

Chapter 4

Phrases

This chapter describes the composition and function of noun phrases, verb phrases, and prepositional phrases. The noun phrase, including the various modifiers of the head noun, is discussed in 4.1. The verb phrase and operators are discussed in 4.2. Prepositional phrases are addressed in 4.3.

4.1 Noun phrase

The noun phrase in Plang consists of a head noun with six optional post-head elements (Dryer 2007b: 151). These elements are attributive verb phrases, quantifiers, demonstratives, possessor NPs, relative clauses, and prepositional phrases.⁴⁴ After a brief introduction to the order of the elements in a noun phrase, each element is discussed with examples.

4.1.1 Relative ordering of elements in a noun phrase

The relative ordering of elements in a noun phrase is presented in (123). It follows the cross-linguistic generalization that if the modifiers follow the noun, then the order is usually adjective-like modifier phrase, numeral, and then demonstrative (Greenberg 1963a: 68-69). In terms of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG), deixis operators and definiteness operators occur outside of number and quantification operators as predicted (Van Valin 2005: 24).⁴⁵ The order of relative clauses (REL) and prepositional phrases (PP) in relation to each other has not yet been determined.

(123) Relative ordering of elements in an NP

NP = N (Attributive VP) (QUANT) (NP_[POSS]) (DEM) (REL) (PP)

The minimum NP in Plang is composed of a noun. This is illustrated in (124) with the noun *pvi* 'people', which is serving as the subject noun phrase.

⁴⁴ Although coordinated noun phrases are generally included in a discussion of the noun phrase, they are beyond the scope of this thesis.

⁴⁵ An "operator" in RRG terms is an element that modifies a specific layer of a clause or, in this case, a phrase.

(124) Data.064

pxi mok juŋ ja hɔn ɔn a
 person exist at home big that RF
 N V PREP N Vst DEM PRT

People live in those many houses.

The theoretical order of attributive verb phrases, quantifiers, possessor NPs, and demonstratives in an NP is illustrated in (125). The noun *lik* ‘pig’ is modified by the attributive verb phrase *hɔn* ‘big’, the quantifier *lɔi* ‘three’, the possessive NP *ʔu* ‘1sg’, and the demonstrative *ɔn* ‘that’.

(125) Data.091

lik hɔn lɔi ʔu ɔn kɛ mok kɛ juŋ k^hɔ
 pig big three 1sg that 3pl exist 3pl at pig.pen
 N Vst NUM PRO DEM PRO V CLI PREP N

Those three big pigs of mine are in the pigpen.

Although an infinite number of modifiers are hypothetically possible, the maximum NP found in the textual material only contains a noun and two modifiers. In (126) the noun *kamum* ‘wife’ is modified by the possessor noun phrase *ailanam* ‘Ailanam’, here coded by a proper noun, and the demonstrative *nɔn* ‘that’. One of the only other examples of a noun with two modifiers is illustrated in (127). The noun *pukɔ* ‘friend’ is modified by the possessor noun phrase *ʔu* ‘1sg’ and the distal demonstrative *tɛ* ‘remote demonstrative’.⁴⁶ Although the textual material only has examples of a possessor noun phrase modifier and a demonstrative co-occurring, other modifiers can also co-occur.

(126) Brothers.108

mɔ	kamum	ailanam	nɔn	ka	kah	hak	ka	juŋ	ka
then	wife	Ailanam	that	3du	emphasis.marker	however	3du	seem	3du
CONJ	N	Nprop	DEM	PRO	PRT	CONJ	PRO	V	PRO

ti	ɛn	pɔk	hɔk	ka	juŋ	kɔp ^h ɛ	jɣ	ni	pɣnne
main.part	this	sunning	seed	3du	at	round.shallow.basket	do	this	a.little
MKR	DEM	V	N	***	PREP	N	V	PRO	ADV

Then that wife of Ailanam, she however, she, this one, seemed to be sunning seeds in a shallow basket, doing a few of these.

⁴⁶The pronoun *ɣn* ‘3sg’ that follows the NP is in apposition to it; it is not part of the NP.

(127) Brothers.110

pukɔ ʔu tɛ ʔɯn juŋ ti pen ku jin ku joŋ jɔ
friend 1sg REM 3sg seem main.part be nominalizer quiet nominalizer quiet do
 N PRO DEM PRO V MKR COP PRT V PRT V V

nɔ la ɯn nɔ
 that say 3sg that
 DEM V CLI DEM

"My friend over there, he seems to be quiet and inactive, doing that," he said that.⁴⁷

4.1.2 Noun phrase heads

Simple nouns, compounds, nominalizations, and pronouns can function as the head of an NP. An example of the noun *lik* 'pig' functioning as the head of an NP is illustrated in (128). Another example of a noun functioning as the head of an NP is illustrated in (129). The noun *cu* 'group' is the head of the NP *cu ʔɛ* 'our group'. Plang nouns are not marked for gender or number.

