Chapter 2

A brief description of the Bru KS language

This chapter describes the phonology of Bru KS and gives a brief overview of its grammar. The phonology is based on over 3000 words collected by the author between February 2007 and April 2008 for a dictionary of the Bru KS dialect. The grammar is based on the six texts under study as well as elicited examples.

2.1   Phonology

Bru has 21 consonants (Table 1) and 28 vowels. Of the vowels, 22 are monophthongs (Table 2) consisting of 11 basic vowels that are contrastive in length and 5 diphthongs (Table 3). There are two registers, but no tones.

Table 1: Consonant inventory

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops-voiceless	p	t	$\widehat{t\int}$ [c]	k	ʔ
Stops-aspirated	p^h	t^h	$\widehat{t\int}^h$	k^h	
Stops-voiced	b	d			
Fricatives		s			h
Nasals	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	
Flaps		r			
Approximates	w	l	j		

There is free variation between /w/ and /v/ which is probably influenced by Lao. Also, /f/ is used in some foreign words like *farang* 'foreigner' which has come into general use. In some words, the /f/ is in free variation with /pʰ/.

Table 2: Monophthong vowel inventory

	Front		Central		Back	
	Short	Long	Short	Long	Short	Long
High	i	iː	ɯ	ɯː	u	uː
Mid	e	eː	ɤ	ɤː	o	oː
Low-mid	ɛ	ɛː	ʌ	ʌː	ɔ	ɔː
Low			a	aː	ɒ	ɒː

Table 3: Diphthongs

	Front Mid-glided	Central	Back
High	ia	ɯa	ua
Mid	ea̤		oa
Low			

Bru KS has contrasting registers in its vowels consisting of a clear register and a breathy register. Of the 28 vowels listed in tables 2 and 3, all have register distinction except for the mid-front to low-mid glide ea̤ which is only found in the breathy register. Thus there are 53 contrastive vowel phonemes.

Some examples of clear and breathy indicated by .. below the vowel are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Examples of clear and breathy register

Clear	Breathy
kiː 'loom'	*ki̤ː* 'there'
ta.kajh 'swipe horn'	*ta.ka̤jh* 'break'
mat 'future'	*ma̤t* 'eye'

Any of the consonants of table (1) may appear in the onset of a syllable. The set of stops which may appear in the coda of a syllable are reduced to unaspirated voiceless stops. Nasals, approximates and flaps are also permitted in the coda as shown in Table (5).

Table 5: Final consonant inventory

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops-voiceless	p	t	c	k	ʔ
Fricatives					h
Nasals	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	
Flaps		r			
Approximates	w	l	j		

Phonological words are mainly monosyllabic or disyllabic. The first syllable of disyllabic words is always unstressed and restricted to three types. The first type is a syllabic nasal which assimilates to the point of articulation of the second syllable. The second type consists of a short /a/ vowel. The third type of first syllable takes the shape of CV(N) with the 'V' restricted to a short /a/ /i/ and /u/. The first syllable is always in the clear (non-breathy) register.

The major syllable is always stressed and may contain either a long or short monopthong or a dipthong. The major syllable may occur in either clear or breathy register. The shape of the second syllable is C1 (C2) V (C3) (C4). The following describes the inventory of possible phonemes for each position:

C1 = any of the 20 consonants shown in Table 1,

C2 = /r l/,

V = any monophthong or diphthong shown in Table 2 or Table 3,

C3 = /w j h/, and

C4 = any of the consonants shown in Table 5.

2.2   Grammar overview

This section describes word formation, the noun phrase (NP), NP modifiers, the verb phrase (VP) and the various possible clause types in Bru KS.

2.2.1   Word formation

There is little morphology in Bru Khok Sa-at. What little morphology there is exists as a prefix on the verb or is in the form of reduplication to form an expressive.

2.2.1.1   Morphology

The causative prefix 'a' is common as in the case of *a.t͡ʃɯ̀t* 'to kill', *a.kiŋ* 'cause to roll' and *a.sɛ:ŋ* 'cause to go down'. Examples (1) and (2) illustrate this.

(1) The_Buyeang_fish.011

lɤ:j	*kuɯt*	*a-t͡ʃɯ̀t*	*sɛːm*
so	think	**CAUS-die**	younger

So he thought (about) killing the younger brother.

(2) The Little Monk.098

a.ɲaː.kuː	*kuːj?*	*lɤːj*	*pʌ?*	*iːt*	*klɔːŋ*	*kọːl*	*a-kiŋ*	*a-sɛːŋ*
monk	small	so	go	take	ball	stone	**CAUS-roll**	CAUS-down

So the little monk took the boulder (and) rolled it down the hill.

2.2.1.2   Reduplication and elaborate expressions

Reduplication is used for intensification as in examples (3) and (4).

