Guidelines for description of mainland Southeast Asian languages

Each author who contributed to the volume was provided with a suggested plan covering the following comprehensive overview of the linguistic features which form the basis for considering Mainland South-East Asia to be a linguistic area. From the outset, we hoped that chapters with similarly organised content would make for better comparison between languages and allow common linguistic features to appear more prominently.

Enfield (2005) is a useful summary of the linguistic features of the Mainland South-East Asian linguistic area, as is Matisoff (1986b).

Much of the data upon which Matisoff and Enfield base their accounts was presented in an earlier comparative typological survey by Eugénie Henderson (1965) which catalogues a wide range of linguistic features in 59 languages including languages of mainland Southeast Asia and further afield in the region. Henderson includes all the languages represented in this volume, with the exception Min Chinese and Khumi, though she does include other Chinese languages (Cantonese, Mandarin and Hakka) and other Chin languages (Tiddim and Lushai).

Henderson notes: ‘In the course of investigations extending over many years into the present phonological and grammatical structure of a variety of languages in the South East Asian mainland, my attention has, however, inescapably been drawn to a number of features which suggest themselves as characteristic of the area.’

1 Phonology

The common phonological features observed in languages of the MSEA area are complex vowel systems (such as diphthongs, a large number of contrasting vowel qualities, contrastive vowel length), tone or register (or mixed) systems,

Henderson catalogues a number of phonological features in her typological survey, and she notes the following ways in which these shared phonological features may be correlated and associated with some grammatical functions (p. 406). She, for instance, reports correlations between pitch, phonation and the morphological use of the tone for languages such as Burmese, Southern Vietnamese and Boro (p. 412).

1.1 Suprasegmental phonology: tone and register

Henderson (1965) also notes correlations between the presence or absence of tone, initial and final consonant patterns, vowel quality and phonation type, all phenomena that have become well known from studies on tonogenesis¹.

“In the beginning was the Sino-Tibetan monosyllable, arrayed in its full consonantal and vocalic splendor. And the syllable was without tone and devoid of pitch. And monotony was on the face and the mora. And the Spirit of Change hovered over the segments flanking the syllabic nucleus. And Change said: ‘Let the consonant guarding the vowel to the left and the right contribute some of the phonetic features to the vowel in the name of selfless intersegmental love, even if the consonants thereby be themselves diminished and lose some of their own substance. For their decay or loss will be the sacrifice through which Tone will be brought into the worlds, that linguists in some future time may rejoice. And it was so. And the Language saw it was good, and gradually began to exploit tonal differences for distinguishing utterances [...] And the tones were fruitful and multiplied, and diffused from tongue to tongue in the Babel of Southeast Asia.” Matisoff (1973: 73)

In many languages of the area, contrastive pitches (tone) and phonation types (register) must be examined together. For instance, in Northern Vietnamese the hối tone is realized with breathy phonation whereas nga and nảng tones are re-

¹ The interaction of initials, syllable-types, and tones in Asian languages and within the Tibeto-Burman linguistic family has been described by Haudricourt 1961, Matisoff 1973, 1990, Bradley 1978, Brunelle & Kirby 2015 inter alia. To summarize, diachronic sources for lexical tones in Asian languages are essentially final and initial consonants, with some vocalic phonemes loss (Michaud 2011).
alized with creaky phonation, sometimes described as glottalization (see Do-Hurinville & Dao, this volume). The Mong Leng tone system also shows the interaction of pith and phonation.

**Table 1: Mong Leng Tone system**
Adapted from Mortensen (2004) and Mortensen (this volume)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>tib</th>
<th>[ti55]</th>
<th>‘to pile’</th>
<th>/M(H)/</th>
<th>very high rising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tij</td>
<td>[ti52]</td>
<td>‘older brother’</td>
<td>/HL/</td>
<td>high falling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tiv</td>
<td>[ti35]</td>
<td>‘to endure’</td>
<td>/MH/</td>
<td>(high) rising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tig</td>
<td>[tʰj21]</td>
<td>‘to turn’</td>
<td>/MLʰ/</td>
<td>low falling breathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ti</td>
<td>[ti44]</td>
<td>‘close’</td>
<td>/M/</td>
<td>high-mid level, ‘chanted voice quality’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tis</td>
<td>[ti22]</td>
<td>‘wing’</td>
<td>/L/</td>
<td>low-mid level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tim</td>
<td>[tjʔ21]</td>
<td>‘because’</td>
<td>/MLʔ/</td>
<td>low falling creaky, sometimes with final stop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Burmese tone system is another good illustration of a system which mixed tonal and phonation type feature.

**Table 2: Description of the Burmese tone system (adapted from Bradley 1982: 160)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Name</th>
<th>Pitch contour</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Phonation</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘creaky’</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>short</td>
<td>creaky</td>
<td>less long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘even’</td>
<td>low-growing</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>clear (or normal voice)</td>
<td>fairly long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘heavy’</td>
<td>low (or middle)</td>
<td>long (the longer)</td>
<td>slightly breathy</td>
<td>very long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘killed’ (with glottal constriction)</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>very short</td>
<td>normal</td>
<td>short</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.2 Segmental phonemes: consonants and vowels