(128) NP.003

lik hɔn ʔu som ka
pig big 1sg eat top.cont
 N Vst PRO V MKR

My big pig is eating.

(129) Church.015

cu ʔɛ kui ɛ sip sam pɣi
group 1pl have 1pl ten three person
 N PRO V CLI NUM NUM N

As for our group, we had thirteen people.

Compounds can also function as the head of an NP. In (130) the compound *kavaŋ la* 'tea field' is functioning as the head of the NP *kavaŋ la hɔn* 'big tea field'.

(130) Data.086

mok ɛ kavaŋ la hɔn
 exist 1pl **field tea big**
 V CLI N N Vst

We were in a big tea field.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *jin* 'quiet' is a loan word from Dai.

⁴⁸ *la* 'tea' is a loan word from Dai.

Nominalizations also function as heads of NPs. The nominalized verb *ku la* ‘words’ is functioning as the head of the object argument in (131). The proper noun *parasi* ‘Parasi’ is modifying the head as a genitive. The proper noun *parasi* ‘Parasi’ is not the subject of the verb *la* ‘say’ because *la* ‘say’ is not functioning as a verb here. The nominalizer *ku* causes the verb to function as a noun. Furthermore, even if *la* ‘say’ could take a subject, that subject would have to precede the verb, rather than follow it as *parasi* ‘Parasi’ does.

(131) Brothers.112

juŋ	hun	ti	un	jaŋ	ku	la	parasi	la	ɣn	no
seem	***	main.part	not	be.same.as	nominalizer	say	Parasi	say	3sg	that
V	***	MKR	NEG	V	PRT	V	Nprop	V	CLI	DEM

"[He] seems like it is not the same as Parasi's words" he said that.

Example (132) illustrates a personal pronoun functioning as the head of an NP.

The subject NP *ʔɣn* ‘3sg’ in (132) is the head of the subject NP.

(132) Brothers.060

ʔɣn	kə	lat	pun	ka	la	sakupam	no	na
3sg	then	after that	blow	give	obl.arg.mkr	leaves.of.blessing	that	topiclzf
PRO	CONJ	CONJ	V	V	PREP	N	DEM	PRT

kah
emphasis.marker
PRT

He [Parasi] then after that blew those leaves of blessing [on them].

4.1.3 Noun phrase modification

Noun heads can be modified by six different kinds of modifiers in Plang: attributive verb phrases, quantifiers, possessor NPs, demonstratives, relative clauses, and prepositional phrases. All modifiers are post-nominal.

4.1.3.1 Attributive verb phrases

Attributive verb phrases occur directly after the noun head they modify. Example (133) illustrates this: the noun *k^ha* ‘road’ is modified by the attributive verb *hon* ‘big’. In (134) the noun *juŋ* ‘village’ is modified by the attributive verb *liŋ* ‘old’. If there are other modifiers, they will occur after the attributive verb.

(133) Trip.069

a	mə	huət	ɛ	juŋ	k ^h a	hən
RF	then	arrive	1pl	at	road	big
PRT	CONJ	V	CLI	PREP	N	Vst

Then we arrived at the big road.

(134) Trip.020

mə	ʔu	ti	siaohə	ila	iŋ	juŋ	liŋ
then	1sg	main.part	Xiao.He	Ila	go	village	old
CONJ	PRO	MKR	Nprop	Nprop	Vmot	N	Vst

And then Xiao He, Ila, and I went to the old village.

Attributive verb phrases are analyzed as phrases because they themselves can be modified by various degree adverbs and comparatives as illustrated in (135). The noun *maləŋ* ‘character flaw’ is modified by the attributive verb *mui* ‘bad’, which is in turn modified by the adverb *k^hai* ‘very’.⁴⁹

(135) Brothers.030

hak	ka	k ^h ai	maləŋ	mui
however	3du	very	character.flaw	bad
CONJ	PRO	ADV	N	Vst

However she [had] a very bad character flaw.

4.1.3.2 Quantifiers

A quantifier modifying a noun is illustrated in (136). The quantifier *kəm* ‘many’ is modifying the indefinite noun *kana* ‘whatever’. Numerals are included in this category. Example (136) illustrates the numeral *lai* ‘two’ modifying the noun *pu* ‘friend’.

(136) Brothers.078

parasi	la	nə	kana	kəm	ʔu	ti	ka	ta	pa	ɣc ³	ai	lu
Parasi	say	that	whatever	many	1sg	main.part	give	to	2du	complete	***	***
Nprop	V	DEM	INDEF	ADV	PRO	MKR	V	PREP	PRO	V	PRT	PRT

la	ɣn	nə
say	3sg	that
V	CLI	DEM

"Parasi said that, 'Many things I [will] give to you completely' he said that."