(3) The_Seven_Orphans.028

t͡ʃuaj?	*si.muː*	**huɯk**	**huɯk**
search	vine	big	big

(I will) search for a very big vine.

(4) The_Seven_Orphans.029

a.laj	*lɤːj*	*pịc*	**n.truː**	**n.truː**
3P	vine	dig	**deep**	deep

So (they) dug very deep.

A kind of reduplication common to Mon Khmer languages is word pairs in a set expression of four words. Matisoff (1973:81-2) calls this construction an elaborate expression and explains that it is a compound containing 4 elements in an (A-B-A-C) or (A-B-C-B) form. It is considered more poetic to use this construction of four words when two would be sufficient. Bru often uses this kind of construction as seen in example (5).

(5) The_Seven_Orphans.005

ta?   tʰraj ta?   suan
make   field make   garden

(They) farmed.

2.2.2   Phrase level

This section examines aspects of Bru grammar at the phrase level, starting with the noun phrase (NP) and continuing on to adjective phrases (AdjP), adverbial phrases (AdvP) and ending with verb phrases (VP).

2.2.2.1   Noun phrase

The noun phrase (NP) is typically realized as a noun, which acts as the head of the phrase, and is optionally followed by one or more attributes. These attributive modifiers are stative verbs (SV), classifier phrases (ClfP), demonstratives (DEM) or a simple possessive phrase (PossP).

Head nouns in Bru KS are not marked for number or gender. Two head nouns may act as a compound and are often used to represent a class of things as in the case of examples (6), (7) and (8) below.

(6) The Buyeang Fish.025

tʰrɛː   a.laːj
shirt   pants

'clothes'

(7) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.004

m̩.pẹ?   m̩.poa
mother   father

'parents'

(8) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.120

sɛːm   aːj
younger sibling older sibling

'siblings'

Another form of a compound noun is used for names of plants and animals. All specific names of animals, like "crow", are usually prefaced by their class as in

18

example (9). If one says *si.aːk* 'crow' without the class, most Bru speakers will be confused.

(9) The Grandfather Ghost.092

t͡ʃom si.aːk
bird crow

'crow'

A noun phrase can possess an immediately preceding NP and this possession can indicate ownership or relationship. Pronouns are often used to possess a preceding NP. In example (10), the first person singular pronoun *ŋ.koaʔ* possesses the head noun *kɔːn ka.muːl* 'child female' indicating relationship. In this case, Bru KS depends on word order to mark possession. Other possessive constructions will be discussed below.

(10) The Seven Orphans.199

kɔːn   ka.muːl   ŋ.koaʔ
child female.unmarried 1S_Poss

'my daughters'

A modifier of an NP can be a verb which acts to describe the noun. Stative verbs in Bru KS are syntactically used the same as adjectives are used in other languages. Smith (1979:84) states that there are no adjectives in Mon-Khmer languages, only stative verbs. Under this interpretation, sizes and colors are considered to be stative verbs rather than adjectives. In example (11), the stative verb *kɯːjʔ* 'small' acts like an adjective modifying the head noun *a.t͡ʃuː* 'knife'. In example (12), *kɯːjʔ* 'small' acts like a verb copula and is the predicate of the sentence "The jungle is very small."

(11) Seven_Orphans.154

buːn buːn **a.t͡ʃuː** **kɯːjʔ** mṳaj nam
have have **knife**   **small** one   Clf_thing

"(Yes we) have, (we) have a **small knife**."

(12) The_Grandfather_Ghost.036

truŋ   kiː tʌː huik dɔːk   **truŋ**   **kɯːjʔ** **kɯːjʔ**
jungle that NEG big   Prt_contra **jungle** **small** **small**

"Actually that jungle is not big. **The jungle is very small.**"

19

2.2.2.2   Pronouns

Pronouns (PRO) usually take the place of an NP. There are two types of pronouns: personal pronouns and reflexive pronouns. There are no possessive pronouns or dual pronouns as is common in other Mon-Khmer languages. There is no marking for syntactic roles such as subject or object, or semantic roles such as agent or patient.

The full set of personal pronouns marked for person and number are listed in Table 6 below. The first person singular pronoun *kʰa.nɔːj* is a diminutive form used for showing respect to people of a higher class. The third person singular pronoun *naw* is used for monks, kings, spritiual beings or other respected religious persons. It is also used as a generic pronoun used in a deictic sense to point to an unidentified referent. The first person plural inclusive pronoun *haj* is sometimes used as a singular pronoun in cases where someone is talking to themselves. It can also be used by royalty as a 'royal we'. There are no dual pronouns.

