

## THE VERB IN SPOKEN MON

Christian BAUER

Mahidol University

I shall discuss some basic structures of the verb complex in spoken Mon, involving compounds, auxiliaries and minor verbs of direction, both morphologically simple and complex, and aspect.<sup>1</sup> Quantifying verbs such as /lòn/ 'to exceed', /ʔət/ 'to be finished, exhausted', or other minor verbs such as /plɔn/ 'to do again, in return' are more appropriately analyzed at a higher syntactic level (clause, sentence) and will be excluded from treatment here.<sup>2</sup> I shall also exclude verbs of existence, possession and negation which show different patterns in word-order and distribution.<sup>3</sup> This article is divided into the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Three-term constructs
3. Two-term constructs
  - i) directional verbs
  - ii) aspectual verbs
    - a) ingressive
    - b) perfective
    - c) progressive
  - iii) modifying verbs

### 1. Introduction

The study of the verb complex in Mon does not appear, at first, to be promising for a statement on the major differences between this particular subgroup (Mon, Nyah Kur) and other Mon-Khmer languages or non-cognate contiguous languages (Thai, for instance) unlike other areas of Mon grammar such as the highly complex nominal piece with its plural-marking clitics and various means of determination, lacking 'classifiers' (except for Buddhist terms, humans and plants), the modal system and (assertive, hypothetical), negation and shifts in the affix-system.

Yet, we can, even at this rather basic syntactic level, observe some significant differences.<sup>4</sup>

While, for instance, both in Khmer and Mon the verbs *to take (away)* and *to bring* consist of two terms, a major and a minor, modifying, verb, the latter shows different distributional properties in each language.

modern Khmer	yòok t̚vu	to take (away)
	yòok m̀òok	to bring
spoken Mon	ket na	to take away
	ket n̚əaŋ	to bring

Khmer t̚vu and m̀òok are directional verbs, *to go* and *to come* respectively. They may occur as major verbs in simple statements like t̚vu psaa *to go to the market* or followed by another minor verb m̀òok d̀ol pt̚əh k̚nom [*he*] *arrived at my house*.

Both may also mark aspect. na and n̚əaŋ may occasionally occur in spoken Mon (SM) by themselves while the two directional verbs ʔa and kl̚əŋ *to go* and *to come* may function as aspect-marking verbs. The former pair has a complex history: na is a phonologically aberrant form (unnatural register, spelt om instead of the expected \*\*/n̚əa/), attested, for the first time, in the Ananda-Plaques (c. 1105 AD), Old Mon (OM) kil na /k̚ɔl na/ (SM /k̚ɔ na/) *to give (away)*.

SM n̚əaŋ and r̚əaŋ are reflexes of OM \*naŋ (as attested in Nyah Kur) and OM raŋ 'to bring' occurring as a major verb,<sup>5</sup> either by itself, or in head-position, followed by directional verbs, rather like the Khmer pattern.

OM	raŋ ʔar	---/to go
	raŋ tluŋ	---/to come

forming derivatives

OM	sraŋ	<s->	[hypothetical]
	praŋ	<p->	[causative] <i>to send</i>
	pahraŋ	<n->	[noun] <i>present, gift</i>

or contracted forms

OM	rənʔar	<i>to carry off</i>	ʔar	<i>to go</i>
	rəntit	<i>to take away</i>	tit	<i>to go, come, out</i>
	rənlop*	<i>to take into</i>	lop	<i>to enter</i>

Variation in word-order, however, does occur, with Middle Mon (MM) conforming to the reverse pattern.

MM	ket raŋ	<i>to bring</i>
	phyaw raŋ	<i>to bring, take, home</i> .

Similarly, some verb complexes in Khmer and SM, while using identical terms, differ from Old Mon in word-order, as in

modern Khmer	t̚vu cliə	<i>to become</i>	(to go/to be)
SM	t̚h ʔa	<i>to become</i>	(to be/to go)
	t̚h kl̚əŋ	<i>to come to be</i>	(to be/to come)

Again, OM shows a pattern different from the modern language (SM) (SM), ʔar d̀os, tluŋ d̀os (to go/to be), (to come/to be).

A phonological classification of the verb in SM is possible only within certain limits: Shapes like /əC-/ and /ʔiʔC-/ tri- and tetrasyllables (loans) except /həcarəna/ *to think, reflect*, P. *vīcāraṇā*, are exclusively confined to nouns; no noun/verb classification can be established on phonological grounds alone, the majority of simple forms in the SM lexicon showing shapes like.

