

Chapter 2

Major Word Classes

2.1 Introduction

Major word classes, often called open classes, are generally nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Open classes are grammatical categories that are in principle open to additions (Schachter & Shopen 2007: 3). No attempt has been made here to definitively distinguish between an open class and a closed class given the limited data.

2.2 Nouns

A noun is often described as a person, place or thing (Schachter and Shopen 2007: 4). However, this is only a rough description. A noun is the head of a noun phrase (Talmy 2003: 201). Noun phrases will be discussed in 4.3 Noun Phrases.

Example (1) shows a noun as the head of a noun phrase.

Grandfather Ghost 2

(1) *vil* *ku:j?* *ku:j?*

N Adj Adj

village small small

a very small village

In Bru Khok Sa-at, nouns are almost never morphologically marked for number, case, class or definiteness. One exception is the prefix *ra-* which may mark plurals or recipients. While this merits further research, it will not be explored in this thesis. Number is marked by a number or quantifier often followed by a classifier (see 3.6 Numerals). Case is marked by the location of the noun within the clause (see 4.3 Noun Phrases). Class will be explored under classifiers (see 3.7 Classifiers). Definiteness is marked by the use of demonstratives (see 3.4 Demonstratives). Subclassifications of nouns are also possible, including proper nouns, count nouns, mass nouns, and other parts of speech nominalized. No examples of proper nouns were found in the five narratives. However, proper nouns are analyzed relating to discourse in Tebow's thesis (2010a).

Table 3: Noun Types

Gloss	Word	Type of Noun
child	<i>nt̃ʃum</i>	count
house	<i>doŋ</i>	count
water	<i>daʔ</i>	mass
rice	<i>doj</i>	mass
idea (NMLZ-think)	<i>k^hwa:m-kut</i>	nominalization

2.2.1 Compound Nouns

It can be argued that Bru Khok Sa-at has compound nouns, but no attempt is made to definitely decide the matter here.

Example (2) to (4) show possible compound nouns.

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(2) *sɛ:m* *ɑj*
 N N
 younger.sibling older.brother
 brothers

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(3) *t^hrɛ:* *ala:j*
 N N
 shirt pants
 clothing

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(4) *mpeʔ* *m̃poa*
 N N
 mother father
 parents

Example (5) shows a possible compound split in a possessive construction.

Big Snake Son-in-law 159

(5) *taʔ* *doŋ* *m̃peʔ* *doŋ* *m̃poa*
 Vt N N N N
 come house mother house father

... [it] came to the house of her mother and father.

Example (6) shows the same two nouns joined by a conjunction.

Big Snake Son-in-law 118

(6) *m̥poa kap m̥peʔ lɣ:j paʔ nam kɔn*
N Coordconn N Coordconn Vi Vt N

father and mother so go follow child

So the father and mother went and followed [their] child.

2.2.2 Noun Modifiers

When two nouns follow one another and refer to the same item the second noun modifies the first. No attempt is made to determine if this is one word or two.

Example (7) shows the second noun modifying the first.

Seven Orphans 41

(7) *kal ta:n*
N N

tree taan

...'dtaan' tree.

In example (8) it shows a noun modified by two following nouns.

Big Snake Son-in-law 11

(8) *kutʰan paŋea oŋin*
N N N

snake king god

...snake god king...

2.3 Verbs

Verbs generally express actions or processes (Schachter and Shopen 2007: 9). A verb is the head of a verb phrase (Lunaghi & Parodi 2008: 152).

Example (9) shows a verb phrase.

Buyeang Fish 15

(9) *tɰʔ jɣ:ŋ tɰp*
Vt Adv Adv

come far quite

...[they] had gone quite far...

Verbs are usually combined with some form of tense, aspect, mood, modality, voice and polarity. Tense gives the time of the action relative to the time of the utterance (Schachter and Shopen 2007: 9-10). Aspect looks at the distribution of an event

over time. Mood indicates the speaker's reason for speaking. Modality shows "...either the speaker's attitude toward the proposition expressed...or the actor's relationship to the described situation..." (Kroeger 2005: 347). Aspect, mood, and modality will be discussed primarily in 4.5.2 Auxiliaries. Aspect will be further discussed in 5.5.1.4 Aspect. Voice indicates the role of the subject in the action (Schachter and Shopen 2007: 10). The texts did not provide a clear example of passive versus active voice. Polarity marks positive from negative and will be discussed in 3.12 Negators.