Table 6: Personal pronouns

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	*ŋ.koaʔ* *kʰa.nɔːj* 'polite' *haj* 'informal'	*hiʔ* 'exclusive' *haj* 'inclusive'
2nd Person	*maj*	*m̩.paj*
3rd Person	*an* *naw* (High Class) *naw* (generic)	*a.laj*

Pronouns can function as a head noun or a possessive in a phrase. In some cases they also function as an appositive. Care must be taken to distinguish which function a pronoun is performing because all these constructions share the same word order. For sake of clarity, pronouns will be marked 'APP' when functioning as an appositive and 'POSS' when used as a possessive. Pronouns acting as the head of a NP will be marked for person and number (e.g. '1S'). Relative clauses in which a pronoun follows a noun will be discussed in section 2.2.4.1.

Possession in Bru KS is marked syntactically by word order. Sometimes this can be ambiguous. In example (13), the pronoun *ŋ.koaʔ* '1S' could be the possessor of the noun phrase *ɲɔʔ tʃɯn ŋ.koaʔ* 'my ripe mango' with the head noun being *ɲɔʔ* 'mango'.

Or, the pronoun *ŋ.koaʔ* '1S' could be a head noun and the beginning of a new clause. The second option would produce the bold words in the following free translation: "If you want to have **ripe mangoes, I** will give them to you." Participant reference considerations discussed in chapter 5 point to a zero anaphora as the preferred form of the subject of the second clause. Thus the pronoun is most likely to be a possessor of the first clause as is shown in (13) below.

(13) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.012

kʰan	*m̩.paj*	*jʌʔ*	*buːn*	*ɲɒʔ*	*t͡ʃiːn*	**ŋ.koaʔ**	*si*	*ɔːn*
if	2P	want	have	mango	ripe	**1S.Poss**	IRR	give

"If you want to have **my** ripe mangoes, (I) will give them to you.

To avoid ambiguity, Bru KS optionally marks possession with *kʰɔːŋ* (borrowed from Thai) as found in example (14).

(14) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.023

ɲɒʔ	*t͡ʃiːn*	**kʰɔːŋ**	*ku.t͡ʃʰan*	*pɯːt*
mango	ripe	**POSS**	snake	big

The ripe mangoes **of** the big snake.

The general reflexive pronoun is *a.t͡ʃaw duːm* and is not marked for person or number. Thus it can be translated as 'himself', 'herself', 'itself', 'ourselves', etc. as illustrated in example (15).

(15) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.106

lɤːj	*iːt*	*kʰan*	*kruap*	*m̩ɛaŋ*	*a.t͡ʃaw duːm*
so	take	bowl	cover	face	**REFL.PRO**

So (she) took a bowl and covered up **her own** face.

The question words *n̩.traw* 'what' and *a.mʌʔ* 'who' can be used as general pronouns meaning 'whatever' and 'whoever' respectively. The general pronouns are shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7: General pronouns

	Bru Word	General meaning	Pronominal meaning
Reflexive	*a.tʃaw dɯːm*		himself, herself, itself, ourselves
General (thing)	*n̪.traw*	what	whatever
General (person)	*a.mʌʔ*	who	whoever

2.2.2.3 Noun phrase modifiers

Nouns may be followed by a classifier phrase (ClfP) and/or a demonstrative (DEM). A formula for the basic noun phrase is given in example (16) below.

(16) NP --> N (V[STAT]) (ClfP) (DEM)

2.2.2.3.1 Demonstratives

Demonstratives (DEM) are devices which point out an object in time or space. Demonstratives may function as a pronoun and replace a NP, or they may function to modify a pronoun within the NP. As in English, Bru KS demonstratives both point deictically to an entity and they specify. Bru KS has two sets of demonstratives. The first set is used mainly to denote distance and location, though sometimes they are used in conjunction with a time word to point to a particular time. The second set of demonstratives are used purely to point to time. All of the Bru KS demonstratives are listed in Table 8.

Table 8: Demonstratives

Bru word	Meaning
Set One: Distance	
naj	here, this thing close to the speaker.
k̦iː	there, that thing close to the addressee.
țɕh	over there, that thing far from the speaker and addressee.
Set Two: Time	
t͡ɕi.nɔː	short time (i.e. now)
tʌː duːn	not a long time (recent)
duːn	long time
ɲu̦aŋ k̦iː	first that (i.e.before)
kliː tɛː k̦iː	behind from that (i.e. after that)

When a demonstrative from Set One comes at the end of a noun phrase, it indicates the distance of that noun phrase from the speaker (e.g. 'this', 'that', or 'that thing far away'). When a Set One demonstrative precedes the noun phrase, it is a locational marker (e.g. 'here,' 'there,' and 'over there'). Sometimes a demonstrative from Set One is used with a time word such as *ɲeaːm* 'time' and thus can point to a particular time period such as 'this time,' or 'at that time.'

