

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Objective 1 Results

The main objective of this research, shown below, is to collect and analyze data on the main word order features of Hkongso, as presented in Wright (2009: 70).

1. Use Hkongso speakers' intuitive knowledge to test the grammaticality of Hkongso word order, primarily focused on SVO and SComp and looking at NegV, NAdj, DemN, NNum, and AdjDeg.

This research looks at these word order features and asks the following questions.

1. Does naturally occurring Hkongso speech verify the word order characteristics described in previous research? If there are variations to these features, are they marked?

All examples obtained in this research confirm the basic word order SVO as previously presented. SOV orders or OSV orders are marked. Also, the orders NegV, NAdj, DemN, NNum, RelN, and AdjDeg are confirmed by this research. There are no unmarked variations of these orders in the data.

The main focus and the main interest of this research is the order subordination, particularly, the complement clause. The order of complementation presented in Wright (2009) was preverbal SComp complementation, which is extremely rare.

The data clearly verifies the complementation patterns presented previously in Wright (2009: 70), which showed preverbal complementation with a complementizer following the complement clause, as in (41) from Wright (2009: 147), and without a complementizer, as in (42) from Wright (2009: 149).

(41) loŋt^haŋt^h ap^h tokk^hiŋ tək^h həm^h mi^h?ŋ dai^h im^h
 Longhtang shoot deer one IRR LNK Dai hope
 ‘Dai hopes that Longhtang will shoot a deer.’

(42) aŋ^h pə^h ham^h aŋ^h tuk^h
 1SG do IRR 1SG know
 ‘I know (how) to do it.’

This research analyzed complementation patterns in three natural texts and found preverbal complementation in 100% of sentences containing complementation. Out of the nine sentences with complementation, seven had a complementizer, as in (43). There were also 15 instances of direct quotes without a subordinator, as in (44). Direct quotes without a subordinator is not surprising. Givón (2001: 71) states, “Direct-quote complementation tends to involve no subordinator morpheme, while indirect quote complementation may display it. However there exists another, more iconic, device for creating a temporal separation between the main clause and its direct-quote complement – the use of intonation breaks or pauses.” As (44) shows, direct quotes in Hkongso tend to use temporal pauses rather than a subordinator, as represented by the two vertical lines.

(43) iŋt̚ kʰamt̚ caŋ təm̚ həm̚ miʔ̚ man̚ miluk̚ kʰriŋ̚ par̚
 IPL drink eat together IRR LNK able.to since very INTENS
 kələm̚ prai̚ baŋ
 thanks very POL

‘Thank you so much for enabling us to eat (this meal) together.’

(44) la̚ miŋ̚ maʔ̚ cə̚ aŋt̚ caŋ hu̚ həm̚ || pa̚ jok̚ pɛʔ̚
 MAL 3P SUBJ TOP 1sg eat most IRR tell give DECL
 ‘The male (cat) said, “I will eat most (of it).”’

Complementation in natural texts is more restricted. Elicited examples contained greater variation of complement clauses and complementation strategies. In elicited examples, preverbal complementation occurred in 92% of the examples. In these examples the complementizer either followed the complement clause or was omitted, as shown in examples (45) and (46). Example (45) is interesting as it contains a complement clause dependent on another complement clause that is then dependent on the matrix verb.

(45) tir̚ meŋ̚ həm̚ miʔ̚ rək̚ aŋt̚ tum̚ kita̚ həm̚ miʔ̚ man̚
 tell song IRR LNK enough 1sg strum guitar IRR LNK get
 ‘I can play the guitar well enough to sing songs.’

(46) aŋt̚ pə̚ caŋ cak̚ həm̚ h̚a̚ ra̚
 1sg also eat rice IRR want come
 ‘I also want to eat (rice).’

We see that the complementizer is optional when we compare examples (46) and (47).

- (47) aŋt̚ cəŋ caŋ pʰumʋ uiŋ həmŋ miʔŋ hʲaŋ caʔŋ
 1sg TOP eat mango fruit IRR LNK want immediately
 'I want to eat a mango right now.'

This verifies the data shown previously in Wright (2009). This research, however, found further complementation possibilities. Eight percent of the sentences elicited contained postverbal complementation. This answers the third research question from Section 1.2, which follows.

3. In producing sentences with complementation, will Hkongso speakers always produce preverbal SComp clauses or are there other possibilities?