⁴⁹ It is also possible to analyze attributive verb phrases in the NP in Plang as relative clauses (Andrews 2007b: 209-210). The free translation for (135) following this interpretation would be "However she [had] a character flaw which was very bad."

(137) Church.050

ən mɔ̃ muh ʔɯn miti pen ʔɯn pu ʔu ɔn mɔ̃ miti len
 then then name 3sg Midi be 3sg friend 1sg then then Midi again
 CONJ CONJ V PRO Nprop COP PRO N PRO CONJ CONJ Nprop ADV

ti kui pu lai
 main.part have friend two
 MKR V N NUM

Then the one named Midi, [who] is my friend, at that time she had two other friends.

The order of quantifiers is somewhat fluid. The NP in (138) *kɔm pɯi* ‘many people’,⁵⁰ in which the quantifier appears before the noun it is modifying, comes from a text. It is also acceptable to put the quantifier in the default position after the noun it modifies, as is illustrated in (139). According to native speakers, both sentences are good.

(138) Brothers.068

kɔm pɯi ti nɔk ʔɯn huut
 many person main.part see 3sg arrive
 ADV N MKR V PRO V

Many people saw him arrive.

(139) Grammar.073

pɯi kɔm ti nɔk ʔɯn huut
 person many main.part see 3sg arrive
 N ADV MKR V PRO Vmot

All the children saw him arrive.

4.1.3.3 Possessor NPs

Possessor NPs are the third element in the NP. Both nominal possessor NPs and pronominal possessor NPs have the same structure (i.e., they follow the noun), which makes Plang unusual among the world’s languages (Dryer 2007b: 182).⁵¹ In (140) the noun *cum* ‘foot’ is the possessee and the proper noun *siaohə* ‘Xiao He’ is the possessor. Another example of possessors in the NP is illustrated in (141). The possessor *ʔe* ‘1pl’ modifies the possessee *maja* ‘grandmother’.

⁵⁰ The pronoun *ti* is not part of the NP. See 6.3.1.

⁵¹ Block (1996: 8) and Suknaphasawat (unpublished: 18) also note that nominal and pronominal possessors pattern the same way in Kontoi Plang and Pang Pung, respectively.

(140) Trip.067

a mɔ cum siaohə su ka
 RF then **foot Xiao.He** hurt top.cont
 PRT CONJ N **Nprop** Vst MKR

Then Xiao He's foot was hurt.

(141) Trip.029

maja ?ε la jɣ ti ni haipah mi ka
grandmother 1pl say do main.part this healthy 2sg question.mkr
 N **PRO** V V MKR DEM Vst PRO PRT

My grandmother said this, "Are you healthy?"

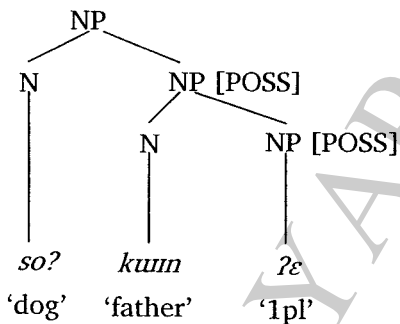
Layered possessive NPs in Man Noi Plang pattern the same way as they do in Kontoi Plang (Block 1996: 8). The noun head (possessee) is modified by a complex possessor composed of its own possessive NP. This is illustrated in (142) where the possessee *so?* 'dog' is modified by the possessor *kum ?ε* 'our father'. The possessor NP is composed of the possessee *kum* 'father' and the possessor *?ε* '1pl'. The tree in (143) presents the structure of the layered possessive NP.

(142) Data.043

so? kum ?ε mui
dog father 1pl bad
 N N **PRO** Vst

My father's dog is ugly.

(143) Tree.001



4.1.3.4 Demonstratives

Demonstratives are the fourth element in the NP. They can modify the head noun on their own, as illustrated in (144). The proximal demonstrative *en* 'this' modifies the noun *tapason* 'old man'. In (145) the distal demonstrative *on* 'that'

modifies the noun *kahɣm* 'forest'. The remote demonstrative *tɛ* along with the possessive pronoun *ʔur* '1sg' in (146) is modifying the noun *pukɔ* 'friend'.⁵² Besides having a deictic function, demonstratives in Plang also give definiteness to the noun they modify. As is typical of demonstratives used to denote definiteness, they are not obligatory (Dryer 2007b: 155).

(144) Grammar.025

tapason ɛn luŋ
old.man this tall
N DEM Vst

This old man is tall.

(145) Trip.050

kahɣm ɔn ham hɪp ka maŋ hai ka ɛɔ
forest that very grassy top.cont not good.easy top.cont look.for
N DEM ADV V MKR NEG V MKR V

That forest is very grassy, it's not easy to look for [fruit].