When a demonstrative from Set Two is used, it points to the duration of time or a point in time. Because there are only two duration-of-time demonstratives, Bru KS constructs a third for recent time by adding a negative to *duːn* 'long time.' To distinguish events that precede some anchor point, *ɲu̦aŋ* 'first' is combined with the demonstrative *k̦iː* to produce the concept 'before'. Events that happen after a particular anchor point are distinguished by using *kliː* 'behind' with *tɛː k̦iː* 'from that' to produce the concept 'after'.

Miller and Miller (2002:125) report that Bru Tri has an additional class of demonstratives that the Millers call abstract deictics. Bru KS does not have a lexical

23

word for this function, but the phrases *nɛːw kiː* 'thing that' or *saː kiː* 'like that' fulfill the same abstract function as shown in example (17).

(17) The Big Snake.053

pʰɔː	*daŋ*	*nɛːw*	*kiː*	*sɛːm*	*a.lʌh*	*kaʔ*	*ɔːn*	*tʃom*	*ŋ.kɛːm*
when	know	**thing**	**that**	younger	youngest	so	allow	bird	mouth.hold

ŋ.kʰoːl	*ku.tʃʰan*	*pʌʔ*
skin	snake	go

When (they) knew **that thing** (eg. the plan they just discussed), the youngest sister had the bird pick up the snake skin in its mouth and go.

2.2.2.3.2   Classifier phrase

A classifier phrase (ClfP) generally consists of a classifier and a numeral. Classifiers are used to embody and quantify nouns. The correct classifier depends on the class of the noun being quantified. The ClfP can be summarized in the following formula: ClfP--> Num + ClfP. Example (18) shows the generic classifier *nam*, which is used for a variety of objects like tools, sticks or mirrors. The classifier *naʔ* is used for people while *toː* is used for animals as seen in examples (19) and (20). Table 9 below lists some of the most common classifiers.

(18) The Buyeang Fish.060

an	*buːn*	*tʃi.laŋ*	*wi.seːt*	*muaj*	*nam*
3S	have	mirror	magic	one	CLF_gen

She had **a magic mirror.**

(19) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.078

an	*buːn*	*kɔːn*	*muaj*	*naʔ*
3S	have	child	one	CLF_person

She had **one child.**

(20) The_Wild_Buffalo_Ear.006

a.laj	*paɲ*	*buːn*	*si.ŋuːr*	*muaj*	*toː*
3P	shoot	able	buffalo.wild	one	Clf_anima

They were able to shoot **a wild buffalo.**

Table 9: Classifiers

Set One: Sort Clf	
Classifier	**Meaning**
tuaŋ	lakes, ponds
ɔk	fruit
ma.nil	roll, scroll
ŋ.keah	side
naʔ	person
tʃuː	number of times
lạm	pieces of wood
toː	animal bodies
pɔːŋ	doors, doorways
Set Two: Measure Clf	
Classifier	**Meaning**
ra.mọːt	handful
tʃuː	number of times
tʃi.kaːt	hands (measure)

When a classifier phase is reduplicated, it signifies one instance of that set of things. Example (21) shows how the idea of "one of your daughters" is realized as a classifier phrase reduplication rather than using the possessive marker *kʰɔːŋ*.

(21) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.013

tɛː	*kɔːn*	*ka.muːl*	*maj*	**muaj**	**naʔ**	**muaj**	**naʔ**
but	child	female.unmarried	2S.POSS	**one**	**Clf_person**	**one**	**Clf_person**

tɔŋ	*pɛn*	*m̩.paj*	*ŋ.koaʔ*
must	be	wife	1S.Poss

"But **one of** your daughters must become my wife."

25

2.2.2.4   Verb phrase

A verb phrase (VP) consists of one or more optional preverbals and an optional auxiliary verb, followed by an obligatory head verb. The head verb may be followed by an optional post-verbal constituent. Example (22) illustrates the verb phrase.

(22) Verb Phrase = (Preverbal PROG) + (Preverbal IRR) + (Preverbal NEG) + (Auxiliary Verb) + Head + (NP) + (Postverbal)

2.2.2.4.1   Preverbals

The preverbal category is a limited set which consists of the negators (NEG) *tʌː* 'not' and *sʌʔ* 'don't,' along with the future/irrealis (IRR) marker *si* and the progressive marker (PROG) *n̩.toːm*. An example of the future/irrealis marker is shown in example (23).

(23) The Wild Buffalo Ear.071

ɲɛŋ	*paːj*	*ɲeaːm*	*a.buː*	*si*	*buɯːn*	*kuaj*	*tʌʔ*	*kʰoːj*	*doːj*
watch	C	time	evening	**IRR**	exist	person	come	steam	rice

'(We) will watch in the evening **(if)** there **will** be someone who comes to steam (our) rice.'

Example (24) shows two preverbals in one verb complex where the irrealis preverbal *si* follows the progressive preverbal *n̩.toːm*. The semantic domain is that of a possible ongoing action which may be translated as 'starting' or 'beginning to.'