CV(C)	CəCV(C)
CCV(C)	CəCCV(C)
CCCV(C)	

The historical evolution of complex (derived) forms resulted in a *syncretism* of various affixes, inflectional or derivational. Thus OM *gɿɿŋ* (SM *klàŋ*) *to be much, numerous* takes the Old Mon infix <-m-> to derive an attributive, *gəmlɿŋ*, and the infix <-r-> to derive a noun-quantifier, OM *gərɿŋ*. Subsequent phonological shifts in the consonant\* system yielded a merger of these two distinctive OM forms, plus an additional form that can be reconstructed from SM *həlàŋ* *to increase, exceed*, OM \**gərɿŋ*, MM \**gəløŋ* (\*causative)

OM	<i>gəmlɿŋ</i> <i>gərɿŋ</i> * <i>gəlɿŋ</i>	SM	<i>həlàŋ</i>
OM	<i>gɿŋ</i>	SM	<i>klàŋ</i>
OM	<-m-> <-r-> <-ə->	SM	<-ə->

following the rules of mediocluster-reduction

OM	-ml-	SM	-l-
OM	-rl-	SM	-l-
OM	-l-	SM	-l-

Relevant in this context is the fact that formerly grammatically distinctive classes also merged, and SM *həlàŋ* reflects the causative verb (*to increase, exceed*), the noun-quantifier and a noun-clitic (OM attributive). The majority of nouns and verbs cannot be distinguished phonologically, and the SM lexicon abounds in homophonous forms.

Before entering into a detailed discussion some phonological features of the verb complex should be mentioned: Chiming and alliterative forms are quite frequent, especially in narratives and public speeches, as in

<i>kriṽ həriṽ</i>	<i>to flee, run away</i>
<i>kòp kò</i>	[ <i>to</i> ] <i>ought</i> [ <i>to</i> ]
<i>khɿɿp kəsɿp</i>	<i>to think, reflect</i>
<i>kəpat krat krao</i>	<i>to wash</i> [ <i>clothes</i> ]

də dək həcə həcah həkao mò'sa? həkao?  
to oppress our nation

(də dək to oppress həcə həcah to run against, counter).

A certain number of chiming constituents can, in fact, be analyzed as a sequence of simple and derived form (or base and derivative), as in the quoted examples

kri:p	to run away	həri:p	running (attr.)
khyo:p	to think	kəso:p	thought, intention

A distinction between stative (the term attributive, as used by Mrs Jacob for Khmer, is to be avoided in this context since OM/MM/LM possess a separate infix to form attributives) and operative verbs is not necessary. Only stative verbs may be reduplicated to form the translation-equivalent of adverbials,

sa	to be light [weight], gentle
?a phəa ?a sa-sa	[when] in a monastery, walk gently
proh	to be fast, quick
kwaik proh-proh	to walk fast

Reduplication of operative verbs, and other word-classes, does occur, the former in modern literary Mon (LM)

pəh kòh khyu-khyu pòŋ kə? təm lòa, pòh lòa, klòh lòa, ...  
those who are writing so that it may be easily learnt,  
easily read, easily understood, ...

(khyu to write)

həkao mòa-mòa	each people, nation
əca mòn təŋə-təŋə	various Mon teachers

(mòa one numerals in Mon are verbs)  
(təŋə individual)

Only operative verbs occur in chiming pairs like kri:p həri:p to run away, flee. Two-term constructs may be reduplicated to form intensifying expressions, as in kwaik ?a kwaik ?a to walk and walk

In SM, unlike OM, only causative verbs are marked morphologically, as in the following:

Non-causative form	Causative	Affix
hum dək	phum dək [kɔ]	<p->
səŋ hə?ui	phyzəŋ hə?ui	<p->
cə? pəŋ	həcə? pəŋ	<h->
kləŋ	hələŋ	<-ə->
sai	hərai	<-ə->

to have a bath	to bathe [s.o.]
to take medicine	to administer medicine [to s.o.]
to eat [rice]	to feed [s.o.]
to be much, numerous	to increase
to be separate	to separate

The use of the causative does not affect word-order  
 The particle *ko*, however, does:

həcəʔ kon ɲaik pəŋ      to feed the children with rice  
 həcəʔ pəŋ ko kon ɲaik

Through *affix-syncretism* some attributive forms have merged with causatives

<i>bəh</i>	<i>həbəh</i>	[ <i>ɬaik həbəh</i> ]
to be cool	-to cool	
	-attr.	[ <i>cold water</i> ]

The remaining derivations are nominalizations of various kinds

Affixes:      <-m-> <-w-> <-n-> <-ə-> <-ə-> <?i?->

Categories: *agentive, instrumental, quantifying, similitive, locative, deictic, onomastic*

[this list is not exhaustive; readers are referred to Bauer 1982]

The verb complex in spoken Mon can be classified according to the number of terms.

## 2. Three-term constructs

Verbs in this category can be reduced to a sequence incorporating a minor verb or a noun.