(146) Brothers.110

pukɔ ʔur tɛ ʔɣn juŋ ti pen ku jin ku joŋ jɣ
friend 1sg REM 3sg seem main.part be nominalizer quiet nominalizer quiet do
N PRO DEM PRO V MKR COP PRT V PRT V V

nɔ la ɣn nɔ
that say 3sg that
DEM V CLI DEM

"That friend of mine over there, he seems to be quiet and inactive, doing that," he said that.

Demonstratives can also function as noun phrases without a head noun (Dryer 2007b: 194). In (147) the proximal demonstrative *ɛn* 'this' is functioning as the subject NP of the verb *nɔk* 'read'. The distal demonstrative *ɔn* 'that' is functioning as the subject NP *kui* 'have' in (148).

(147) Yesterday.021

ɛn nɔk pap a
this read book RF
DEM V N PRT

This one reads a book.

⁵² The English free translation cannot adequately represent the fact that the remote demonstrative and the possessive pronoun are both modifying the noun.

(148) Data.069

on a kui ka ja huun
that RF have top.cont home many
DEM PRT V MKR N QUAN

Those are many houses.

4.1.3.5 Relative clauses

Relative clauses in Plang have the same form as a main clause (SVO) and are not marked by a relative word. In (149) the relative clause *kək ʔu* 'bite me' is modifying the noun *soʔ* 'dog'.⁵³ The relative clause occurs after the demonstrative *kə* 'that', which specifies that a certain dog is being talked about.

(149) Data.010

soʔ kə kək ʔu hɿi ka ja aipe
dog that **bite** 1sg go top.cont home Aipee
 N DEM V **PRO** V MKR N Nprop

The dog that bit me went to Aipee's house.

In (150) the relative clause *tajɾm eh* '[who] kills chickens' is modifying the noun *pu* 'friend'.

(150) Yesterday.006

ʔɿnku k^hɾ pu naɲ tajɾm eh
 yesterday run.into friend person **kill** **chicken**
 ADV V N N V N

Yesterday I ran into my friend the chicken killer.

4.1.3.6 Prepositional phrases

Prepositional phrases can modify nouns in the noun phrase. The prepositional phrase *juŋ ja* 'at home' is modifying the compound noun *ɸɿi kame* 'male person' in (151).⁵⁴ In (152) the prepositional phrase *juŋ k^ha* 'on the road' is modifying the noun *soʔ* 'dog'. The prepositional phrase occurs after the numeral *kuti* 'one', which makes the dog non-specific.

⁵³ There is no relative clause marker in Plang. Relative clauses are simply juxtaposed with the noun they are modifying.

⁵⁴ Further study such as that described by Payne (1997: 92-94) needs to be done to determine if *ɸɿi kame* 'male person' is indeed a compound noun in Plang.

(151) Data.093

pxi	kame	juŋ	ja	som	ɣn
person	male	at	home	eat	3sg
N	N	PREP	N	V	CLI

The man in the house is eating.

(152) Data.094

so?	kuti	juŋ	k ^h a	juum	ɣn
dog	one	at	road	dead	3sg
N	NUM	PREP	N	V	CLI

The dog on the road is dead.

4.1.4 NP functions in text

NPs can be terms, oblique arguments, adjuncts, and topics.⁵⁵ Terms, according to Kroeger (2005: 57), are arguments that have the grammatical relation of subject or object. Any argument that is not a subject or an object has the grammatical relation of oblique argument. An element of a sentence that gives additional information, but is not necessary for the sentence to be complete, is an adjunct.⁵⁶ A topic is an element that tells what the sentence is about and occurs in sentence-initial position (Li and Thompson 1976). It does not necessarily have a co-referential grammatical relation in the sentence. Some term arguments are also topics.

NPs that occur before the main verb have the grammatical relation of subject in Plang. For example, in (153) the NP *pxi* ‘person’ is the pre-verb argument (and thus the subject) of the verb *kuh* ‘get up’. The NP that occurs after the verb has the grammatical relation of object. In (153) the coordinate NP *som tu* ‘rice and vegetables’ has the grammatical relation of object since it occurs after the verb *ku* ‘steam’.

(153) Brothers.024

kasa	pxi	kəm	kəŋ	kuh	ku	ti	som	tu	kuh	haŋhen
next.day	person	then	then	get.up	steam	main.part	rice	vegetable	get.up	prepare
ADV	N	CONJ	CONJ	V	V	MKR	N	N	V	V

⁵⁵ Noun phrases can also function as predicates; this is treated in 5.1 under non-verbal predicates.

⁵⁶ For a fuller discussion of the differences between arguments and adjuncts, see the introduction to Chapter 3.