(24) The Wild Buffalo Ear.075

a.laj	*kaʔ*	*huɯːm*	*ma.sɛːm*	*muaj*	*naʔ*	*an*	*n̩.toːm*	*si*	*kʰoːj*	*doːj*
3P	so	see	woman	one	Clf_person	3S	**PROG**	**IRR**	steam	rice

And so they saw a woman who **was starting** to steam rice.

An example of the negative preverbal is found in (25) below.

(25) Seven_Orphans.006

tɛː	*baː*	*naʔ*	*tʌː*	*ruaʔ*	*leːw*
but	two	Clf_person	**NEG**	happy	Prt_pst

But they were **not** happy.

2.2.2.4.2   Auxiliary verbs

Kroeger (2005:251) states that auxiliary verbs do not:

26

> function as independent semantic predicates; they do
> not take their own arguments as normal verbs do. The
> semantic content of auxiliary verbs is usually
> grammatical rather than lexical; they are used to
> express elements of meaning … (such as) tense, aspect,
> mood, voice and polarity.

Many auxiliary verbs may stand alone as an independent verb. The meaning of a verb used as an auxiliary verb varies from the meaning it has when used as an independent verb. Table 10 below lists the common auxiliary verbs and a gloss when used as an auxiliary and as an independent verb.

Table 10: Auxiliary vs. Independent Verbs

Bru Word	Auxiliary Verb Gloss	Independent Verb Gloss
ɤːt	'still'	'be_located/live'
kaː	'dare'	'brave'
kɤːj	'ever'	'used to'
ɔːn	CAUSATIVE/ BENEFICIAL[4]	'give'
tan̪	'yet'	---

Example (26) shows the locative 'be' verb ɤːt taking its preverbal meaning as it precedes the verb ta.ŋuh 'to pulse/breathe'. Note that in this example there is the post-verbal nʌŋ which is often paired with, but is not obligatory, the preverbal ɤːt which mean 'still'.

(26) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.133

ta.kɔːŋ   an   ɤːt   ta.ŋuh   nʌŋ
neck   3S   still   pulse   still

Her neck was **still** pulsing.

---

[4] It is sometimes difficult to discern when ɔːn is acting as a beneficial (eg. 'allow') verses when it is acting as a causative (eg. 'make to happen') This ambiguity is clarified in the phrase ta? ɔːn 'make CAUS' which is always causative.

2.2.2.4.3   Head verbs

The head verb of a Bru verb phrase may consist of one verb or a compound verb such as *bec ra.ŋeːt* 'lie.down sleep'. A compound verb does not allow an object between the verbs and is thought of as one action. A serial verb construction is also thought of as one action, but it allows an object to be inserted as shown in example (27) below. This example illustrates the serial verb construction with the verbs *ku.kɔh* 'chop', *a.dʋʔ* 'to place' and *a.kạn* 'wait'. Within the first verb phase is a NP object, *ku.naj* 'mouse', which is required by the transitive verb *ku.kɔh* 'chop'. Thus, there are a string of three VPs encoding three actions in succession: chopping up the mouse, putting it away and it will wait (eg. be stored).

An alternative interpretation of this serial verb construction is that *a.dʋʔ* is acting as a post-verbal which marks the head verb as a causative completed (eg. 'cause the mouse to be chopped up'). Under this interpretation, there would be two VPs. The first VP would be *ku.kɔh ku.naj a.dʋʔ* 'cause the mouse to be chopped up' and the second would be *a.kạn* 'wait'. Either of these interpretations is possible.

(27) The_Wild_Buffalo_Ear.070

t͡ʃaw	maj	**ku.kɔh**	ku.naj	**a.-dʋʔ**	**a.kạn**
grandchild	2S	**chop**	mouse	**CAUS-put**	**wait**

"Grandson, you **chop up** the mouse and **put** (it) **in storage**."

2.2.2.4.4   Post-verbals

Table 11 below lists the limited set of post-verbals in Bru KS. Some of the post-verbals also function as head verbs.

Table 11: Post-verbals

Bru Word	Verb meaning	Post-verbal function
dɒʔ/a.dɒʔ	put/cause to put	completive/cause to be complete[5]
t͡ʃʌː	finish	past event
ɲɛʔ	all (adverb)	used up/consumed
nʌŋ	in/on (locative preposition)	still/yet
buːn	have	'ability/achievement'
kan	---	'reciprocal'

The verbs *a.dɒʔ* or *dɒʔ* generally mean 'to cause to put' or 'to put' when acting as a main verb. When they follow a head verb at the end of a clause, they are post-verbals and mark the verb as completed. Sometimes, as in example (27) above, it is ambiguous as to whether the *a.dɒʔ* is a post-verb or the head verb of a new VP. An unambiguous example is shown in (28) below.