#### 1.2.1 Consonants

We find in MSEA languages that certain patterns prevail in the inventory of initial consonants: the presence or absence of aspiration, patterns of voicing contrasts in consonants, including pre-glottalization and prenasalization, and the presence or absence of velar vs. uvular consonants. For instance, the Mon initial consonant inventory contains aspirated consonants beside plain stops, but no
phonemic voicing contrast; the implosives ɗ and ɓ are pronounced as fully voiced implosive or preglottalised stops.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3a: Initial consonant in Mon</th>
<th>Table 3b: Possible clusters in Mon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adapted from Jenny (this volume)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>ky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kh</td>
<td>kr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>kl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>kw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>hcy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch</td>
<td>khr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>khl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hn</td>
<td>khw</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for prenasalized consonants, the Mong Leng set of initial consonants includes plain and aspirated ones, contrasting also velar and uvular consonants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Mong Leng consonant onset – from Mortensen (this volume)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>labial labial cluster dental dental cluster dental postalveolar palatal retroflex velar uvular glottal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prenasal plain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fricative vless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vcd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lateral vless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vcd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, we find highly constrained patterns of initial consonant clusters. In Mon (Table 3b), initial clusters are allowed only with a velar or labial stop in first position and a liquid in second position. Whereas in Pwo-Karen, the C2 inventory is reduced to liquid consonants only (table 5).
Table 5: Possible combinations of C1 and C2 in Pwo-Karen – From Kato (this volume)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C1</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>θ</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>k</th>
<th>?</th>
<th>ph</th>
<th>th</th>
<th>ch</th>
<th>kh</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>j</th>
<th>l</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final consonants are also highly restricted and final consonant clusters are extremely rare in the area. In Pwo-Karen, only the uvular nasal /n/ can only occur syllable-finally, whereas in Burmese the final consonants p, t, k are all realized as a glottal stop together with a change in the vowel quality (2) and the nasal final consonants m, n, ŋ, ɲ nasalize the vowel of the rhyme or become a homorganic consonant (3).

Burmese

(2)  a. tp= b. tt= c. tk= d. lp= e. lt= f. lk=  
WB <tap> <tat> <tak> <lap> <lat> <lak>  
Transc. taʔ taʔ tɛʔ laʔ laʔ lɛʔ  
fix, attach be skilled go up be vacant be fresh hand

(3) /footer-name:52/ /shiNʃ/ to go down, descend  
/footer-name:52 ba22/ /shiNPaʔ/ Please go down  
/footer-name:52 Ta2/ (the fact) X go/went down  
/footer-name:52 ge55/ /shiNKhɛ1/ went down (+ change of situation)

To summarize, final consonants generally form a smaller set, with an absence or a neutralization of contrasts, although Mon-Khmer languages may show a higher and unusual number of contrastive and distinctive final consonants. For instance, Kri syllables show a three-way contrast for oral sonorant finals (cf. (4)a,b,c) and distinguishes between phonetically similar checked palatal stop final [c̚] and post-glottalized palatal glide [jʔ] (Enfield & Diffloth 2009: 18).

Kri (Mon-khmer Language, Laos) – from Enfield and Diffloth (2009)

(4) Voiced Checked Voiceless  
a. tɔʔj tail tɔʔjʔ bowl tɔʔjɛ to follow, to chase  
b. camał shiny ?uməlʔ to hunt dəl to bounce  
c. kavər stir kavərʔ embrace təɾ to run out of workspace  
d. kʰʔa:j tree sp. kʰʔa:jʔ 1sg. kʰʔa:jɛ to escape
1.2.2 On vowel systems

In the vowel systems of MSEA languages, languages have generally large inventories of contrasting vowel qualities as in Khmer (see Haiman this volume), in some cases including back unrounded vowels [ɯ] and contrastive vowel length—as in Thai (table 1)—, in addition to characteristic diphthongs.

Vowel contrasts may correlate with tone and register systems as in Burmese where the creaky and killed tones despite their similarities in terms of duration, pitch and phonation type, are not easily confused thanks to the vowel realization (Watkins 2000: 144 ff).

Table 6: Phonetic realizations of the vowels /i/ and /ɔ/ according to tone in Burmese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>low tone</th>
<th>high tone</th>
<th>creaky tone</th>
<th>‘killed’ tone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/i/</td>
<td>[miː22]</td>
<td>[miː52]</td>
<td>[miː5]</td>
<td>[mjɪʔ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Name)</td>
<td>‘fire’</td>
<td>‘mother’</td>
<td>‘river’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɔ/</td>
<td>[mɔː22]</td>
<td>[mɔː52]</td>
<td>[mɔː55]</td>
<td>[maʊʔ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘look up’</td>
<td>‘tired’</td>
<td>‘tilt up’</td>
<td>‘haughty’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 provides a comparison of the vowel systems of some languages in and outside the MSEA area. Thai and Burmese show a 4-way distinction in vowel height, and are part of the MSEA Sprachbund. Arakanese—a Burmese dialect spoken in the western part of Burma, therefore on the edge of the MSEA Sprachbund—has fewer vowel-height distinctions than Standard (or Central) Burmese.

Interestingly, comparing Burmese dialects with other Tibeto-Burman languages such as Central Tibetan or Meitei shows that there are fewer vowel-height distinctions in the latter languages. Thus, apart from Kham dialects which have rich vowel systems and are spoken on the edge of the MSEA area, Amdo dialects and other Tibetic dialects such as Balti (5 vowels), Sherpa (7 vowels) and Ladhaki, have generally fewer vowels. Generally speaking, the further west these languages are spoken, the fewer vowels they have.
Table 7: Comparison of simple vowel systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thai  (Lg Tai-Kadai)²</th>
<th>Burmese (Lg TB)³</th>
<th>Arakanese (Lg TB west of MSEA)</th>
<th>Standard Tibetan (Lg TB outside MSEA)⁴</th>
<th>Meithi² (Lg TB outside MSEA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i u u</td>
<td>i u</td>
<td>i u</td>
<td>i /y u</td>
<td>i u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e y o</td>
<td>e o</td>
<td>e ø</td>
<td>e ø</td>
<td>e ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɛ θ c</td>
<td>ɛ c</td>
<td>ɛ a</td>
<td>ɛ a</td>
<td>ɛ a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Syllable structure

In general, the languages of the MSEA have monosyllabic morphemes; additionally, sesquisyllabic syllable structures — i.e. a prevocalic consonant or consonant cluster considered as a half syllable (Henderson 1952: 170, Matisoff 1973: 86) — are a characteristic feature of many languages.