ʔɯn	sɤt	hwi	na	hwi	huk	aihonam	nɔn	nun
3sg	take	bag	possession	give	fasten.around.waist	Aihonam	that	one
PRO	V	N	PRT	V	V	Nprop	DEM	DEM

kah
 emphasis.marker
 PRT

Next day then someone [his wife] got up, steamed rice and vegetables, got up and prepared him, took his bag and gave and fastened [it] around that one Aihonam's waist.

The object can be fronted for emphasis.⁵⁷ In (155) the NP *kana* ‘all of them’ has the grammatical relation of object. Normally, it would follow the verb *ka* ‘give’ as it does in (159). Some of the previous discourse is given in (154) to establish that the *sakupam* ‘leaves of blessing’ are already a known piece of information. Therefore (155) is not an example of focus-presupposition articulation, but rather topic-comment articulation.

(154) Brothers.055

parasi	nɔ	ʔɯn	kɔ	lat	pun	ka	la	sakupam
Parasi	that	3sg	then	after that	blow	give	obl.arg.mkr	leaves.of.blessing
Nprop	DEM	PRO	CONJ	CONJ	V	V	PREP	N

That Parasi, he then after that blew [them] leaves of blessing.

(155) Brothers.059

kana	ka	u	ta	pa	ɤc'	ai	la	ɣn	ɔn
all.of.them	give	1sg	to	2du	complete	***	say	3sg	that
INDEF	V	CLI	PREP	PRO	V	PRT	V	CLI	DEM

"All of them - I have given [them] to you completely," he said that.

Oblique arguments are not necessarily required by the verb to make the proposition complete, but they do add important semantic information. Like term arguments, they are specified by the verb, which means, “a particular kind of argument is permitted only with a verb of the appropriate type” (Kroeger: 2005: 59). They are also unique within their own clause. The NP *ke* ‘3pl’ in (156) is an oblique argument of the verb *pet* ‘kill’. The argument *ke* ‘3pl’ is not the subject or the object, nor does the verb *pet* ‘kill’ require a beneficiary argument to be complete. However, the verb *pet* ‘kill’ can specify a beneficiary argument and that argument is unique, which means that it is an oblique argument.

⁵⁷ Fronting arguably makes these NPs topics, as well.

(156) Trip.055

icij ka pet ke la eh a
Izhing give kill 3pl obl.arg.mkr chicken RF
Nprop V V PRO PREP N PRT

Izhing killed them a chicken.

Another example of an oblique argument is illustrated in (157). The NP argument *pi* 'pen', which is the object of the preposition *ta* 'by', is not required by the verb *mai* 'write', but the verb *mai* 'write' can specify an instrument argument. The instrument argument is not the subject or the object, but it is unique within its clause. Thus, it is an oblique argument.

(157) Grammar.044

ka ti mai ka tu ta pi
3du main.part write 3du words by pen
PRO MKR V CLI N PREP N

She writes with a pen.

The grammatical relation of oblique argument is optionally marked by the preposition *la*. In (158) the object argument is the NP *ma ke* 'their mother'. It is unmarked. The verb *ka* 'give' also requires a theme argument, which the theme NP *kukakut* 'gift' fills. The second NP after the verb, which is marked by the preposition *la*, is the oblique argument.

(158) Data.040

?yn ka ma ke la kukakut
3sg give mother 3pl obl.arg.mkr gift
PRO V N PRO PREP N

He gave their mother a gift.

The argument *kukakut* 'gift' can be placed directly after the verb *ka* 'give', as is illustrated in (159). This changes its grammatical relation to primary object. The NP *ma ke* 'their mother', which is marked by the preposition *ta* 'to', is an oblique argument.

(159) Data.039

?yn ka kukakut ta ma ke
3sg give gift to mother 3pl
PRO V N PREP N PRO

He gave a gift to their mother.

Elements that are not arguments are adjuncts. They are usually marked by a preposition. In (160) the intransitive verb *huut* ‘arrive’ refers to its one term grammatical relation with the clitic *u* ‘1sg’. Therefore the NP *ciaot^haj* ‘church’, which is marked by the preposition *juj* ‘at’, is an adjunct.

(160) Church.071

huut	u	juj	ciaot ^h aj	ka	jaŋ	k ^h ɔ	pet	ta
arrive	1sg	at	church	top.cont	not.yet	be.at.time	eight	hour
V	CLI	PREP	N	MKR	ADV	V	NUM	N

I arrived at church before eight o'clock.

NPs can also function as topics. In (161) the NP *ma ?ε kuum ?ε* ‘my mother and my father’ is the topic of the sentence. The second NP *ke* ‘3pl’, is the subject argument.⁵⁸

(161) Trip.011

ma	?ε	kuum	?ε	ke	cu	mok
mother	1pl	father	1pl	3pl	also	exist
N	PRO	N	PRO	PRO	ADV	V

My mother and my father were also there.