2.3.1 Reduplication

Example (10) shows that verbs are occasionally repeated for emphasis. However, no attempt will be made in this thesis to determine if this is one word or two.

Seven Orphans 153

(10) *bu:n bu:n atʃu: ku:ʃ? mu:aj nam*

Vt Vt N Adj Num Clf

have have knife small one Clf_thing

"[Yes we] have, [we] have a small knife."

2.3.2 Copulas

Copulas are verbs that link a subject and a complement (Crystal 1992: 85). Bru Khok Sa-at also has a few copulas that are used for existential or equative clauses. These will be discussed more in 4.6.5 Copula Phrase. More research on these words would be helpful.

EXIST *bu:n*

equal *mah*

be *pen*

equal *sam*

Example (11) shows a copula used with a predicate nominative.

Big Snake Son-in-law 11

(11) *kutʃʰan pu:t ki: pen kutʃʰan paŋɛa oŋin plɛŋ tʃak tʃʰ?*

N Adj Det Cop N N N Vt N Vt

snake big that be snake king god change body come

That big snake was the snake god king which had transformed itself into a body and come [down to earth].

Example (12) shows a copula used for an existential clause.

Seven Orphans 181

(12) *ta: bu:n dɔʔ ta? nea*
Neg Cop N Vt N

NEG EXIST water make/do field

"There is not enough water to make the fields."

Example (13) shows a copula used in an equative clause.

Seven Orphans 37

(13) *mah ŋkɔŋ*
Cop N

equal arm

"[It] is as big as my arm."

2.4 Adjectives

Adjectives are notionally identified as “denoting qualities or attributes”. Generally, they modify a noun (Schachter and Shopen 2007: 13). Adjectives are also the head of adjective phrases (Trask 1993: 8). In some languages, including Bru Khok Sa-at, adjectives are very similar to verbs.

Adjectives usually follow the nouns they modify.

Example (14) shows an adjective following the head noun.

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(14) *ka? hu:m kʰan ku:ʔ*
Coordconn Vt N Adj

then see bowl small

...then [they] saw a small bowl.

Example (15) shows the only example of an adjective used with a copula independently.

Big Snake Son-in-law 73

(15) *pɛn mac paɭaj?*
Cop Adj Adv

be beautiful very

...[he] was very handsome.

However, it is possible that the noun is simply elided before the adjective.

Example (16) shows a similar sentence with a noun before the adjective.

Buyeang Fish 4

(16) *sɛ:m* *pɛn kuaj* *ɔ:*
 N Cop N Adj

younger.sibling be person good

...the younger brother was a good person.

2.4.1 Reduplication

Example (17) shows how adjectives can be reduplicated for emphasis. No attempt will be made in this thesis to determine if this is one word or two.

Grandfather Ghost 2

(17) *bu:n* *vɪl* *kuaj? kuaj?* *mɯaj* *vɪl*
 Cop N Adj Adj Num Clf

EXIST village small small one Clf_village

...there was a very small village.

2.4.2 Adjectives as Verbs

In some languages, adjectival meanings are expressed primarily by verbs (Schachter & Shopen 2007: 16). Bru Khok Sa-at appears to have adjectives that act as verbs.

2.4.2.1 Negation

Example (18) shows how adjectives can be negated like verbs.

Seven Orphans 72

(18) *ŋpoa* *tɔ:* *ŋɛam*
 N Neg Adj

father NEG sweet

Father - [It's] not sweet.

Example (19) shows how verbs are negated in this manner.

Seven Orphans 81

(19) *p^hɔ:* *kal* *aluaj* *dom* *ka?* *tɔ:* *saj* *siaŋ* *ranɛm* *naŋ*
 Subordconn N N Vi Coordconn Neg Vt N N Prt

when tree stem fall so NEG hear noise child Prt_intensifier

When the tree had fallen, [he] did not hear any noise from the children at all.

2.4.2.2 Particles

Example (20) shows how adjectives also take verbal particles.