(28) The_Seven_Orphans.093

tʰeːw.daː	*t͡ʃuaj*	*a.laj*	***a.dɒʔ***
god	help	3P	**COMP**

The god's **had helped** them.

The grammaticalized form of *t͡ʃʌː* 'finish' signals that an action has happened in the past. The post-verbal *ɲɛʔ* acts as an aspect marker to show that an object has been used up. These two post-verbals are often used together as shown in example (29) below. Note that the first instance of *ɲɛʔ* functions as a quantifier meaning 'all' or 'the whole group.'

(29) Seven_Orphans.082

m̩.pɔa	*kɯt*	*paːj*	*kɔːn*	***ɲɛʔ***	*ta.puːl*	*naʔ*	*ku.t͡ʃiːt*	***ɲɛʔ***	*t͡ʃʌː*
father	think	C	child	**all**	seven	Clf_person	die	**completely**	PST

The father thought that **all** of the seven children were **completely dead**.

One important difficulty in Bru KS is that *t͡ʃʌː* has multiple meanings depending on its syntactic position in a sentence. As a verb it means 'finish', as a post-verb it means 'PST' and as an adverbial conjunction it means 'then'. In example (30), the

---

[5] The difference between the post-verbals *dɒʔ/a.dɒʔ* has yet to be explored.

29

combination of *ɲɛʔ* *t͡ʃʌː* is ambiguous. It could mean 'completely finished' and form the ending of the first clause. The second option is that *ɲɛʔ* could be the end of the first clause and *t͡ʃʌː* could be the beginning of the second clause acting as an adverbial. The second option is preferred because of the adverbial *pʰɔː* which begins the first clause which forms a type of 'when/then' statement. That is, when this event happens, then this event will be the result.

(30) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.051

pʰɔː	*ujh*	*kaːt*	*ŋ.kʰoːl*	*ku.t͡ʃʰan*	*an*	*ɲɛʔ*	*t͡ʃʌː*	*an*	*kaʔ*
when	fire	burn	skin	snake	3S_POSS	**complete**	**then**	3S	so

pɛn	*kuaj*	*kṳː*	*kṳː*	*si.ŋaj*	*dɔːk*
be	person	every	every	day	PRT_conclusion

"When the fire burns **up** his snake skin, **then** he will be a person from then on for sure."

The locative prepostion *nʌŋ* signals that an action or state is ongoing. This is shown in example (31) below. Note that the preverbal *rːt* 'still' is generally paired with *nʌŋ*.

(31) Seven_Orphans.038

tʌː	*hṳk*	*rːt*	*kṳːjʔ*	*nʌŋ*
NEG	big	still	small	still

"It's not big, still too small."

When the verb *bṳːn* 'have' is used as a post-verbal it signals ability to do something. Example (32) below shows that the post-verbal *bṳːn* can be negated. The post-verbal *ɲɛʔ* can also be negated while the other post-verbals cannot be negated.

(32) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.147

sɛːm	*tɛːŋ*	*kap*	*an*	*tʌː*	*bṳːn*	*dɔːk*
younger	marry	with	3S	**NEG**	**able**	PRT_conclusion

[younger speaking] "No, I **cannot** marry her."

The reciprocal *kan* is used when an action is between two or more people, as seen in example (33). Note that the *kan* follows the object in the transitive verb *t͡ʃih* 'ride' but directly follows intransitive verbs such as *wạw kan* 'to talk with each other'.

(33) The_Seven_Orphans.051

haj	*ta.pṳːl*	*naʔ*	*t͡ʃih*	*ta.kɔːŋ*	*kan*	*t͡ʃoːn*
1P_inc	seven	Clf_person	ride	neck	**RECIP**	up

"We seven will go up by sitting on **each other's** necks."

2.2.3 Clause types

The following intransitive, transitive and ditransitive clauses demonstrate that Bru KS is an SVO language.

2.2.3.1 Intransitive clause

An intransitive clause does not take object complements. There are three types of intransitive clauses in Bru KS. They are general, reciprocal and stative. An example of a general intransitive clause is found in (34). Note that this example contains a compound verb.

(34) The_Seven_Orphans.058

> pʰɔ: ra.nɛ:n **bec** **ra.ŋɛ:t**
> when child **lie** **sleep**

When the children **were sleeping**...

The reciprocal intransitive clause is marked morphologically by the verbal prefix *ra-*. The intransitive reciprocal verb is often, though not necessarily, followed by the reciprocal post-verb *kan*. Sometimes a reciprocal intransitive clause is marked only by the post-verb *kan*. When both *ra-* and *kan* are used together there is a sense of ongoing interaction. For example, *ra-waw kan* means 'converse' and which entails multiple interactions as opposed to *ra.waw* which means 'respond/say' which entails only one interaction. Not every verb which starts with the syllable *ra* is a reciprocal verb as seen in the verb *ra.ŋɛ:t* 'sleep' found in example (34) above. The stem of a reciprocal verb is in most cases able to stand alone as in *ra.t͡ʃɛ:t* 'run into each other' and *t͡ʃɛ:t* 'crash.' An example of a reciprocal intransitive clause is found in (35) below.