Some authors define a sesquisyllable as any disyllabic word with a reduced number of contrasts in the initial syllable, while a more restrictive definition of sesquisyllables describes them as ‘one and half syllables’, comprising an initial minor syllable with a neutral vowel or a syllabic consonant. The examples in (5) are from Stieng.

Stieng (from Bon 2014: 87)

(5) a. [ɡa.naː] often reduced to [ɡnaː] ‘together’
    b. [trə.saj] often reduced to [təsaj] ‘vein’
    c. [mə.rac] often reduced to [mrac] ‘chilly’
    d. [kən.cian] often reduced to [ncian] ‘ring’
    e. [ka-šɔw] reduced to [kʰɔw] ‘to show’

² From Jenny (this volume, chapter on Thai). Notice that Thai vowel system shows also a length distinction, leading to a larger set of vowels.
³ From Vittrant (this volume, chapter on Burmese)
⁴ From Tournadre (1996: 57)
⁵ From Chelliah (1997: 21)
Many languages contrast major vs minor syllables in some way (Butler 2015); often minor syllables have greater restrictions on initial consonant clusters (Pittayaporn 2015), and may make use of a smaller subset of vowels. Henderson (1952) described Khmer as having a class of monosyllables with extended onsets which was distinct from a class of disyllables consisting of a ‘minor’ syllable followed by a major one, as shown in (6).

Khmer word structure (from Henderson 1952)

(6) a. simple monosyllable [de:k] ‘sleep’
   b. extended monosyllable [pʰde:k] ‘to put to bed’
   c. minor disyllable [bɔn.de:k] ‘go to bed’

2 Morphology

2.1 Word structure

The generally monosyllabic morphemes of MSEA languages can rarely be extended with affixational morphology; derivational compounding prevails. One exception is the Mon-Khmer family where most languages make use of prefixes (or infixes) —although few of them are productive. Examples of Mon-Khmer affixational morphology are given in (7).

Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in the Indosphere area have extensive suffixing as shown by Khumi sentence in (8).

(7) a. Wa (Mon-Khmer): g- prefixation
   lang > g-lang
   rauʔ > g-rauʔ
   ‘long’  ‘this long’  ‘deep’  ‘this deep’

6 The labels Indosphere and Sinosphere, coined by Matisoff 1991, encapsulate the view that Tibeto-Burman languages could be divided into two types according to their grammatical features, a typological classification correlating with geography. Languages of the first type (complex morphology, extensive suffixing, polysyllabic words) are found mainly in South Asia, while languages of the second type (simpler morphology, verb serialization, prefixation, compounding, occasional onset clustering (sesquisyllabism) are more commonly found in Mainland Southeast Asia.

7 From Watkins, this volume
b. Stieng (Mon-Khmer)^\textsuperscript{8}: nominalizing infix -n-
\begin{align*}
\text{sweep} & > p\text{-an-u:s} \\
\text{broom} & > c\text{-an-ɛ:h} \\
\text{old} & > c\text{-an-ɛ:h} \\
\text{old age} & > p\text{-an-ar} \\
\text{fly’} & > p\text{-an-ar} \\
\text{feather’} & > p\text{-an-ar}
\end{align*}

Khumi (Tibeto-burman), from Peterson (2005 [2002])

(8) kaay móey=loey phayloeyng=moe ang-ke-tlaw-noe-te-ba
\begin{align*}
1\text{S} & \quad \text{eye=TOP} \\
\text{ant=DEF} & \\
1/2\text{O-bite-LARGE0-NZR-EVID-EVAL}
\end{align*}

noe=piee-te
\begin{align*}
\text{QUOT}=\text{say-EVID}
\end{align*}

“The ant bit me in the eye!” he said to her.

The following types of nominal compounding listed by Suriya (1988), are found in most languages of the area — as well as other types of compounds. Adjective compounds (for those languages that have a distinct syntactic adjective category) or verbal compounds are also common.

**Table 8: Compounding in three Southeast Asian languages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N-N compounds with antonyms</th>
<th>Stieng\textsuperscript{9}</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Yongning Na (Mosuo)\textsuperscript{10}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• [mej-moəm]</td>
<td>‘parents’</td>
<td>[näng-múa]</td>
<td>• [zə33-mu33] ‘child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father-mother</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘bad weather’</td>
<td>‘sondaughter’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close-far</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘chance’</td>
<td>‘foot – hand’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>field-paddy</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘be very talkative’</td>
<td>‘foot – hand’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• [pəŋ-mlb squarely]</td>
<td>‘lamp’</td>
<td></td>
<td>• [ku];m rá:k ‘affected’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fire-bulb</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘manner-way’</td>
<td>‘mouth-way’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N-N compounds comprising</th>
<th>Stieng\textsuperscript{9}</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Yongning Na (Mosuo)\textsuperscript{10}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• [təəm-paːs]</td>
<td>‘coton tree’</td>
<td>[cây cam]</td>
<td>• [si33-dzi33] ‘tree’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trunk-coton</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘orange tree’</td>
<td>‘wood-tree’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

8 From Bon (2014)
9 Adapted from Bon (2014)
10 Adapted from Lidz (2010)
2.2 Psycho-collocations

Psycho-collocations are a semantic field in which many MSEA languages can form distinctive compounds. These compounds typically pair a part of the body with a stative verb to express an emotion or feeling. They were termed ‘psycho-collocations’ by Matisoff (1986a).

The following authors have described psycho-collocations in particular languages: VanBik (1998) for Hakha Lai; Oey (1990) for Malay, Jaisser (1990) for White Hmong, Vittrant (2014) for Burmese.

