

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This chapter presents a summary of each chapter in 7.1. Areas for further research are discussed in 7.2.

7.1 Summary of each chapter

The contents of chapters one through six are summarized in 7.1.1 through 7.1.6, respectively.

7.1.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 presents information on the language family of Plang, as well as the history and background of the Plang people in the PRC. The scope, limitations, goals, and benefits of the study were mentioned. The goal has been to describe aspects of the grammar of a previously undescribed dialect of Plang. Also, since the syntax of personal pronouns, clitics, and certain reference particles in Plang texts is unique, these elements were investigated in particular.

The methodology used was described, including how the texts were collected and analyzed. A brief overview of Man Noi Plang phonology was discussed. Then a review of relevant materials from related Waic literature, Western Palaungic literature, and other Mon-Khmer literature was presented.

7.1.2 Chapter 2: Lexical categories

There are two open classes of words: nouns and verbs. Nouns are identified by the fact that they function as head of noun phrases, which in turn function as arguments. They also can be modified by various things such as possessors, attributive verbs, and classifier phrases. Verbs are identified by the fact that they can function as heads of verb phrases and they can be specified for polarity. Closed classes in Plang include prepositions, quantifiers, and modals. Other closed classes include conjunctions, negators, emphasis markers, interjections, mood markers and politeness markers.

7.1.3 Chapter 3: Adverbial Adjuncts

Adverbial adjuncts give extra information about the sentence, but are not necessary for the sentence to be complete. They can be coded as words, phrases, or clauses. Semantically, they include locative adjuncts, time adjuncts, manner adjuncts, degree adjuncts, instrument adjuncts, epistemic adjuncts, purpose adjuncts, reason adjuncts, and conditional adjuncts.

7.1.4 Chapter 4: Phrases

Noun phrases, verb phrases, and prepositional phrases are addressed in Chapter 4. Noun phrases consist of a noun head that can be modified by attributive verbs, quantifiers, possessors, and demonstratives. NPs can function as core arguments or oblique arguments. The simple predicate (or verb phrase) in Plang consists of a single verb. Operators, such as negators, adverbs, and auxiliaries, modify the predicate. Prepositional phrases consist of a preposition heading a noun phrase.

7.1.5 Chapter 5: Simple clauses

In Chapter 5 nonverbal and verbal predicates are discussed. Nonverbal predicates include noun phrase predicates, prepositional phrase predicates, impersonal predicates and existential predicates. Verbal predicates are divided into intransitive and transitive predicates. Intransitive predicates can be subdivided into stative and nonstative. Transitive predicates include two-argument predicates and three-argument predicates.

7.1.6 Chapter 6: Pronouns in text

The syntax of personal pronouns, clitics, and the discourse particles *ti*, *na*, and *ka* were discussed in Chapter 6. Pronouns in apposition with nouns are functioning as emphatic pronouns. Particles that are identical with the personal pronouns and that follow a verb in an independent clause are clitics. Clitics are always used in a temporal clause, rather than an independent pronoun. The pronoun and clitic syntax for direct quotes is that the verb of speaking goes between the pronoun or clitic and the quote itself. Therefore if a subject pronoun is used, then the quote will follow the quote formula. Likewise, if a clitic is used, then the quote will precede the quote formula.

It is hypothesized that the particle *ti* marks the most important participant in a sentence; thus it is called a main participant marker. The particle *na* generally refers to the topic, although there are a few instances that do not necessarily have that function. The particle *ka* seems to be a more indirect way of referring to the topic of a sentence. It can also function as a non-focus pronoun or as a dummy subject in existential clauses. Besides these uses, there are a few examples in the texts that require more investigation.

7.2 For further study

Many areas of Plang syntax can be studied in the future. More study needs to be done concerning the various negators to determine their distribution and differences in meaning, if any. In the same way, the distribution of the copulas *cei* 'be' and *pen* 'be', which is possibly a loan word from Dai, needs to be investigated. The differences between the Plang conjunction *juj* 'at' and the Dai loan *k^ha* 'at' need to be investigated, as well.

As more texts are collected and analyzed, more particles such as modals and aspect markers will probably be discovered. Complex sentences involving coordination, relative clauses, and complementation need to be investigated.

Each of the hypotheses given in Chapter 6 should be tested against more data. Discourse analysis of Plang texts will contribute new insights into pronoun and clitic syntax and the function of discourse particles, especially regarding participant reference and topic continuity strategies. As for the anomalous examples in the texts, new hypotheses need to be created to encompass them. For example, it was mentioned that *na* can function as a topicalizer and as a marker of topic reference. However, there are several examples of *na* that do not fit either of these descriptions. Further study of this particle is needed to determine whether these examples can all be explained as functions of the same particle or whether they are homophonic particles with distinct functions.

It is hoped that the hypotheses presented here will stimulate more investigation in this and other related dialects. Much research can be done in the area of discourse analysis, especially in the area of participant reference and focus. As more research is done in Plang and related languages, further understanding of the syntax of participant reference in Plang will be refined and clarified.