<i>kɔp tɛa ʔa</i>	to run after	V V V
<i>həm əɾɛ həmən</i>	to tell lies	V N V
<i>həm əɾɛ mən</i>	to speak Mon	V N N
<i>kətv təh nɪh</i>	to be born	V V N

Instances without a directional verb are  
 V V V

<i>kəp kə tɛh</i>	ought to [ <i>pre-verbal -V#</i> ]
<i>kwəiŋ cəŋ təu</i>	to be seriously concerned
<i>klai he klɪp</i>	to search carefully

Other sequences include directional verbs, always in final position

<i>kələŋ cao klɔŋ</i>	to come back
<i>paik hətom phyih</i>	to fell
<i>ʔəh lai ʔa</i>	to waste away

## 3. Two-term constructs

Analyzing two-term verb constructs in Mon might prove as hazardous as isolating affixes; the reasons for this are two-fold.

Firstly, variation of the kind

həḏah sai	~	sai həḏah	to be separated
hənèa krət	~	krət hənèa	to hinder
kwaik wòiq	~	wòiq kwaik	to go for a stroll

entails a change in stress-placement. In sequences such as these the stress is fixed the primary stress being placed on the second term

kwaik 'wòiq	wòiq 'kwaik
-hə'ḏah 'sai	sai -hə'ḏah

and secondary stress on the first, with unstressed minor syllables. In isolation or in different syntactic environments disyllables of the shape CəCV(C), əC(C)V(C) and ?i?C(C)V(C) show primary stress on the first syllable. Additional rules apply to tri- and tetrasyllabic Indo-Aryan loans.<sup>6</sup>

The set given below, kwaik ?a and ?a kwaik, shows exceptions to the stress change rule. In the first sequence, ?a functions as an aspectual verb<sup>7</sup>, receiving secondary stress, as in the latter, although occurring here as a major verb,

'kwaik ı?a	[off he] went
ı?a 'kwaik	[to] walk

as opposed to

ıḏak 'kwi	[to] go by car, cart (to mount/cart)
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A second difficulty arises when negating two-term constructs,

	Negative
yàk ket	hù? yàk ket
cup klɜŋ	hù? cup klɜŋ
toik hloiŋ	hù? toik hloiŋ
	toik hù? hloiŋ
klài chɜ	hù? klài chɜ
	klài hù? chɜ

V <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>1</sub> V <sub>2</sub>
to carry	to take	to carry [in arms]
to reach	to come	to arrive
to lie down	to sleep	to sleep
to look for	to find	to find

Two-term constructs may not be split by the negative verb particle hù? if the minor verb is a directional verb, ?a ~ kləŋ, na ~ nɛaŋ, cih ~ tɔn, or a modifying verb.

However, if the minor verb is a resultative verb, the negative particle may either precede the entire construct or the resultative verb,

toik hloiŋ                      hù? toik hloiŋ                      toik hù? hloiŋ

The former conveys the idea of not even having made an attempt while the latter expresses a failed attempt or an inability of some sort, [I] *did not* [go to] *sleep*, [I] *could not*, *was unable to*, *sleep*. In some cases, I did not note the negation of the entire construct,

ròŋ jàt                      ròŋ hù? jàt                      cannot see

Should minor verbs of result and ability be treated rather as auxiliaries,

ərə həmɛa kòh ?oa hɔm hù? lèp  
ərə həmɛa kòh ?oa hɔm lèp kɔm  
dəh lèp ərə həmɛa

*I cannot speak Burmese*  
*I can speak Burmese as well*  
*he can speak Burmese*

- if lèp to know how to, have learned to is considered as an auxiliary, as kə?, màn &c. - or be classified in the same group as verbs of direction and modifying verbs in second position?

Finally, how are two-term constructs to be isolated from extended syntactic environments, such as the following:

krìp tèa lùp krəp ?a      fled into the forest [narrative]  
pa? ka həcɔt ?a      [he] died  
?a ròŋ chɜ tèh      to come across

?a to go &c., in final position of a complex indicated either aspect or direction ([away from speaker]); in the two cases quoted it refers, however, to the entire complex,

krìp tèa lùp krəp  
pa? ka həcɔt

in its aspectual function, and not, as might be suggested in the first case, to lùp alone, as in lùp ?a which Shorto glosses as to go indoors (DSM.184) while listing as example

dəh lùp ?a əhmo nɔm sòa kòh  
he went in under the pipal tree [narrative]

The third case shows ambiguity in the analysis: tèh may follow the main verb, meaning it happened that, inadvertently; to be

able to and refer to either chə or the entire complex ʔa ròŋ chə. But it may also be the second term of a two-term construct, such as

chə tɛ̀h	to encounter, meet
həpɛʔ tɛ̀h	to encounter
cəm tɛ̀h	to crash into
tɛ̀h	to hit [target]

ʔa in head-position of a complex, as any other verb, controls the sequence and cannot be a directional verb in the restricted sense or function as an aspectual verb ([ingressive]).