Kelatan Malay, from Nomoto & Soh, this volume

(9) a. besar hati 
   big – liver
   ‘glad, big heart’

b. kepala besar 
   head – big
   ‘proud’

c. besar mulut 
   big-mouth
   ‘brag’

Cham, from Brunelle & Phu, this volume

(10) a. prɔ̆ŋ taj 
   large-liver
   ‘reckless, foolhardy’

b. prɔ ̆ŋ koɁ 
   large-head
   ‘arrogant’

c. sam taj 
   beautiful-liver
   ‘good hearted’

---

11 Adapted from Bon (2014)
12 Adapted from Lidz (2010)
2.3 Elaborate expressions

‘Elaborate expressions’ are a characteristic feature of many MSEA languages. They are structures – often quadrisyllabic – with an aesthetic component typically involving patterns of symmetry, rhyme, alliteration, repetition and so on. General accounts of the phenomenon can be found in Enfield (2005: 189) and Matisoff (1986b: 76–77). Williams (2014) is collection of accounts of the use of phonaesthetics and sound symbolism in elaborate expressions in MSEA languages, including general overviews of the phenomenon in Austroasiatic (Sidwell 2014) and Tai (Hudak 2014). General overviews of the languages of this volume are also available: Haiman’s and Watkins’ contributions are dedicated respectively to Khmer and Wa, two Mon-khmer languages, Wheatley and Peterson focus on Burmese and Khumi ( Tibeto-Burman languages), and Wilaiwan’s contribution described the phenomenon in Thai. Mong Leng elaborate expressions are described in details in Mortensen 2003.

This characteristic feature has been studied in other Mon-Khmer (Migliazza 2005), Tai-Kadai (Wayland 1996, Compton 2007) and Southeast Asian languages (Watson 2001).

Thai, from Jenny, this volume
(11) a. สะดวกสบาย
sàduāk-sàbaay
‘convenient’

b. กินข้าวกินปลา
kin-khāaw-kin-plaa
‘eat’

Southern Min, from Chappell, this volume
(12) a. chui³-chio³-bak⁸-chio³
mouth-smile-eye-smile
‘beaming radiantly’

b. gong⁷bin⁷ – gong⁷bin⁷
simple-face (x 2)
‘kind of stupid-faced’

c. ang⁵-ang⁵
red (x 2)
‘sort of red, reddish’

d. sui²-sui²
beautiful (x 2)
‘beautiful’

In part related to the grammatical function of aesthetics in MSEA languages, reduplication in particular plays a grammatical role in several languages of the area. See for instance Min example in (12)b where reduplication code the ap-
proximate meaning ‘rather X’, and Malay example, where reduplication plays many different functions according to the stem category.

Table 9: Reduplication in Bahasa Indonesia, some examples adapted from Grange 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reduplication function</th>
<th>Syntactic category</th>
<th>Simple form</th>
<th>Reduplicated form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>plural of nouns</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>pokok ‘tree’</td>
<td>pokok pokok ‘trees’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>anak ‘child’</td>
<td>anak anak ‘children’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plurality of action</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>datang ‘to come’</td>
<td>datang-datang ‘to come all (of them)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iterativity,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[several event of coming]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuation)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ber-lompat ‘to jump’</td>
<td>berlompat-lompat ‘to hop’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mem-baca ‘read’</td>
<td>membaca-baca ‘to leaf through’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ber-teriak ‘shout’</td>
<td>berteriak-teriak ‘shout several times’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formation of adverb</td>
<td>V (or V₃₃)</td>
<td>cepat ‘quick’</td>
<td>cepat cepat ‘quickly’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>betul ‘be true’</td>
<td>betul-betul ‘truly, really’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensification</td>
<td>V (or V₃₃)</td>
<td>sakit ‘ill’</td>
<td>sakit-sakit ‘very ill’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Grammar and Syntax

In this section, we introduce a few basic facts about the noun phrase (§ 3.1) and the verb phrase (§ 3.2), and then move on to basic sentence structures (§ 3.3).

3.1 Nominal domain

This section sets out to describe some of the main features of noun phrases (NP) in the language studied, giving the basic structure of the NP, and how demonstratives, definiteness and number are expressed.

3.1.1 Basic structure of the NP

Figure 1 shows the basic structure of the Burmese NP. The big brackets represent the available ordered slots in the NP, while the small brackets represent optional items which may be expressed within each slot. In Burmese, which is a
final verb language, modifiers of the noun precede it, whereas information about number, such as plurality, classifier phrase, quantifiers, follow it.

**Figure 1**: The structure of the noun phrase in colloquial Burmese

In contrast, in the Mon-Khmer language Wa the noun always appears in the first slot, with modifiers following it.

**Figure 2**: The structure of Wa NP

Related to the basic structure of the NP is a comparison of word order in languages of the area. The table (10) summarizes what is frequently found in the different linguistic families, or sub-groups.

**Table 10**: Constituents order (cf. Enfield 2003: 52)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mon-Khmer</th>
<th>Tai-Kadai</th>
<th>Hmong-Mien</th>
<th>Chinese languages</th>
<th>Tibeto-Burman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(S) VO</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositions</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>±</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>±</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-modifier</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>±</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun-genitive</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>±</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessee-possessor</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num-CLF-N</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N- Num-CLF</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

13 See also Pinnow 1960
(13) a. Vietnamese
   hai quyên sách lớn này
   2 CLF book big DEM
   These two big books

b. Thai
   náňsɯɯ yay sɔɔŋ lèm nii
   book big 2 CLF DEM
   These two big books

c. Burmese
   ʔɛ.diʔ saʔ.ʔoʔ Ciʔ niʔ ?ʔoʔ
   DEM.ANAPH book big 2 CLF
   These two big books

3.1.2 Classifier (CLF) device

Classifier devices differ from one language to another, even in the Southeast Asian area where languages share so many structural features. The classifiers (also called sort or measure term) may be obligatorily or optionally used with numeral, demonstrative or in genitive constructions.