This research shows that other complementation orders are possible in Hkongso. Examples (48), (49), and (50) come from the same participant. In example (48) the participant produced a typical sentence with preverbal SComp complementation. In examples (49) and (50) the participant produced sentences with postverbal complementation and no complementizer.

- (48) aŋt̚ kaiŋ vitʋ həmŋ miʔŋ aŋt̚ noŋ tʰaŋt̚
 1sg go.to field IRR LNK 1sg NEG think
 'I don't think that I will go to the field.'

- (49) aŋt̚ noŋ tukʋ kəŋʋ boŋ neŋ
 1sg NEG know weave basket really
 'I don't really know how to weave baskets.'

- (50) aŋt̚ tukʋ pəŋ kʰroŋməiŋ neŋ
 1sg know do gun really
 'I really do know how to make guns.'

Examples (51) and (52) come from another participant. Example (51) exhibits the typical complementation order. Example (52) contains postverbal

complementation without a complementizer. This example is interesting because of the unmarked OV order of the complement. This order contrasts with the similar idea in (49) about weaving baskets, which contains VO order in the complement. Other examples, such as (53) can help explain the unmarked OV occurrence in the complement in (52). Example (53) shows the normal VO order of *tʃaunʋ piʋ* 'attend school'. This structure can be reversed, as in (54), as a case of nominalization or noun incorporation. Therefore, one strategy for complementation in Hkongso is to use nominalized postverbal complements.

- (51) aŋʈ caʋ caʌ cakʋ həmʌ miʔʌ noʈ ʃaʋ
 1sg TOP eat rice IRR LNK NEG want
 'I do not want to eat.'
- (52) aŋʈ noʈ tukʋ ʔpaiʋ pəʈ əʋ
 1sg NEG know basket do really
 'I really do not know basket making.'
- (53) həriʌ həmʌ haʌ teŋʈ əŋʋ miʌpaʌmiʔʌ piʋ tʃaunʋ paʈ jokʋ
 Harry OBJ 10 grade pass so.that attend school tell give
 '(I) said to Harry, "Go to school until you pass 10th Standard."
- (54) joseʃʌ caʋ laʌ loiʋ miʌlukʋ noʈ manʋ tʃaunʋ piʋ pətʋ
 Joseph TOP age young since NEG get school attend DECL
 'Since Joseph is too young, he cannot get schooling.'

One unstated research question that arose when postverbal complements occurred in the data is, "When postverbal complementation occurs, is it possible to use the complementizer? If so, would the complementizer come before or after the complement clause?" There is only one example in the data where the use of a complementizer in a postverbal complementation construction seems possible. In example (35), repeated here as (55) the matrix clause is followed by the construction *miʔʌ caʋ* 'LNK TOP', which is then followed by the complement clause. If the topic

marker *cəʎ* 'TOP' was not present, the sentence would closely resemble the typical order of SVO complementation around the world, matrix clause followed by complementizer followed by complement clause (Dryer 2012: 76). If that was the case, the sentence would resemble the English sentence, "I think that today rain will come." However, the subordinator *miʔʔ* 'LNK' followed by the topic marker *cəʎ* 'TOP', has the effect of nominalizing the preceding clause, creating a topic-comment construction. I do not include this example as an example of complementation, but it is a possible strategy for combining SoAs. It is also a strategy used in Burmese, as in example (56).

(55) aŋʈ kəkəʎ miʔʔ cəʎ kəmaiʎ faŋʈ raʈ həmʈ
 1sg think LNK TOP today rain come IRR
 'I'm thinking...today it will rain.'

(56) thu lou' hta ka. to-to hsou: te
 he do R/NOM SUB quite bad RLS
 'His working/doing...(it's) quite bad.' (Soe 1999: 299)

It is clear that Hkongso speakers will naturally form postverbal complementation that is acceptable to them and other speakers. However, what happens when Hkongso speakers are presented with structures that have been manipulated to contain postverbal complementation? This leads to the second research question from Section 1.2.

2. When Hkongso speakers are presented with unmarked variations of these features, will they declare them to be ungrammatical?

To answer this question I used fieldworker-driven transformational elicitation (Chelliah and de Reuse 2010: 373) to manipulate a sentence from a natural text and observe the participants' responses, as explained in Section 3.4. I asked the

participants questions to find out what would happen if the complement clause was moved to the beginning of the sentence or after the verb. Was it possible? Would something have to change? The participant's responses are summarized in Table 3.4.4.