In other cases, paradigmatic commutations are easily established:

ʔa həðəa	to go inside
ʔa pəŋɛ̀h	to go outside
kwaik ʔa	[off he] went
kətem ʔa	to crawl
tòh ʔa	to become
tòh kləŋ	to come to be
ʔa kləŋ	to come and go
yòn lùp	to creep in
yəm lùp	to breathe in

Several directional verbs may be used in some cases

yəm tet	~	yəm tɔn	to breathe out
yəm lùp	~	yəm cih	to breathe in

These preliminary observations lead us to establish two types of two-term constructs:

- simple autonomous verbs showing ambiguity due to morphological syncretism to mark *causative / non-causative* or *attributive / non-attributive* forms, such as

həton	to teach, to learn
kət həton	to learn, study
həlɛʔ həton	to teach, instruct

- modifying verbs in second position, consisting of
  - directional verbs
  - aspectual verbs
  - resultative verbs

### i.) Directional verbs

All directional verbs may also occur in initial position of a two-term construct or as simple autonomous verbs, or as part of complex autonomous verbs.



Three directional verbs also yield derivatives which are members of this set,

pə̀tɔ̀n ~ tɔ̀n	to raise / to rise
pə̀tət ~ tət	to take out / to emerge
phyih ~ cih	to lower / to descend

Affix: <p-> [causative]

Apart from these, we recognize a total of eight directional verbs:

V	autonomous V	second position V <sub>2</sub>	
cih	to go down, descend	[downward]	
tɔ̀n	to rise, go up	[upward]	
lùp	to enter, go in to	[inward]	
tət	to go, come, out	[outward]	
na	to take away	[away from speaker]	
nə̀aŋ	to bring	[towards speaker]	
ʔa	to go	[away from speaker]	
klɛŋ	to come	[towards speaker]	
V <sub>1</sub>		V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>
		-na	-nə̀aŋ
ku	to give	to send [away]	to send
ket	to take	to take away	to bring
kok	to call	to take with one	to collect s.o.
		ʔa	klɛŋ
tòh	to be	to become	to come to be
chui	to move aside	[id.]	to move over
		cih	tɔ̀n
hə̀laik	to jump	to jump down	to jump up
yəm	to breathe	to breathe in	to breathe out
		phyih	pə̀tɔ̀n
pət	to throw	to throw down	to throw up

A derivational pair occurs in

hər̀uì cih ~ hər̀uì phyih	to fall in drops / to scatter in drop
hətɔ̀m cih ~ hətɔ̀m phyih	to fall down / to knock down

Examples of simple and derived directional verbs are given in Figure 1 and Figure 2 respectively.

[Verb- and noun-particles will not be discussed here though in some ways the resemble directional verbs. In some cases severe syntactic restrictions apply,

$V_1 V_2$

N-particle

həlaik cih nù	to jump <u>from</u>
tət pləh nù	to be freed <u>from</u>
həlaik tən ətao	to jump <u>onto</u>

or

ʔa phəa kəmàn	[I am] going to Potter's Monastery
klɔŋ nù-lɔ rao	where are you coming from? [hello!
əmù mɔŋ əlɔ rao	where do you live?].

1. Simple directional verbs

Directional verb	Verbal piece	Meaning of autonomous headverb
cìh / tòn	hèrh cìh	'to demolish'
	tòm cìh	'to fall down'
	hètek cìh	'to fall head-long'
	kwàn tòn	'to climb up'
	çtæk tòn	'to advance'
	lòn tòn	'to pass, overtake'
	yèa tòn	'to lift up'
	yòn lùp	'to creep in'
	klàk lùp	'to duck into'
	keyo lùp	'to enter a room stooping'
	tèa tet	'to run away'
	hwò tet	'to flow out'
na / nèaŋ	hètòh tet	'to burst out'
	helot tet	'to come out'
	kle? na	'to borrow for s.o.'
	çtæk na	'to cart away'
	tah na	'to sweep away'
	phyao nèaŋ	'to bring back'
	ket nèaŋ	'to bring (back)'
	kok nèaŋ	'to fetch s.o.'
	pèak ?a	'to follow along'
	tet ?a	'to cross'
	plèh ?a	'to stray'
	lòn kləŋ	'to elapse'
?a / kləŋ	keleəŋ kləŋ	'to come back'
	cəp kləŋ	'to arrive'
		'to decay'
		'to fall'
		'to tumble'
		'to climb'
		'to pull, draw; travel'
		'to elapse, exceed'
		'to lift'
		'to stalk'
		'to duck'
		'to stretch, bend forward, slope'
	'to run away, stray'	
	'to flow'	
	'to burst'	
	'to slip, come off'	
	'to leave'	
	'to pull, draw, travel'	
	'to level, sweep together'	
	'to bring, send, back'	
	'to get, obtain'	
	'to call'	
	'to follow, chase'	
	'to go across'	
	'to free'	
	'to elapse, exceed'	
	'to return'	
	'to reach, arrive'	