Cham (from Brunelle & Phu, this volume)
(14) klɔ̂w pɔ̂h ɲĩn năn
    three CLF bowls DEM
    ‘Those three bowls.’

(15) klɔ̂w ɲĩn thɛj năn
    three bowls rice DEM
    ‘Those three bowls of rice.’

The number of classifiers in a language’s repertoire ranges from dozens of forms to less than ten. For instance, Min dialects (see Chappell this volume) or Yongning Na (see Lidz this volume) have around 40 true individuating classifiers, excluding measure words and collective nouns that may appear in the same slot. On the other side, Khumi speakers commonly use very few, lacking even a specific classifier for animals (see Peterson this volume).
Some languages make extensive use of them, not only in quantifier phrases but also in contexts where individuation of the referent is required. Thus, classifiers may be required in nominal phrase containing a demonstrative, such as in (14) and (15).

They may also occur in bare classifier constructions without a numeral, expressing definiteness or indefiniteness (16) and finally they can have an anaphoric function (17), used to form indefinite expressions (18).

Chinese Wu (from Li & Bisang 2012: 336)

(16) kɣ lɔpan ma lə bu tsʰotsʰ
    CLF boss buy PFV CLF car

The boss [/*a boss] bought a car [/*the car.]

Cham (from Brunelle & Phu, this volume)

(17) klɔ̆w nʔ paj sît bǎŋ ka-rot, mǐn ha nʔ čoh kʃj.
    three CLF rabbit small eat carrot, but one CLF break tooth

‘Three small rabbits eat carrots, but one breaks a tooth.’

Burmese (from Vittrant, this volume)

(18) а. təʔ-ʔoʔ-ʔoʔ phye2 naiN2 =ma la3
       one-CLFbook.REDUP answer CAN =IRR QST

Take some book or other. Could someone answer [this question]?


### 3.2 Verbal domain

#### 3.2.1 No inflection

SEA languages are well-known for their lack of inflection (see Enfield 2005: 188). They usually do not encode tense, that is to say tense is not a category which is obligatorily expressed in the VP. However, languages may be able to deploy non-obligatory morphemes to express tense and other aspectual/modal distinctions.
Similarly, number is frequently not obligatorily encoded or required in MSEA languages, although many languages do have a way to express number distinctions in the VP.

Burmese (from Vittrant, p.c.)

(19) ကေလးေတွနားေထာင်ြက။
kəle³ -Twe² na’. TaɔN² =Ca¹ Ø
children -PLUR listen =PLUR (IMP)
‘Hey kids! Listen!’

Mon (from Jenny, this volume)

(20) ေကာန်ၚာ်အာဘာအိုတ်ရ။
kon.ŋàcʔa phɛ̀ə ʔɒt raʔ
cild go school all FOC
‘The children have (all) gone to school.’

3.2.2 Verbal Categories

Aspect and mode are the categories most usually expressed inside the VP in MSEA languages, frequently by means of a pre- or post-verbal auxiliary (Goddard 2005: 109, 119 ff).

Here are some current examples of grammaticalizes verbs MSEA languages, including the famous ‘GET’ auxiliary (see Enfield 2003, 2005, Van der Auwera & al 2009) with a pre-verbal and a post-verbal meaning as in Stieng.

Stieng (from Bon 2014)

(21) a. paŋ ɓaːn lan muaj 3 get/obtain car a
‘He got a car’

b. hej ɲɔp ɓaːn muaj 1SG catch ASP: RESULT a
I got one -

c. ɓaːn bə:h ɡək waŋ Tɛːh-Dɔm mod.deontic come live village TD
I [got to/could] come to TD village.
• to get, to obtain > potential modality, resultative/perfect aspect
• to put, to set > completed/ resultative aspect
• to give > causative, benefactive > preposition (see (22))
• to finish > perfective/ complete aspect > conjunction/temporal subordinator
• to go ~ to come (and other directional verbs) => allative/venitive, laudative/malefactive, ...
• to see/ to watch > temptative & success, as in “she tries a skirt” vs. “she tries to wear a skirt” (without succeeding). See in (24) and (27).
• to stay, remain > progressive and continuous, durative aspects => two different aspectual meanings depending on the category of verbs : stative vs. non-stative. See for instance Watanabe (2005), Romeo (2008 : 108ff)

Vietnamese (adapted from Do-Hurinville 2008).
(22) a. Paul mua cho Mary cuốn sách này.  
Paul buy give Mary CLF. book DEM  
Paul bought this book and gave (it) to Mary.

b. Paul mua cuốn sách này cho Mary ...  
Paul buy CLF. book DEM give/BEN Mary  
Paul bought this book for Mary [and this one for ...].

c. Paul mua cuốn sách này cho Mary đọc.  
Paul buy CLF. book DEM give/BEN Mary read  
Paul bought this book so that Mary read it.

The verb ហើយ haej ‘finish’ in the Khmer example (23)a indicates the completion of an event. It also functions as a sequential clausal conjunction (see (23)b).

Khmer (from Haiman, this volume)
(23) a. វារីមកក្នុងអំឡុងពេលខ្លះ ែធង្ជំ ឬ ហើយ  
via kha:n pheuk teuk tnaot ju: nah mau:k haej  
3 miss drink juice palm long.time very come:DIR finish:PERF  
“He had missed drinking palm syrup for a very long time already.”

b. គាត់លូកៃទៅកនុងថង់យាមកអួ  
koat lu:k daj tev knong thawng jiam haej daw:k  
3 reach hand go in knapsack finish:CONJ remove
Cham (from Brunelle & Phu, this volume)

    1PS watch television
    ‘I watch television.’

    1PS write letter TAM:watch
    ‘I try to write a letter.’

