nominal Equative + S + P_3 + C_2

Adjectival Equative + S + M

Quotative + S + P_4 + Q

(S = Subject, P = Predicate, O = Object, C = Complement, M = Modifier, Q = Quotation)[2]

    1.1   The transitive type with P_1 predicate (verbs like see, hit, etc.) has obligatory object. $\underline{kan}$ $\underline{so}$ $\underline{sau}$ 'he saw dog'. In clauses with O-S-P order the object is in focus. $\underline{bo'}$ $\underline{kan}$ $\underline{han}$ $\underline{lai}$ $\underline{nai}$ $\underline{so}$ (pl. masc. there already they saw) 'they already saw them'.

    1.2   The object complement transitive type with P_{1a} predicate (filled by verbs $\underline{nan}$ 'to name' or $\underline{kuol}$ 'to name or call') has obligatory object and complement. $\underline{nai}$ $\underline{nan}$ $\underline{kan}$ $\underline{han}$ $\underline{Y}$ $\underline{Pal}$ 'people call him there Y Pal'. The object is $\underline{kan}$ $\underline{han}$ 'him there', and Y Pal, a man's name, is the object complement.

    1.3   In the intransitive clause the predicate P_2 is filled by verbs that do not take an object. $\underline{añ}$ $\underline{plǒ}$ 'I go-home'.

    1.4   The stative clause type requires $\underline{mau}$ 'is, there is' with a subject, optional predicate, and optional object following $\underline{mau}$. $\underline{mau}$ $\underline{pay}$ $\underline{nau}$ $\underline{yat}$ $\underline{gong}$ 'there-are three people hit gong'. $\underline{mau}$ $\underline{bal}$ $\underline{bri}$ $\underline{mŏng}$ $\underline{uon}$ $\underline{añ}$ (there-are pl. forest in village mine) 'there are forest people in my village'.

    1.5   In the fused clause type the obligatory object of the first predicate is simultaneously the subject of the second predicate. The second predicate can be simple transitive, object-complement transitive, or intransitive. $\underline{nai}$ $\underline{phung}$ $\underline{bo'}$ $\underline{kan}$ $\underline{mhǒ}$ $\underline{djoh}$ $\underline{ta}$ $\underline{nai}$ (they fear pl. him do bad to people) 'they fear they will do bad to people'.

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[2]A complete analysis of word classes has not yet been undertaken, but the following general statements can be made about the fillers of subject, object predicate and modifier slots. Noun expressions manifest the subject, complement, and object tagmemes, and are further identified as those forms that can occur in the frame $\underline{ta}$ ___. Ta has many meanings, such as 'to, for, with, by, at, pertaining to'. The minimum form of a noun expression is a noun or pronoun. Verb expressions manifest the predicate tagmeme and are further identified as those forms that can occur in the frames $\underline{wih}$ ___ $\underline{sứt}$, or ___ $\underline{un}$. ($\underline{wih}$, $\underline{sứt}$ 'again', $\underline{un}$ 'thus help'.) The minimum form of a verb expression is a verb. Adjectives manifest the modifier tagmeme in adjectival equative clauses, and are further identified as those forms other than nouns and verbs that can occur in the frame $\underline{ngăn}$. ($\underline{ngăn}$ 'very')

1.6   The nominal equative clause with optional P₃ filled by a copulative verb (njing 'is', blah, ndrom blah, ndrom ta 'is same as') always has a noun or pronoun as the complement.   añ ndrom blah e 'I am-same-as you', jau-dak-duh u-ur go'-gu (sorcerer-water-hot women only) 'midwives are women only'.

1.7   The adjectival equative clause has obligatory M filled by an adjective.   The usual order is subject followed by modifier, but this order may be reversed, usually to mark emphasis on the condition.   kan ndrong (he rich) 'he is rich', ar ngan añ (tired very I) 'I am very tired'.

1.8   The quotative clause has P₄ filled with verb lah 'say' or lup 'ask'.   The obligatory quotation includes anything from one word up to a number of sentences.   The subject is an animate noun or a pronoun.   nai lah, hi ay so gut 'they say, we do not know'.

2.   Clauses may be either dependent or independent.   The quotative and fused types occur independently most of the time.   Dependent clauses are marked by one of eight introducers (to' or dî 'if, when', cieng bi 'in order to', koyuadah or koyuahan 'because', lai or lai le 'already, finished', tui or tui si 'according to', mhay 'as soon as') and must co-occur with an independent clause.   To', dî, koyuahan, lai, lai le, and mhay introduce dependent clauses almost always preceding the independent clauses. The dependent clauses introduced by to' or dî indicate time or condition. Koyuadah, cieng bi, and koyuahan indicate purpose.   Tui and tui si mark condition.   Lai, lai le, and mhay mark time.

3.   Clauses may be expanded by inclusion of location, time, instrument, and indirect object constituents.[3]

Most location constituents are introduced by the prepositions ta 'to, at, in', bak 'with', dong bo 'from', mong 'in', and tang 'on'.   Direction words such as nam 'south', buk 'north', ien 'there', to 'there far', au 'here', and nouns and pronouns are the head words in phrases with ta, dong bo', and mong.   Only nouns and pronouns are the head words in phrases with tang 'on' and bak 'with'.   The location constituents usually follow the predicate in an intransitive clause or follow the object in a transitive clause.   They may also occur sentence initial.

Among the time constituents are words denoting definite time periods such as mo'-mang 'night', mho 'evening', nam 'year', khe 'month'; words denoting passage of time such as jok ta ien 'after a while', luor 'first or before', yau lak 'long ago', ejai 'during'; and expressions with the prepositions truh ta 'until' and dong bo 'from' with some of the time period words and yau and lak.

The time constituents usually precede the subject, or precede the predicate if there is no subject, but also may follow the object or complement.

The instrument constituents are introduced by ta 'by, with' and usually follow the predicate in an intransitive clause or the object in a transitive clause.   The distinction between instrument, location, and indirect object is not always clear.   Instruments never occur clause initial, and

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[3] There are other minor constituents which expand clauses, such as manner, which are not treated in this paper.