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(20) *masε:m kuaj ki: lɔ:j waw pa:j mε:n tʃa:*
 N N Det Coordconn Vt Subordconn Adj Prt
 woman person that so speak COMP true Prt_seq_completive

ηkoa? pen katur siɲur

Pro Cop N N

1S be ear buffalo.wild

So that woman said, "Correct, I am the wild buffalo ear."

Example (21) shows how verbs also take verbal particles.

Seven Orphans 82

(21) *kɔ:n ɲε? tapu:l na? kutʃit ɲε?*
 N Prt Num Clf Vi Prt
 child Prt_completive seven Clf_person die Prt_completive

tʃa:

Prt

Prt_seq_completive

...all of the seven children were completely dead.

2.4.2.3 Predicate

Example (22) shows how an adjective can act as a predicate, like a verb.

Seven Orphans 18

(22) *aja:k siɔm mi:t paleaj?*
 N Adj Adv
 husband happy very

The husband was very happy.

Example (23) shows how verbs are also predicates.

Big Snake Son-in-law 17

(23) *alaj tamuj dɔ:*
 Pro Vi Prt
 3P listen Prt_command

"...they will understand."

2.4.2.4 Auxiliaries

There are no examples of auxiliaries with adjectives in these Bru Khok Sa-at narratives.

Example (24) shows how auxiliaries are used with verbs.

(24)	<i>ŋpaɪ̄</i>	<i>ŋpeʔ</i>	<i>jaʔ</i>	<i>a-tʃit</i>	<i>ŋkoaʔ</i>
	Pro	Pro	Vaux	Vt	Pro
	2P	why	want	CAUS-die	1S

"Why do you want to kill me?"

2.5 Adverbs

Adverbs are usually described functionally as words that modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. However, some adverbs modify entire phrases or even sentences (Schachter and Shopen 2007: 20). Adverbs are the head of adverb phrases (Trask 1993: 10). Adverbs as modifiers may precede what they modify, follow after what they modify, or come at the beginning or end of a clause.

Table 4: Adverb Types

Gloss	Word	Type of Adverb
very	<i>ala:</i>	degree
even	<i>hat</i>	degree
very	<i>luʔ</i>	degree
so.much	<i>malɛʔ</i>	degree
almost	<i>maŋ</i>	degree
deep	<i>ŋtru:</i>	degree
very	<i>paleajʔ</i>	degree
enough	<i>pəa:</i>	degree
and some	<i>trɔp</i>	degree
often	<i>du</i>	frequency
again	<i>ɛn</i>	frequency
really	<i>akan</i>	manner
sure	<i>kak</i>	manner
enough	<i>kom</i>	manner
half	<i>kaŋ</i>	manner
together	<i>manɔj</i>	manner
sure	<i>ne:</i>	manner
clever	<i>pɔŋ</i>	manner

Gloss	Word	Type of Adverb
also	<i>pruam</i>	manner
only	<i>te:</i>	manner
far	<i>jɣ:ŋ</i>	place
after	<i>kli:</i>	place
close	<i>tʃe?</i>	place
still	<i>ɣt</i>	time
not.yet	<i>ha:</i>	time
ever	<i>kɣj</i>	time
still	<i>nɔŋ</i>	time
formerly	<i>pa:t</i>	time
just.then	<i>padi:</i>	time
yet	<i>taŋ</i>	time
now	<i>tʃiŋɔ:</i>	time
yet	<i>wɛaj</i>	time
now	<i>wɛaj</i>	time

2.5.1 Degree

Example (25) shows an adverb of degree modifying an adjective.

Wild Buffalo Ear 121

(25) *v?* *reaj* *paleaj?*

N Adj Adv

grandfather angry very

The grandfather became very angry.

2.5.2 Place

Example (26) shows an adverb of place modifying a verb.

Seven Orphans 68

(26) *ŋpoa* *aje?* *atʃet* *tajah* *ŋuaj* *kɔm* *ŋpre:k* *ajan* *nam* *kli:*

N Vt N Vi Adv N Vt N Vt Adv

father hold axe walk before child carry.pole basket follow after

The father held the axe and walked ahead while the children carrying a big basket on a pole followed behind.

2.5.3 Frequency

Example (27) shows an adverb of frequency modifying a verb.

Seven Orphans 195

(27) *paɬəjʔ t̃f̃uː du paʔ*

Quant Clf Adv Vi

many Clf_time often go

[The daughters] went [to get rice] many times and often.