Further accounts of these grammaticalizing processes may be read in Smeall (1975), Matisoff (1991), and Heine & Kuteva (2003).

### 3.2.3 Serial verb constructions (SVC)

Serial verb constructions (SVC) are a key feature of the verb systems of many MSEA languages. The key feature of SVCs is that two or more verbs combine to form, to a greater or lesser extent, a single verbal predicate. Aikhenvald & Dixon (2006) note that this is done “without any overt marker of coordination, subordination or syntactic dependency of any sort.” See also Foley and Olson (1985), Durie (1997: 290).

The main features of a SVC are that the component verbs express a single event, sharing tense, aspect, modality and polarity. They must share at least one argument, and can have only one subject. None of the verbs of an SVC can be the syntactic argument of another verb of the SVC. A SVC comprises a single intonational phrase and the component elements may display other forms of phonological juncture. Frequently, SVCs are grammaticalized or lexicalized. Depending on the word order preferred in a language, certain elements in the SVC may become more prepositional and less verbal in their function. #

However, in certain cases, an SVC may can possess only some of the features just described.

While SVCs are clearly an areal characteristic of MSEA languages, the details vary from language to language.
In general, it is possible to distinguish between 'symmetrical' SVCs which are time-iconic, and refer to sequential actions which constitute one event or the various phases of a single event (26) and 'asymmetrical' SVCs where a certain element or elements have undergone grammaticalization (27) or lexicalization (28).


3.3 Clausal/sentential organization

For most MSEA languages, the basic word order is (S)VO, with the exception of most Tibeto-Burman languages of the area which are verb-final.
Stieng (Mon Khmer, from Bon 2014)
(29) sədiaŋ-təklɔw kɑl cʰiː
human cut.down tree
S V O
A man cuts down a tree.

Khumi (Tibeto-burman language from Peterson, this volume)
(30) ... kay¹ h’ni³ ngo¹ abay¹=nō³ s’ra¹⁰=a¹ niw¹
1S [DEM fish cut=NR doctor=LOC] see
S O V
‘I saw the doctor who cut the fish’.

3.3.1 Ellipsis of arguments

In general, arguments already known from the context (or co-text) may be omitted. For instance, in (31) from a dialogue situation, the arguments are retrievable from the speech situation and are therefore not expressed by a linguistic mean. See Tamba-Mecz (1983), Kibrik (2001) on ellipsis of arguments.

Burmese
(31) pyiN² pe³ laʔ =mɛ²
repear give/BENEF follow/ASP:TERM =IRR
[I] will repear [it] for [you].

3.3.2 Information Structure

In organizing information in the discourse, MSEA languages are known to be ‘topic-prominent’, rather than ‘subject-prominent’. Unlike in, say, Indo-European languages, no emphasis is put on an argument (subject) by verbal agreement. Rather, MSEA languages give prominence to the topic of the sentence, the argument referred to in new information given by the speaker. Topical arguments are usually fronted as in (32)b, and sometimes external to the clause, but remain semantically connected to rest of the sentence, which can be considered a “comment” on the topic. See Lambrecht (1984), Krifka (2006) and Goddard (2005: 128ff), inter alia.
Pwo Karen (from Kato, this volume)

(32) a. သာအွာ ေဍာဟ် သာခၠင်း။
   θàʔwà dò θʊkhléɪn
   Thawa hit Thakhlein
   ‘Thawa hit Thakhlein.’

   b. သာခ ိင္း ṃႜႜာြအာ ေႜဟ္။
   θàkhléɪn nɔ́ θɔʔwà dò
   Thakhlein TOP Thawa hit
   ‘As for Thakhlein, Thawa hit him.’

Mong Leng (from Yaaj and Vaaj 1985: 9)

(33) Luas tej mas nim ua zaam lab-<quas>vog
    lùa tê mà nǐ ua żáŋ lá-<qùa>vq
    IMP.PL PL TOP EMPH do clothing red-EXP<EUPH>
    ‘The others, they wore clothes of the reddest red.’

The grammaticalization of topic markers from conjunctions seems to be an areal feature observed in, for example, Vietnamese, Hmong, Black Thai (Clark, 1991: 87).

In (34), for instance, the noun thi ‘time’ has been grammaticalized to become a conjunction and also a topic marker (35).

Vietnamese (from Do-Hurinville & Dao, this volume)

(34) Nếu trời đẹp thi ta sẽ đi dạo.
    if sky be beautiful TOP 1 PL FUT go for a walk
    ‘If the weather is beautiful, then we’ll go for a walk.’

(35) Tôi thi tôi thích đọc Balzac.
    1SG TOP 1SG like read Balzac
    ‘As for me, I like reading Balzac.’

3.3.3 Others

Clark (1985) notes that many SEA languages distinguish between polar ‘yes-no’ questions and wh-questions. Moreover, polar questions may in some cases be formed by the juxtaposition of two alternative positive and negative propositions of the same verb, as in Mandarin Chinese. See for instance Mongleng questions in (36).
Mongleng (from Mortensen, this volume)

(36) a. Koj puas moog?
   kô pûa mʊŋ
   2SG QST go
   ‘Are you going?’

   b. Koj moog tsi moog?
   kô mʊŋ tʃi mʊŋ
   2SG go NEG go
   ‘Are you going?’

   c. Koj moog lov?
   kô mʊŋ lô
   2SG go QST
   ‘You’re going, are you?’

MSEA languages have “a penchant for nominalizing whole sentences without embedding them into any larger unit, typically via a particle, which is also used in citation-form verbs, and which has a relative/genitive function in other constructions.” (Matisoff 1986b: 78).

In Thulung Rai, a language spoken by about a thousand people in Eastern Nepal (Lahaussois 2003), the morpheme < mu-> (and its allomorphs) is used with different functions including citation form, nominalizing and relativisation.