Figure 1: Simple directional verbs

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 II. *Derived directional verbs*


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Directional verb	Verbal piece	Meaning of autonomous headverb
petet	hɔm pətət	'to speak, talk'
	helak pətət	'to put on'
	kion pətət	'to make, do, work'
	pək pətət	'to follow, chase'
	kəŋ pətət (nù)	'to grasp, keep'
peton	pət pəton	'to throw'
	yəa pəton	'to lift'
phyih	hə'on phyih	'to reduce'
	tho' phyih	'to throw'
	chai phyih	'to empty, unload'
	pək phyih	'to fell, slash'
		'to reveal'
	'to take off'	
	'to manufacture'	
	'to expel'	
	'to take, bring, out'	
	'to throw upwards'	
	'to lift up'	
	'to reduce'	
	'to throw down'	
	'to unload'	
	'to fell'	

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Figure 2: Derived directional verbs

ii.) Aspectual verbs

One tense (past) and three aspects (ingressive, perfective, progressive) are overtly marked in SM. There are also two modalities, the hypothetical and the assertive, which may have, in some contexts, aspectual or tense values. The status of ?i?-(MM ye-) in Mon grammar is, as yet, unclear, and has therefore been excluded from treatment here. It marks the perfective aspect but commutes in the paradigm with tœ in that position preceding ra?, the assertive modality (in declarative sentences and commands in absolutely sentence-final position). Modality and tense-markers are sentence particles. Tense and aspect may be combined and can occur with auxiliaries, the aspectual verb always immediately the main verb and preceding the tense-particle.

deh kə? na kətao kətan tən tœ tēh [narrative]  
 he became [increasingly] depressed by worries

where tən (ingressive) and tœ (past tense) follow the main verb kətao kətan to be depressed.

Aspectual verbs may function as autonomous verbs as well. Instances like mòŋ mòŋ or thv? thv? are not to be considered mere reduplications but ought to be analyzed as the autonomous verb, mòŋ and thv? to be located, situated at and to throw respectively, followed by the verb in its aspectual function.

The word-order with respect to aspectual verbs and tense and modal particles is absolutely rigid, as shown in the following table. Aspect immediately follows the verb, tense comes at the end of a clause.

Complex	Exponent	Category	
təak lò cək	lò	aspect	perfective
pòh mòŋ lòik pəreŋ	mòŋ	aspect	progressive
cəp lè?phùn tœ	tœ	tense	past
?at əkhoŋ noŋ	noŋ	modality	hypothetical
pək lò kəreŋ tœ	lò-tœ	asp./tense	
hum mòŋ đaik tœ	mòŋ-tœ	asp./tense	
cə? lò tœ	lò-tœ	asp./tense	

fastened the rope  
 reading a letter  
 having reached, arrived at, Lamphun  
 should ask for permission  
 having opened the door  
 having [had] a bath  
 [and] put it down

Neologisms show a difference in word-order in that a complex consisting of a verb and a noun, such as pa<sup>?</sup> hətəo *reside* (where pa<sup>?</sup> verbalizes nouns, as in pa<sup>?</sup> həmœ *be ordained, become a monk*) may not be split by an aspectual verb, thus pa<sup>?</sup> hətəo mōŋ *residing* [at].

The ingressive and perfective aspect comprise a set of two terms each; historically, the occurrence of two terms for each of the two functions stems from a shift in the grammatical system of Mon:

OM	MM	SM	colloquial	narrative
ʔar	ʔa	ʔa	✓	
tøn	tøn	ton		✓
lar	low	lò	✓	
∅	tho <sup>?</sup>	thv <sup>?</sup>		✓

SM ton and thv<sup>?</sup> occur predominantly in narratives while ʔa and lò being retained for colloquial usage.

OM ʔar had three main functions,

- as autonomous verb to go
- as directional verb, as in tit ʔar *to go, come, out*
- as aspectual verb, as in sgut ʔar *to be cut short*

whereas tøn occurred only as an autonomous verb *to go, come, up; ascend*. The history of the second pair is identical: MM tho<sup>?</sup> (no instance is attested for OM; most OM th- initials are Burmese contact words and IA loans) occurred only as an autonomous verb *to throw away* whereas OM lar, MM low, SM lò functioned, from the earliest attested instances onwards, as an aspectual verb as well.