Topic NPs can also be marked by the particle *na*, which functions as a topicalizer.⁵⁹ *Na* marks a left-dislocated NP as the topic of a sentence.⁶⁰ The NP *lik loi ?ɣn* ‘my three pigs’ in (162) is marked as the topic by the topicalizer *na*. The topic continuity marker *ka*, is functioning as a clitic whose referent is the topic.

(162) NP.022

lik	loi	?u	na	mok	ka	juj	karum
pig	three	1sg	topiclzf	be.at	top.cont	at	section.under.house
N	NUM	PRO	PRT	V	MKR	PREP	N

As for my three pigs, they are under the house.

⁵⁸ This analysis follows Janzen (1987). See 6.1.2.

⁵⁹ *na* can also function as a topic continuity marker; see 6.3.2.

⁶⁰ Left dislocation itself is also a marker of topical referents, particularly definite and anaphoric referents (Givon 2001b: 265).

In (163) *na* marks the demonstrative pronoun *en* ‘this’, which is the left-dislocated NP of the quotation clause. The topic continuity particle *ka* is again functioning as a clitic.⁶¹

(163) Brothers.056

ʔɯn kə lat la nə ɛn na mok ka juŋ kon kamum
 3sg then after that say that this topiclzr exist top.cont at child wife
 PRO CONJ CONJ V DEM DEM PRT V MKR PREP N N
 pa ka nə ai
 2du top.cont that ***
 PRO MKR DEM PRT

He then after that said that, "This [blessing], it is there at that [place] of your children and wives."

4.2 Simple verb phrase and operators

For the discussion of the simple verb phrase and related elements, it has proved helpful to use certain terms and ideas from Role and Reference Grammar (RRG; Van Valin 2005).⁶² In order to be consistent and avoid misinterpretation, the RRG term ‘predicate’ will be used in place of verb phrase. RRG posits that the predicate is usually a single verb that is contained in the nucleus. The nucleus and the arguments are contained in the core. The core and all other periphery non-arguments are contained in the clause. This schema is called the layered structure of the clause (see Figure 6).

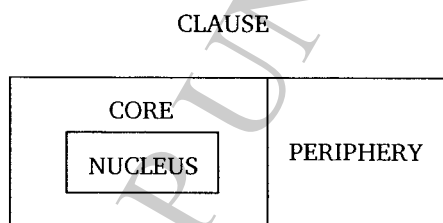


Figure 6: The Layered Structure of the Clause (Van Valin 2005: 4)

Negation, aspect, and modals are operators that occur outside of the predicate.⁶³ Operators have scope over different layers of the clause. After the predicate is

⁶¹ For a discussion of *ka*, see 6.3.3. When a sentence contains both the particle *na* and the particle *ka*, *ka* will always be co-referential with the NP that *na* topicalizes.

⁶² The term “simple” indicates that complex constructions such as coordination and complementation will not be discussed.

⁶³ The term “operator” also comes from Van Valin (2005: 8-11).

discussed in 4.2.1, each operator and its scope are discussed with examples in 4.2.2.

4.2.1 Predicate

A single verb can make up the predicate in Plang. This is illustrated in (164) with the verb *sut* ‘angry’. Another example of a predicate is found in (165) with *hxi* ‘go’.

(164) VP.023

ʔxn sut
3sg angry
PRO V

He is angry.

(165) Trip.034

mo lei hxi
then then go
CONJ CONJ V

Then [we] went.

4.2.2 Operators

Three operators have been identified in Plang at this time: negation, aspect, and modality.⁶⁴ All languages have negation (Van Valin 2005: 9). Aspect and modality are not used as frequently in Plang as they are in agglutinating languages. Enfield (2003: 51) comments that this is an areal feature of Mainland Southeast Asian languages. Negation is discussed in 4.2.2.1, followed by aspect in 4.2.2.2. Modals are discussed in 4.2.2.3.

4.2.2.1 Negation operators

According to RRG, negation operators⁶⁵ can take any layer of the clause as their scope: nucleus, core, or clause. Negation is an optional operator. When an argument is negated, the operator’s scope is the core, which is the level on which

⁶⁴ Van Valin (2005: 9) uses the term “modality” to refer to root modals such as ability, permission, obligation, or responsibility.

⁶⁵ The lexical category of negators is discussed in 2.7.

negation usually operates in Plang.⁶⁶ Core-level negation is also known as narrow scope negation. Clause-level negation relates the entire proposition to an epistemic reality outside the clause. Core-level negation is illustrated in (166), where the subject argument *ka* ‘3du’ is negated by the clause-initial negator *maŋ*.⁶⁷

(166) VP.009

ironŋ maŋ ka pet ?ε la eh
 Irong not 3du kill 1pl obl.arg.mkr chicken
 Nprop NEG PRO V PRO PREP N

It was not Irong who killed a chicken for us.