Thulung Rai (from Lahaussois, 2003)

(37) a. si-mu  b. po-mu
   ‘to die’   ‘to eat’

(38) make sinben-mu hapa much kam bo-mu basi
    grain plant-NMLZ much work make-NMLZ OBL
    Planting seed requires a lot of work.

(39) go khok-to-m dzam brɔpa bai-ra
    isg cook-1SG/3SG.PST-NMZL rice good be-3SG.PST
    The food I cooked was good.

Compare also the following examples. The particle မီ့ /Te²/ which marks the citation form of the verb in Burmese, has also a quotative function. See (40).

As predicted by Matisoff 1986, it also appears in relative clauses, and in no-
minalized or completive clauses, with a slight different form (allomorph /Ta/).

Burmese (from Vittrant, this volume, and Vittrant 2002)

(40) ?oma1 mə=θma3 naiN2 =Phu1 mə=θə=3 =ne1 Te1
older sister NEG go can NEG NEG go INJ.NEG QUOT
You (sister) cannot go (there). Don’t go there, they said.

(41) a. ʔəma1 mə =θmə3 naiN2 =Phu3 mə =θə=3 =ne1 Te1
older sister NEG go can NEG NEG go INJ.NEG QUOT
You (sister) cannot go (there). Don’t go there, they said.

b. ʔəma1 mə =θmə3 naiN2 =Phu3 mə =θə=3 =ne1 Te1
older sister NEG go can NEG NEG go INJ.NEG QUOT
You (sister) cannot go (there). Don’t go there, they said.

(41) a. ʔəma1 mə =θmə3 naiN2 =Phu3 mə =θə=3 =ne1 Te1
older sister NEG go can NEG NEG go INJ.NEG QUOT
You (sister) cannot go (there). Don’t go there, they said.

(42) ?eiN2.thəN2.ca1 =Ta2 =Ka1 thəN2.ca1 =Ta2 the? mə =sho3 =Phu3 la3
be.married NMZL S. be.in.jail NMZL COMP NEG bad NEG QST
To be married isn't it worse than to be in jail?

4 Semantics and pragmatics

4.1 Common semantic domains

MSEA languages typically share conceptual frameworks relating to certain semantic domains, mentioned by Matisoff (1986b: 79).

Among them are certain terms relating to food. Broadly, food is divided into two categories:

‘rice’ and ‘what-is-eaten-with-rice’.

(43) Rice With-rice
Burmese thamiN3 ထမင်း hiN3 ဟင်း
Thai khàaw ข้าว kàp-khàaw ข้าว
Further, most languages have distinct terms for rice in various stages of its growth, production and preparation. The following table is adapted from L. Bernot (2000: 103).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English/French</th>
<th>Vietnamese (Hmong-Mien)</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Burmese</th>
<th>Cham</th>
<th>Wa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice seedlings</td>
<td>ma yang</td>
<td>yang</td>
<td>pyo₃ нибудь</td>
<td>ȵih</td>
<td>kla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddy, rice in field</td>
<td>lua blau dao zəba 3</td>
<td>t̥aj</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhusked rice</td>
<td>thoc tsu gu</td>
<td>kaoo 乖乖</td>
<td>t̥aj</td>
<td>ȵºoʔ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husked rice</td>
<td>gao hmei</td>
<td>mi sʰâN² 乖乖</td>
<td>prah/pjah  gaoʔ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked rice</td>
<td>com hnang fan</td>
<td>thamιN³ 乖乖</td>
<td>th̥j. ʔɯp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequently, MSEA languages encode fine lexical distinctions in the following semantic domains:

- Verbs of cutting: according to the nature of the object being cut, the tool, the type of motion involved, the size of the resultant pieces, etc. (see Wa data from Watkins this volume),
- Verbs of carrying: according to the part of the body and the position used for carrying (hand, shoulder, back, arm(s), etc...)
- Verbs of drying: drying by fire, in the sun, etc.
- Verbs of pushing: according to the direction of the pushing (up, down, pressing, etc...)

Table 12: Words encompassing a 'carry' meaning (adapted from this volume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Thai</th>
<th>Malay</th>
<th>Khumi</th>
<th>Wa</th>
<th>Khmer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To carry (general)</td>
<td>chọ</td>
<td>membawa</td>
<td>klom ~ s.gron</td>
<td>haa</td>
<td>dedi</td>
<td>bao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To carry on back</td>
<td>bęek menggendong pho³ gao</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To carry on/ across</td>
<td>vac</td>
<td>hąap menanggung, t'va¹, apu¹ gu, kan̄ kao menjulang</td>
<td>līi</td>
<td></td>
<td>pun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

14 See Brunelle & Phu on Cham, Watkins on Wa, this volume
15 See Do-Hurinville & Dao, Jenny, Nomoto & Soh, Peterson and Watkins’s chapters for fine grained semantics of these terms. About Khmer, see Haiman’s chapter and Khmer dictionary online <www.sealang.net>.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Thai</th>
<th>Malay</th>
<th>Khumi</th>
<th>Wa</th>
<th>Khmer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To carry on or between hands</td>
<td>ถือ thụùw menanai</td>
<td>menai ya̤ok</td>
<td>yəok</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To carry in one hand, or hanging from one hand</td>
<td>หิ้ว hîw menjinjing</td>
<td>vá, sùng²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To carry on head</td>
<td>ดู้ dɔi</td>
<td>tehn menjunjung</td>
<td>atlăng⁴ cah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tuul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To carry with/in arms</td>
<td>khuân</td>
<td>.heap hʊ̀wp</td>
<td>t'pâng⁴</td>
<td></td>
<td>kɒŋ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To carry close to body/astride the waist/in one’s arm/on the back</td>
<td>ตำบ (bệ, bông)</td>
<td>RelativeLayout mʊ̀m mendukung</td>
<td>pew⁴ kʰwp</td>
<td>बाय</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certain head nouns used in compounding are found across a range of MSEA languages, e.g. ‘ankle’ < ‘foot-eye’ in couple of languages. Further examples can be seen in Matisoff (1978) and (2004).