All aspectual verbs may also function as autonomous verbs; their meanings are set out below:

Exponent	Tense	Aspect	Autonomous verb
tœ	past		<i>to be ready, finished</i>
ʔa		ingressive	<i>to go</i>
ton		ingressive	<i>to rise, ascend, go up</i>
lò		perfective	<i>to place, put</i>
thv <sup>?</sup>		perfective	<i>to throw, place</i>
mōŋ		progressive	<i>to be situated, located, [at]</i>
∅	CONTEXT DEPENDENT		

a.) *Ingressive* ʔa, tɔn

As mentioned, in narratives tɔn occurs more frequently; it marks the beginning of an action,

tɛ̀h tɔn cɔt	to get fond of s.o.
tɛ̀m nàt tɔn	to get acquainted [with]
kə̀rɔ́ʔ tɔn	to start crying
lùp tɔn	to enter

The last example is, in this context, ambiguous since tɔn may function here as a directional verb; when occurring with a complex which includes a noun the ambiguity is removed, lùp tɔn hɔeʔ and lùp hɔeʔ tɔn to enter the house [directional] and [he] went up into the house [aspectual]. Only in instances such as these may the aspectual verb be separated from the main, or head-verb, to remove the ambiguity.

Examples with ingressive ʔa have been mentioned previously;

khyt ʔa	to die
tòh ʔa	to become
hut ʔa	to decay
lòn ʔa	to pass, passed

b.) *Perfective* lò, thɔʔ

This aspect marks the conclusion of an act and does not occur with stative verbs. As yet, no precise distributional account can be offered as to whether certain classes of verbs occur only with one particular aspectual verb; as with the foregoing, however, the use of thɔʔ is confined to narratives and public speeches. Both occur in modern literary Mon.

He threw away translates both into thɔʔ lò and thɔʔ thɔʔ although the former may also have adhortative connotations throw it away.

dɛ̀h tɛ̀ak lò kɔ̀ hɛ̀còm	he tied an amulet [around his neck]
pətət na lò pə̀nɛ̀h teʔ	having put it outside
sə̀ŋ lò phɛ̀a kòn	[they] built the monastery
na cɔ̀ŋ thɔʔ hwɛ̀ʔ	took [the corpse] away for cremation
thɔʔ daik thɔʔ	splashed water
nɛ̀h hɛ̀cɔt thɔʔ dɛ̀h	they killed him

c.) *Progressive* mɔ̀ŋ

mɔ̀ŋ may occur with stative and operative verbs; mɛ̀p mɔ̀ŋ to be well, pə̀ŋ pə̀lɔ̀ŋ nùm mɔ̀ŋ ha is there any sticky rice left?

mɔ̀ŋ indicates an ongoing action or temporary state of affairs (progressive, durative).

ce? mɔŋ hwa?	eating [a curry]
tɔik hloiq mɔŋ	sleeping, be asleep
pɔh mɔŋ lɔik kɔh	reading the book
deh lɔn mɔŋ əca pra?cum	he gives Acharn Prachum a [foot-] massage

One of the verbs of existence, nɔm, may occur with the progressive aspect,

daik cha nɔm mɔŋ ha	is there any tea [left]?
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### iii.) Modifying verbs

As yet, I cannot propose any categories for this third group of verbs, occurring in second position, which are not directional or aspectual verbs. Some of these may be classified as resultative verbs, as already mentioned briefly. This is supported by distributional evidence: A two-term construct which has a resultative verb as a second verb may be split by the negative verb-particle hù?,

rɔŋ nàt	rɔŋ hù? nàt	to see / cannot see
klài chɛ	klài hù? chɛ	to find / cannot find

These others may be classified as verbs affixally derived from the main verb. These simple and derived verbs may occur in any order; there are no phonological constraints (syllabicity, register).

Complex	Base V <sub>1</sub> / V <sub>2</sub>	Affix	
kok pəkom	kom	<p->	to call together
tɔŋ kəlɔŋ	klɔŋ	<-ə->	to welcome
hə?ɔ? kle?	?ɔ?	<ɰ->	to vomit
kətv tɔh	tv	<k->	to come into being

Some two-term constructs show a large variety of modifying verbs in second position while others occur with only one modifying verb, like kənon həbɔh to point out or kənom pətɔh to build, institute.

In Figures 3, 4, and 5 three types of two-term constructs are shown, type 1 with a variable modifying verb in second position (V<sub>2</sub>) type 2 with a variable head-verb (V<sub>1</sub>), and type 3 transitive verbs followed by a noun-complement which are idiomatic expressions.