The negator is clause-initial when an oblique argument is negated, as well. In (167) the first clause *?xn pet εh* ‘she killed a chicken’, is setting the scene. The second clause, in which the oblique argument *ta ?ε* ‘for us’ is negated, begins with the negation operator *maŋ* ‘not’. The scope of negation is the core.

(167) VP.008

?xn pet εh maŋ ?xn pet na ta ?ε pet na ta ke
 3sg kill chicken not 3sg kill topic.con to 1pl kill topic.con to 3pl
 PRO V N NEG PRO V MKR PREP PRO V MKR PREP PRO

She did not kill a chicken for us; she killed it for them.

When the nucleus of a clause is negated the negation operator has the clause as its scope. The nucleus in (168), *pet* ‘kill’, is negated by the clause-initial negation operator.⁶⁸ In (169) the negation operator *maŋ* ‘not’ is also clause-initial; it is negating the nucleus *pun* ‘have’. Therefore, syntactically, it does not appear to matter whether the negation operator has the clause or the core as its scope, nor does it matter what element of the sentence is negated. The negation operator is always clause-initial.

⁶⁶ Negation on the nuclear level involves derivational morphology, which Plang does not seem to have.

⁶⁷ The subject is co-referential with the topic *ironŋ* ‘Irong’ in this sentence.

⁶⁸ The first personal pronoun *?xn* ‘3sg’ is functioning as the topic and is therefore outside of the clause.

(168) VP.010

ʔɤn	maŋ	ʔɤn	pet	eh	ʔɤn	ka	eh	kuh
3sg	not	3sg	kill	chicken	3sg	give	chicken	feed
PRO	NEG	PRO	V	N	PRO	V	N	V

As for her, she did not kill the chicken - she fed it.

(169) Trip.061

maŋ	ʔe	pun	ti	la	makanuŋ	a	tok
not	1pl	have	main.part	obl.arg.mkr	jackfruit	RF	***
NEG	PRO	V	MKR	PREP	N	PRT	PRT

We didn't have ourselves [any] jackfruit.

4.2.2.2 Aspect operators

Aspect operators have the nucleus as their scope. The aspect marker *pun* 'attained', which is grammatically derived from the verb *pun* 'have', is illustrated in (170). Like many other Mainland Southeast Asian languages, this main verb can function as an aspect operator when it occurs before the verb (Enfield 2003: 42). It gives the main verb the sense of 'attainment'. For example, in (170) the aspect operator gives the action of the verb *sɤ* 'pack up' the sense of having been attained. This same aspect is given to the action of the verb *hɤi* 'go' in (171).⁶⁹

(170) Trip.109

pun	pɤi	ti	sɤ	ka	la	la	pɤnne
attained	person	main.part	pack.up	3du	obl.arg.mkr	tea	a.little
ASP	N	MKR	V	PRO	PREP	N	ADV

I only had [time] to pack them up a little tea.

(171) Brothers.101

kɔ	ʔa	pun	ti	hɤi	kanap	ti	hamhen	na	en	na	la	ɤn
***	1du	attained	main.part	go	labor	main.part	study	***	this	***	say	3sg
PRT	PRO	ASP	MKR	V	V	MKR	V	PRT	DEM	PRT	V	CLI

nɔ
that
DEM

"*** we went and labored and studied this," he said that.

⁶⁹ It is uncertain whether the scope of this aspect operator includes all three verbs. However, it is certain from the context that all three verbs have been attained.

4.2.2.3 Modal operators

There are four modals in the corpus. They are optional and take the core as their scope (Van Valin 2005: 9). Example (172) illustrates the modal *ciaŋ* ‘able’ modifying the core *ʔɿn pɿt la* ‘he picks tea’. It occurs between the subject argument and the predicate.

(172) VP.020

ʔɿn ciaŋ pɿt la
 3sg able pick tea
 PRO MOD V N

He can pick tea.

The second modal in the corpus is *la*, which is an irrealis particle. It is illustrated in (173). There is no subject in this clause, which is often the case with weather-related propositions. The whole core is modified: *ka le ke ij* ‘it was raining’.⁷⁰

(173) Trip.044

hak a mok juŋ kavaŋ la la ka le ke ij ij juŋ ɲa
 however RF exist at field tea IRR *** rain *** come go.back at home
 CONJ PRT V PREP N N PRT PRT V PRT V V PREP N

tah e ti
 rest 1pl main.part
 V CLI MKR

However [we] were in a tea field and it was going to rain, [so] we returned home and rested.