### 4.2 Pragmatics & discourse

#### 4.2.1 Final particles

SEA languages generally deploy systems of sentence-final particles as the basic means of expressing the illocutionary force of an utterance: requesting, questioning, persuading, advising, reminding, instructing..., etc. Particles are also used to convey propositional attitudes, such as the emotions of the speaker: surprise, doubt, impatience, reluctance, hesitation, etc.).

For instance, the Cham sentence in (44)a is a declarative sentence. The same propositional content appears modified by different final particles in the following sentences, changing the illocutionary force. Burmese example (45) shows final particles conveying attitudes of the speaker. Other examples may be found in Goddard (2005: 144) and Fischer (2006).

Cham, from Brunelle & Phu, this volume

(44) a.  ça ka naw pac
   "boy name go study"
   Ka goes to school.
b.  ça ka naw pac lēj  
*boy name go study QST*

Does Ka go to school?

> interrogative

b.  ça ka naw pac mēʔ  
*boy name go study IMP*

Go to school Ka.

> imperative

b.  ça ka naw pac da!  
*boy name go study EMP*

Ka went to school, I’m afraid!

> emphaser

Burmese, adapted from Hnin Tun (2006: 40)

(45) a.  ၸမ္းကိုလာေနာ်။  

diʔ=Ko² la² ɲɔ²  

*Come here, OK?*

_The request is softer, soliciting the addressee’s agreement._

b.  ၸမ္းကိုလာေလ။  

diʔ=Ko² la² le²  

*Please, come here. Come along!*

_The often the order while checking that the addressee is paying attention._

c.  ၸမ္းကိုလာကွာ။  

diʔ=Ko² la²  Kwa²  

*Come on, won’t you.*

_Compelling attention, signaling some exasperation.informal_

d.  ၸမ္းကိုလာစမ်း။  

diʔ=Ko² la²  SaN³  

*Get over here!*

_A sharp, abrupt comment._

e.  ၸမ္းကိုလာဆို။  

diʔ=Ko² la²  Sho²  

DEM=DIR come  

*Come (I already called you, so please do come!)*

_Reiterating a request, impatiently._

4.2.2 Politeness

In a number of languages, complex sets of pronouns are used to encode systems of honorifics and levels of politeness. Distinct lexical items may be used to express honorific, humilific, religious or royal contexts. Goddard (2005) gives an account of these phenomena.
Table 13 shows the Thai pronominal device, that encodes either gender distinction and social status of the speech-act participants.

**Table 13: Thai pronominal device, from Jenny, this volume**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. PERS.</th>
<th>2. PERS.</th>
<th>3. PERS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>กู (kuu)</td>
<td>intimate, impolite</td>
<td>มีง (mung) impolite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>มัน (man) hum ref. contemptuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ข้า (khaa)</td>
<td>intimate</td>
<td>เดี๋ย (deii) intimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>เขา (khao) neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>อัน (chan)</td>
<td>informal, intimate</td>
<td>แก่ (gai) informal, contemptuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>เธอ (tho) female referents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ผม (phom)</td>
<td>m. speaker,</td>
<td>เธี (thi) familiar, intimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>สุภาพ (sua) female referents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>กรำปะ (krapom)</td>
<td>m. speaker,</td>
<td>คู่ (ku) neutral, polite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>formal</td>
<td>ทาน (thao) formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ติ้น (tinn)</td>
<td>f. speaker,</td>
<td>ทาน (thao) formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ข้าพเจ้า (khaphao)</td>
<td>formal</td>
<td>เจ้า (jao) literary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>เราม (raw)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 14: Khmer pronominal device, from Haiman, this volume**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. PERS.</th>
<th>2. PERS.</th>
<th>3. PERS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ខញុំ (kjom)</td>
<td>speaker is acting</td>
<td>មិន (mien) addressee is younger or of lower status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>humble or polite</td>
<td>គាត់ (koat) referent is respected other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>អញ (anj)</td>
<td>speaker is arrogant</td>
<td>អនក (neak) addressee is of much lower status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or on intimate terms with addressee</td>
<td>ឯង (aeng) referent is unrespected other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>អាតាម (atma)</td>
<td>speaker is monk</td>
<td>រត់ (ruot) referent may be any other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>េយើង (jeung)</td>
<td>Neutral (Plural)</td>
<td>ស្លម (srom) speaker and addressee are both monks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ស្លេស (truang)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ម្មៀង (migheng) referent is royalty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**5 Summary**

In conclusion, regarding the characteristics of Southeast languages, how typical or ordinary is the language examined?
Which of the shared features are present? Which are widespread; which are not found?

In general, how does the language in question match the norms of the MSEA linguistic area?

In these guidelines, we have described a number of grammatical features shared (to some extent/various degrees) by languages of Mainland Southeast Asia. These features are the ones which have to be investigated in an areally-orientated description of a language.

The pervasiveness of the features may vary according to language contact history and other linguistic and sociolinguistics factors (see Aikhenvald 2006). The language in question may have been in close contact with one or more languages of the area, resulting in a case of language convergence (such as Cham with Vietnamese, or Karen or Mon with Burmese).

The language may be spoken on the edge of the linguistic area, display fewer areal features (see Khumi or Mosuo Na), and even be considered part of a different linguistic area (South Asia), or between two linguistic areas (as for Tani: see Post 2015).

In summary, the notion of linguistic area does not rely exclusively on linguistic criteria. It requires language communities to have shared culture and history. Thus, each language description, although following the same guideline, will result in a different language sketch.

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