Type 2 is problematic and needs further investigation; are verbs like tɛh to be classified as auxiliaries - since they are preceded by the negative verb particle hù?, and show variable positions with respect to the main verb? How are verbs like kòŋ to dare to, be bold to be classified,





$V_1$	$V_1 V_2$	$V_1$	$V_2$	$V_1 V_2$
hɔm	hɔm kwɔh	'to speak'	'to preach'	'to speak formally'
	hɔm pətət		'to take out'	'to reveal'
	hɔm pətəm		'to inform'	'to petition'
	hɔm kəh	*	'to say'	'to say'
	hɔm kəlɔh		'to explain'	'to explain'
	hɔm həhəh		'to show'	'to explain'
kənoik	kənoik hətɔn	'keep secret'	'to hide'	'to conceal'
	kənoik kəmon		'to mislead'	'to wrap up tight'
	kənoik kətɔ		'to cover (up)'	'to conceal'
	kənoik kəlɔn		'to deceive'	'to avoid truth'
pɔk	pɔk həhəh	'to open'	'to show'	'to expound'
	pɔk kɔ		'to give'	'to found, open'
	pɔk kle?		'to leave'	'to uncover'
kələe?	kələe? kle?	'to pass'	'to leave'	'to pass'
	kələe? kʰ?		'to get'	'to acquire'
klòiq	klòiq hò	'to be long'	'to be distant'	'to be distant'
	klòiq hwò		'to flow'	'to extend'

Figure 3: Two-term constructs of Type 1.

V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>1</sub> V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>1</sub> V <sub>2</sub>
hept	kit hept	'to bite'	'to cut, break off'	'to bite through'
	kut hept	'to amputate'		'to cut off'
heton	bok hept	'to chop, strike'		'to chop off'
	hel <sup>3</sup> ? heton	'to teach'	'to learn, teach'	'to teach'
	kat heton	'to study'		'to learn'
	wet heton	'to instruct'		'to instruct'
cop	ton cop	'to rise'	'to reach, arrive'	'to come up'
	kləŋ cop	'to come'		'to arrive'
khra	kənch khra	'to be other'		'to differ'
	khyai khra	'to be separated'	'to be separated'	'to diverge'
	paŋ khra	'(Burm., DSM)'		'to distinguish'
	sai khra	'to be separate'		'to be parted'
tèh	dàk tèh	'to ride, load'		'to crush'
	kwò? tèh	'to touch, feel'	'to hit &c.'	'to touch, feel'
	həpə? tèh	'to encounter, meet'		'to encounter'
	cəm tèh	'to collide, heave'		'to crash into'
	tj? tèh	'to collide'		'to collide with'
	perat tèh	'to splash about'		'to splash'
	hetəm tèh	'to remember'		'to remember'
	ki <sup>3</sup> ? tèh	'to cross, penetrate'		'to be transmitted'

Figure 4: Two-term constructs of Type 2.

V	V N	V	N	V N
ʔon	ʔon cɔt	'to be few'	'mind &c.'	'to be sorry'
hum	hum daik	'to bath'	'liquid, water'	'to have a bath'
sɔŋ	sɔŋ daik	'to drink'	'liquid, water'	'to drink'
cɛʔ	cɛʔ pɔŋ	'to eat'	'boiled rice'	'to have a meal'

Figure 5: Two-term constructs of Type 3.

## NOTES

\*This article was written in May 1983 when I was a post-doctoral research fellow in linguistics at Monash University, Melbourne. After corresponding with Theraphan Thongkham and Gérard Diffloth, both accepted it for publication to be included in the forthcoming third volume of the series "Monic Studies funded by the Toyota Foundation, entitled Mon and Nyah Kur Linguistic Studies. After the publication of volumes one and two of the same series in the middle of 1984, it was uncertain when the third volume was going to be published; so I decided, in agreement with Dr. Theraphan, to have it published in the Science of Language Papers, as part of volume seven, to be devoted to syntax and semantics. After the appearance of volume six, however, linguists at Chulalongkorn University decided to transform the Papers into a proper linguistics journal, to be edited by Dr. Sudaphorn Laksaniyanawin who agreed to publish this article in the first issue. Subsequent changes in editorial policy such as shift of emphasis on theoretical topics combined with a focus on Thai, as well as targeting a readership in Thailand, precluded the acceptance of this contribution of Mon. In agreement with both Dr. Theraphan and Dr. Sudaphorn I decided to offer it for publication in Mon-Khmer Studies. May I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Monash University for offering me a postdoctoral fellowship in linguistics, from January 1983 to January 1985, and to colleagues at Monash and elsewhere in Australia for advice. I have changed nothing substantial in the original article although my views on, and knowledge of, Mon grammar have evolved over the past five years. I hope this will be reflected in my forthcoming A Grammar of Spoken Mon. David Thomas's editorial assistance and David Bradley's earlier comments (1983) are gratefully acknowledged. (1 January 1989.)