2.5.4 Manner

Example (28) shows an adverb of manner modifying a verb.

Buyeang Fish 5

(28) *liːan pɔːŋ*

Vi Adv

study clever

[He] was clever in his studies...

2.5.5 Time

Example (29) shows an adverb of time modifying a verb.

Grandfather Ghost 106

(29) *t̃f̃om karoʔ paːt pen neaj amprɔː*

N N Adv Cop N N

bird owl formerly be lord district

The owl had been the district ruler.

2.5.6 Reduplication

Example (30) shows an adverb reduplicated for emphasis.

Grandfather Ghost 7

(30) *doŋ su ɣːt j̃ɣːŋ j̃ɣːŋ kan*

N N Vi Adv Adv Pro

house shelter live far far RECIP

The houses were located far from each other.

2.5.7 Word Classes Modified

Adverbs can modify many word classes.

Example (31) shows an adverb modifying a verb.

Big Snake Son-in-law 180

(31) *alaj neam paleaj?*

Pro Vi Adv

3P cry very

They cried a lot.

Example (32) shows an adverb modifying an adjective.

Big Snake Son-in-law 38

(32) *an pen kuaj mac paleaj?*

Pro Cop N Adj Adv

3S be person beautiful very

He was a very handsome person.

Example (33) shows an adverb modifying a negator.

Wild Buffalo Ear 90

(33) *ta: tan tʃa: weaj*

Neg Adv Vi Adv

NEG yet finish yet

..."We haven't finished yet."

In many languages there are alternative ways of expressing adverbial meanings (Schachter and Shopen 2007: 21). Adverbial clauses will be discussed in 5.2.2.1 Adjectival Predicates.

2.6 Conclusion

Major word classes consist of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Bru Khok Sa-at shares many features with other MSEA languages. Manson defines MSEA as consisting of present day Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Burma, and southern Chinese provinces. Languages spoken there include the Tibeto-Burman, Austroasiatic, Daic and Hmong-Mien language families (2009: 1).

Nouns in MSEA languages are not inflected for number, gender or case.

Compounding is the most common way of deriving nouns (Enfield 2005: 189). Bru Khok Sa-at follows this pattern. This corpus did not include any proper nouns in Bru, but Tebow collected other texts in Bru Khok Sa-at that included proper nouns

(2010a: 7). These are also attested to Bru Woen Buek (Pattiya 1981: 114), So (Miglizza 1998: 80), Kuy (Bos 2009: 40), and Pacoh (Alves 2006: 57).

Verbs are combined with free morphemes to indicate aspect, mood and modality. Miller in Eastern Bru identifies these as preverbals and postverbals (1964: 49-50). Tebow also uses the term preverbals and postverbals (2010a: 26), as does Pattiya in Bru Woen Buek (1998: 143). This thesis uses the terms auxiliaries and particles for the same types of morphemes. Further discussion of this topic may be found in section 4.5 Verb Phrase and 4.6 Verb Phrase.

Mann, et. al. remark that “Austronesian languages commonly use reduplication to express syntactic and semantic functions,” (2009: 9). This can be seen in Bru Khok Sa-at with both adjectives and adverbs.

Adjectives function as stative verbs in Bru Khok Sa-at according to this corpus. Tebow also identifies adjectives as having properties of verbs in Bru Khok Sa-at (2010a: 31). Pattiya reports them in Bru Woen Buek (1998: 156-157). Miglizza also attests to this phenomenon in So (1998: 75). Kuy behaves in the same way (Bos 2009: 15). However, John Miller describes Eastern Bru as having adjectives that modify both nouns and verbs (i.e. they function like adverbs). He does not mention the concept of adjectives acting alone as stative verbs (1964: 47-48).

Different grammar descriptions have different listings of adverbs. This thesis mentions degree, frequency, manner, place, and time. John Miller only mentions temporal adverbs and something he calls indefinite adverbs (1964: 48-49). Miglizza mentions manner and time in So (1998: 74). Bos in his Kuy grammar mentions direction, time and manner (2009: 17-18). Alves mentions manner adverbs in Pacoh along with numerous other categories not used in other grammars (2006: 46-50). However, this may be due to different grammatical theories rather than significant differences in word categories.