(35) The_Grandfather_Ghost.037

> ka.nɛa braw n̪.t͡ʃu̪m ki: **ra.-waw**
> friend ghost group that **RECIP-say**

That group of the ghost friends **said to each other**...

The stative intransitive clause denotes a state of existence or being. Most words that are categorized as adjectives in other languages are analyzed as stative verbs in Bru KS, since they can stand alone as the predicate of a clause. An example of the stative intransitive clause is found below.

(36) The_Wild_Buffalo_Ear.121

> ʋʔ   **rɛaj**   pa.lɛajʔ
> grandfather **angry** very

The grandfather **was** very **angry**.

2.2.3.2   Transitive Clause

The transitive clause in Bru KS consists of a subject preceding the verb and an object following. While the subject and object are semantically obligatory, one or the other or both are sometimes left implicit when it is known by context. An example of a transitive clause with an explicit object is found in (37) below. An example of a transitive clause with an elided object is found in (38).

(37) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.154

> n̩.paj aːj   t͡ʃoh   **maʔ.uʔ**
> wife older plant **pumpkin**

The older brother's wife planted **a pumpkin**.

(38) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.160

> a.jɛaʔ   tʰaw kɪt   Ø   a.ruːp
> grandmother old pick.off **vine** morning

The old woman picked off **the tip of the vine** in the morning.

2.2.3.3   Ditransitive clause

A ditransitive clause consists of a subject, verb, direct object and indirect object. The direct object in the case of example (39) below is the t͡ʃʰac 'meat', which immediately follows the verb. The indirect object is the recipient of the object, which in this case is the first person plural inclusive pronoun haj. It is common for the direct object (along with the subject) to be elided if the context is rich enough as in example (40).

(39) The_Wild_Buffalo_Ear.018

> ʋʔ   a.laj ɔːn **t͡ʃʰac haj**   pa.lɛajʔ naʔ   t͡ʃʌː
> grandfather 3P   give **meat 1P_inc** many   CLF_person PST

"Grandfather, many of them have given **meat to us**."

(40) The_Buyeang_Fish.026

pʰɔ:	Ø	ɔːn	Ø		a.laj	t͡ʃʌ:
when	he	give	those things		3P	PST

When (he) had given (those things) to them …

2.2.4 Embedded clauses

Bequette (2008) describes three kinds of embedded clauses in Bunong: relative clauses, complement clauses and adverbial clauses. Bru KS has the same embedded clause types.

2.2.4.1 Relative clauses

Bru KS employs a gap strategy which deletes the co-referential noun phrase from inside the relative clause. Relative clauses follow the head noun within the noun phrase. Relative clauses can be overtly marked with the borrowed Thai relativiser *tʰiː*. They can also be implicitly signaled by the discourse context as shown in section 3.3.1 below. An example of an overtly marked relative clause is found in (41) and an implicitly marked relative clause in (42) below.

(41) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.024

buːn	kɔːn	a.lʌh	muaj	naʔ	tʰiː	ka:	t͡ʃa:
EXIST	child	youngest	one	Clf_person	REL	dare	eat

The youngest daughter was the only one **who dared to eat** [the mangoes].

(42) Buyeang Fish.003 and 004

ɲuaːn	sɛːm		pɛn	kuaj	ɔ:	liːan	pɔːŋ	mak	t͡ʃuaj
because	younger brother		be	person	good	study	clever	like	help

kuaj	ka.nɔh	t͡ʃuaj	tran	pruam
person	other	help	animal	also

Because the younger brother was a person **(who) was good, (who) was clever in his studies** and **(who) liked to help other people and animals.**

2.2.4.2 Complement clause

A complement clause is defined as an embedded clause that is the subject or direct object of another clause. The complementizer (C) *paːj* 'thus' signals an embedded

33

clause. The direct quote speech formula is a kind of complement clause and is demonstrated in (43) below.

(43) Seven_Orphans.034

pʰɔː	tʌʔ	sʌk	m̩.poa	atɤːŋ	kɔːn	paːj	t͡ʃuaj?	si.muː	huk	huk
when	come	forest	father	say	child	C	search	vine	big	big

dəː
PRT_request

When they arrived at the forest the father said to the children thus, "**Search for a very big vine.**"

Other complement clauses are indirect speech, or clauses that are the object of verbs of perception or desire. Often, the complementizer is elided in a complement clause. An example of a complement clause as the object of a verb of cognition is shown in (44). An example of an elided complement is shown in (45).