The particle *lat* is the third modal operator. Unlike the first two modals, this one follows the verb it modifies. The LRP suggests that it is like the Chinese word *yao*, which has a wide range of meaning. *yao* can mean ‘want’, ‘want to’, ‘must’, ‘be going to; be about to’, or ‘if’ (Wu Jing Rong and Cheng Zhen Qiu 2001: 1802-3). The Plang modal *lat* is illustrated in (174). It has the sense of ‘be going to; be about to’. It follows the verb *sɿt* ‘grab’ and the clitic *a’lɿdu* and comes before the direct object *kih* ‘salt’, which is interesting since it is modifying the whole core.

(174) Brothers.086

sɿt a lat kih
 take 1du be.about.to salt
 V CLI AUX N

"We are about to take salt."

⁷⁰ The function of the particle *ka* in this sentence is unclear at this time.

In (175) the particle *lat* does not have the same sense as it does in (174). Although it is unclear what its function is here, the syntax is the same: *lat* follows the verbs *lih sxt* ‘go down and grab’ and the main participant marker *ti*. Again, it precedes the direct object, which in this case is *sai* ‘sand’.

(175) Brothers.043

ka	kə	lih	sxt	ti	lat	sai	kah
3du	then	go.down	grab	main.part	***	sand	emphasis.marker
PRO	CONJ	V	V	MKR	***	N	PRT

They then went down and got sand.

The fourth modal is *pun*, which is the same word that was used aspectually in (170) and (171). When *pun* is post-verbal it can function as a modal operator meaning ‘can’ or ‘able’.⁷¹ Enfield (2003: 42), in his cross-linguistic study of this idea, expects that it will be post-verbal when it has a modal function. Example (176) illustrates *pun* ‘can’ modifying the core. In (177) the modal operator *pun* ‘can’ is modifying the verb *cim* ‘get’.

(176) Brothers.047

lat	ʔən	ti	la	nə	ta	ka	lei	ti	ən	na	pa
after	that	3sg	say	that	to	3du	again	main.part	this	topic.con	2du
CONJ	PRO	MKR	V	DEM	PREP	PRO	ADV	MKR	DEM	MKR	PRO

kə	lei	ti	hxi	pun	ti	hamhen	ta	ʔu
then	again	main.part	go	can	main.part	study	to	1sg
CONJ	ADV	MKR	V	MOD	MKR	V	PREP	PRO

After that he [Parasi] said that to them again, "In this way you then again can go and study with me."

(177) Brothers.020

ʔa	pun	ti	cim	ku	cu	ku	joŋ	cim	pun	ti
1du	attained	main.part	get	nominalizer	know	nominalizer	know	get	can	main.part
PRO	ASP	MKR	V	PRT	V	PRT	V	V	MOD	MKR

lat	watkəŋ
be.about.to	special.knowledge
AUX	N

"We will be about to get knowledge and ability and can get the special knowledge."

⁷¹ It is also possible that it “marks postverbal complementation or clause coordinating structures” (Enfield 2003: 42), but this will not be discussed here.

4.3 Prepositional phrases

Prepositional phrases are composed of a preposition and an NP. The structure is illustrated in (178): the head is a preposition that is modified by an NP. There are many prepositions in Plang; for a full list of prepositions and examples of each, see section 2.3.

(178) Order of elements in the prepositional phrase

PP = PREP NP

Example (179) illustrates the simplest kind of prepositional phrase possible. The preposition *juŋ* ‘at’ heads the prepositional phrase. The NP *ciaot^haŋ* ‘church’ is the object of the preposition.

(179) Church.002

teu	a	k ^h a	huut	a	juŋ	ciaot ^h aŋ	kah	jaŋ	k ^h ɔ	pet
walk	1du	road	arrive	1du	at	church	emphasis.marker	not.yet	be.at.time	eight
V	CLI	N	V	CLI	PREP	N	PRT	ADV	V	NUM

ta	tik ^h ao	ka		kɔ	k ^h ɔ
hour	a.little.bit	dummy.sub	then	be.at.time	
N	ADV	MKR	CONJ	V	

We walked [down] the road and arrived at the church before it was 8 o'clock, in a little bit it was time [to start].⁷²

In (180) the preposition *ta* ‘to’ is the head of the prepositional phrase. The NP *kon kamum ?u ke* ‘my children and wife’ is the object of the preposition.

(180) Brothers.014

ij	la	ta	kon	kamum	?u	ke
go.back	say	to	child	wife	1sg	3pl
V	V	PREP	N	N	PRO	CLI

"[I will] return and speak to my children and wife."

Localizer nouns, which are discussed in 2.1.3.2, are words that are often prepositions in other languages. In Plang they function as the object of a preposition as in (181), where the localizer noun *tuk* ‘front’ is the object of the preposition *k^ha* ‘at’.

⁷² *teu* ‘walk’ is a loan word from Dai.

(181) Data.030

mok ɣn k^ha tuk
exist 3sg at front
V CLI PREP LZN

He is at the front.

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