1. Fieldwork was conducted in Thailand between 1978 and 1980. I lived in Mon communities, with families and in monasteries, in Rajburi, Lopburi, Nonthaburi and Lamphun provinces, with occasional visits to Samut Sakhorn. The National Research Council of Thailand kindly gave permission to visit these areas. The research was funded by the British Council (1977-1981), the Central Research Fund of the University of London (1979), SOAS (1979) and from private sources. May I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the above-mentioned institutions and organisations. I am also deeply indebted to the Mon people, for their hospitality and kindness, in particular Professor Su-ed Kochaseni, and various senior bhikkhus, as well as to my two

principal London teachers, Mrs. Jacob and Professor Shorto.

All quoted phonologizations of OM forms are Shorto's reconstruction, as published in DMI (1971). I have adopted his transcription of SM forms, except for his /c-/ and /ch-/ which in the various Thailand dialects correspond to /ky-/ and /khy-/.

The terms 'complex' and 'piece' (in the Firthian sense) are interchangeable; the three charts which use the term 'piece' are drawn directly from Bauer (1982:381, 382, 385). I prefer now the term complex, and do apologize for employing only partially defined concepts here. At present I am rethinking and redefining the entire syntax section of my Mon grammar.

2. As exemplified in the following:

... wàt kàt lòn nù kòh  
... wàt kàt nù kòh

[is] far more difficult than that  
[is] more difficult than that

?a cɔp əyək həcam cuh prɛŋ  
?a cɔp əyək həcam cuh

[he] is over 80 [years] old  
[he] is 80 [years] old, has reached the age of 80 [years]

mòa saik plɔn	and yet another matter
ŋoa plɔn kòh	a day later
nùm ɛa ətət plɔn	there are two weeks left
ket plɔn ha	would you like some more?

3. As in

nài tip kòh kon pɔn nùm	Nai Tip has four children
nài tip kon hù? mòa	Nai Tip has no children
tòh sùm hù? mòa kɔ kyì?	it's not a venomous snake

nùm and its negative counterpart hù? mòa occur in these contexts, exceptionally, in sentence-final position. If the noun-particle kɔ is used, however, the order is reversed. kɔ may function, in other contexts, as verb-particle as well.

4. To avoid two possible misunderstandings: (i) I do not advocate the comparison of individual terms but rather insist on comparing grammatical systems. Yet, for historical purposes the former procedure can be revealing. (ii) I do not regard Khmer and Mon as belonging to the same subgroup; the only reason for quoting them is that they are AA languages which I know from first-hand experience; and they are typologically sufficiently distinct. However, one should bear in mind that Khmer and Mon were, before the Thai intrusion, contact languages.

5. This may be due to possible confusion of OM raŋ and OM reŋ to SM rɛaŋ (to arrange / to bring). Irregular phonological shifts are also common in Mon, as exemplified in the following table:

SM	OM	
raʔ	daʔ	~ <sup>n</sup> daʔ EMM modal particle
noŋ	roŋ	modal particle
ha	-a	question(-sentence-)particle
hùʔ	sak, hæ-	negative verb-particle

A fair number of studies have been devoted to language diffusion and typological similarities of the languages of South-east Asia in an attempt to define the mainland as a *linguistic area*. Yet, some fundamental questions remain unanswered:

Why, for instance, do certain particles not conform to regular phonological shifts? Which elements, at the syntactic level, are more likely to change, or be replaced, or duplicate the system, while others remain unaffected by contact with non-cognate languages.

6. Stress is another thorny subject in Mon; HLS reports variable stress in only one case, from Burma Mon, in

ɲèh kòh	they, the people; he, she
ɲèh 'kòh	who? [question-particle]

The stress-pattern of the first is found in Thailand varieties as well but the vocalism of the question-particle shifted to /œ/, merging with diphthongs in other contexts, /phœ/ to be sated, full [after meals] (HLS in DSM 1962 /phoa/) and /tœ/ [particle, past-tense],

ɲèh 'kœ	who?
mòʔ 'kœ ~ mùʔ kœ	what?
	[not listed in DSM]

spelt goy, gay, ga'.

Noun constructs, with their various clitics, show very complex stress-patterns.

7. This is at variance with HLS (DSM 1962.2) who describes kwaik ʔa as a verb of locomotion, in this case, and in-gressive in others caik ʔa to get torn. However, I noted ʔa kwaik ʔa kwaik. HLS does not list ʔa kwaik.

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*Institute of Language and Culture  
Mahidol University at Salaya  
Nakhon Pathom 73170, Thailand*