(44) Seven_Orphans.082

m̩.poa	kut	paːj	kɔːn	ɲɛʔ	ta.puːl	naʔ	ku.t͡ʃiːt	ɲɛʔ	t͡ʃʌː
father	think	C	child	all	seven	Clf_person	die	complete	PST

The father thought **that all of the seven children were completely dead.**

(45) Seven_Orphans.056

baː	naʔ	m̩.paj	a.jaːk	n̩truh	mit	huːm	Ø	kɔːn	t͡ʃuː	doŋ
two	Clf_person	wife	husband	surprise	see		C	child	return	house

t͡ʃaː	pɔŋ	t͡ʃon	ɲɛʔ
eat	root	until	consume

Both the husband and wife were surprised to see **(that) their children had returned home and had eaten the root all up.**

2.2.4.3   Adverbial Clause

Adverbial clauses are used to denote time, location, manner and conditionals. Subordinating conjunctions mark an adverbial clause, though they are often elided. Table 12 below lists the subordinating conjunctions and their function.

Table 12: Subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunction	Function	Gloss
pʰɔː	Heads an adverbial time clause.	when
t͡ʃʌ	Heads an adverbial clause of result or progression.	then
jah	Heads an adverbial clause of location or focus.	meanwhile/ as for the
kʰan	Heads a conditional adverbial clause.	if
ɲuaːn	Heads an adverbial clause of reason.	because

Example (46) demonstrates a time adverbial clause that is introduced with the subordinating conjunction *pʰɔː* 'when'.

(46) Seven_Orphans.053

pʰɔː	*taʔ*	*saː*	*kiː*	*kuɯ*	*naʔ*		*lɤːj*	*t͡ʃoːn*	*buɯn*
when	do	like	that	every	Clf_person	so	up	able

When (they) did as he said, everybody was able to get up...

Example (47) demonstrates the subordinating conjunction *t͡ʃʌ* 'then'.

(47) The_Big_Snake_S-I-L.089

t͡ʃʌː	*kaʔ*	*t͡ʃaː*	*an*
PST	so	eat	3S

And then (it) (started to) eat her.

The subordinating conjunction *jah* 'on the side of' is an important discouse markert͡ʃʌ that is used when changing focus from one participant to another. When *jah* precedes a noun of location or a locative demonstrative, a locative adverbial clause is generated. When *jah* precedes a NP which is a participant, a major text boundary is signaled. Example (48) demonstrates a locative adverbial clause introduced with *jah*. Example (49) demonstrates a major text boundary signaled by *jah*.

(48) Seven_Orphans.054

jah	*doŋ*	*a.jea?*	*tʰaw*	*ta?*	*t͡ʃaː*	*kʰoːj*	*pɔŋ*	*t͡ʃɪːn*	*t͡ʃʌː*
side	**house**	grandmother	old	do	eat	steam	root	ripe	PST

Back at the house, the old grandmother had steamed the root and it was ready to eat

(49) Seven_Orphans.091

jah	*kɔːn*	*pʰɔː*	*m̩.poa*	*pʌ?*	*wet*	*a.laj*	*pea*	*kan*	*ŋ.kọːŋ*	*loah*
side	**child**	when	father	go	out.of.sight	3P	invite	RECIP	crawl	out

tɛː	*kal*	*aluaŋ*
from	tree	stem

As for the children, when the father went out of sight, they helped each other crawl out from (under) the tree.

The subordinating conjunction *kʰan* 'if' precedes a conditional adverbial clause as shown in example (50) below.

(50) The_Buyeang_Fish.064

kʰan	*kuaj*	*lɛ?*	*tọ?*	*tɛː*	*t͡ʃɪ.laŋ*	*wi.seːt*	*an*	*buːn*	*an*	*si*	*pa.tah*
if	**person**	any	hide	from	mirror	magic	**3S**	able	3S	IRR	free

pa.nẹa	*kap*	*m̩.pai͡*
ruler	and	wife

"**If anyone is able to hide from her magic mirror**, she would free the king and his wife."

2.3 Summary

Bru KS phonology consists of 21 consonants, 11 vowel positions and 5 diphthongs. The additional features of length and register multiply the number of vowel morphemes, making a total of 55 contrastive vowel morphemes. Bru KS is an isolating language with no verbal inflection. Bru KS morphology consists of a limited number of prefixes on the verbs and on reduplication. A noun phrase is head initial and makes frequent use of compounds. A verb phrase consists of a limited set of optional preverbals, an optional set of auxiliary verbs, an obligatory head verb which may be a compound and a limited set of optional post-verbals. Bru KS is an SVO language as seen in intransitive, transitive and ditransitive clauses. Bru KS also has embedded relative clauses, complement clauses and adverbial clauses.