The participants gave a quick and confident affirmation when asked if the complement clause could come at the beginning with the subject following and then the matrix verb following the subject. However, when asked if the complement clause could come after the matrix verb, as in example (57), the initial response was either laughter or confusion. Most of the participants laughed about this idea and said that it was not possible.

- (57) *kəkəl cəʔŋ kətʰipŋ tət̚ həmŋ miʔŋ hauŋ ləmcaŋ
 crow SUBJ go.down stream IRR LNK look.for food
 'The crow went down to the stream to look for food.'

Participants 8 and 9, however, did find a way to move the information in the complement clause behind the verb. This consisted of backgrounding the matrix clause, thereby removing complementation by making the subordinate information the main information, as shown in example (40), repeated here as (58).

- (58) kəkəl cəʔŋ kətʰipŋ tət̚ kʰəŋ hauŋ ləmcaŋ həmŋ
 crow SUBJ go.down stream having look.for food IRR
 'The crow, having gone down to the stream, will look for food.'

This construction is also seen in the elicited examples as in (59). I do not see any semantic difference between this construction and complement constructions involving the complementizer *miʔŋ*. The marker *kʰəŋ* is typically used for background information in narratives.

- (59) moil caɿ miɿ həmɿ peɿ kʰəɿ imɿ prɔnɿ
 wild.animal eat rice IRR happen having think PRT
 'I think that a wild animal will eat the rice (plants).'

So, participants declared the postverbal complementation examples to be ungrammatical. However, during elicitation they produced some examples with postverbal complementation. What this shows is that postverbal complementation following the matrix verb is possible, but it is much more restricted than preverbal complementation.

4.2 Objective 2 Results

The second objective of this research, shown below, is to compare the Hkongso word order patterns, particularly complementation patterns, with other languages around Hkongso to better understand Hkongso's linguistic environment.

2. Show how Hkongso word order compares to other Chin languages, Tibeto-Burman languages, and languages throughout the world.

Since Hkongso is the only attested SVO language with preverbal SComp complementation, and because all the languages surrounding Hkongso are SOV, it stands to reason that language change is behind the rare complementation pattern that Hkongso speakers are currently using. To understand the potential for language change it is beneficial to look at similar grammatical structures in languages around Hkongso.

Burmese, as the national language, exerts significant influence on the languages in the country. Burmese is SOV and has preverbal SComp complementation, as is

shown in example (34), repeated here as (60). The main complementation pattern in Hkongso is identical to this.

- (60) tin maun pyo: te lou. youn = ci te
 name say RLS COMP believe RLS
 'I am confident that Tin Maung said thus.' (Soe 1999: 318)

Khumi, the most influential LWC in the Paletwa area also has preverbal SComp complementation, which is identical to Hkongso's main complementation pattern. Examples (61) and (62) come from Khumi speakers currently living in Yangon.

- (61) aichi yhm so sang y nanai kai dawn
 1pl house build should NEG COMP 1sg think
 'I don't think that we should build a house.'

- (62) kai kjeaung y le ai ngai
 1sg school LOC go COMP want
 'I want to go to school tomorrow.'

Looking a little farther outside of the Khumi area, we still see preverbal, SComp complementation. Daai and Lemi are SOV languages with SComp complementation in Southern Chin State. Example (32), repeated here as (63), shows the SComp order of the complement clause in Daai Chin (So-Hartmann 2009: 314), and example (33), repeated here as (64), shows the SComp order of Lemi Chin (So-Hartmann 2015).

- (63) kah thi-in kkhai = a kah ngngaih ni.
 S.AGR:1S die-MIR FUT = CF S.AGR:1S think EMPH
 'I think that I will die.'

(64) Käsui1 =lä5 käsi5 sa3 vävawi5 =te3 mäny3 bawi5 kha3
wolf=TOP evil do ASP:habitually=NOM know QUANTF:all NF
'They all know that the wolf did habitually evil and ...'

At this time in history, Hkongso's primary complementation pattern closely resembles the pattern employed by the surrounding languages. It is also identical to the national language Burmese. However, Hkongso's main word order SVO is not shared by any of these languages. Also, the less common postverbal complementation pattern sometimes employed by Hkongso speakers is not found in any of these languages.