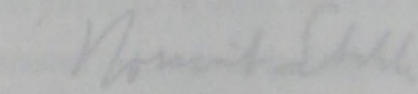




Preface by Thammasat University

Thammasat University is committed to promoting understanding not only the rich linguistic history of the country of Thailand but also that of the wider area in which we live. The University values partnerships with scholars and students from countries of the west and other parts of the world. In this we have been fortunate to have received the support of His Royal Highness King Bhumibol Adulyadej. In his honor this volume which represents both an aid to teaching and research in the Lao language and research done under a cooperative program with the Center for Linguistics.

Pamela Sue Wright



Assoc. Prof. Noranit Setabutr

Rector

Thammasat University

TU-SIL-LRDP

Thammasat University

Bangkok, Thailand

A Lao Grammar for Language Learners

Pamela Sue Wright

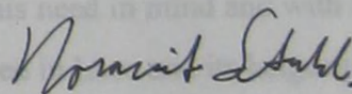
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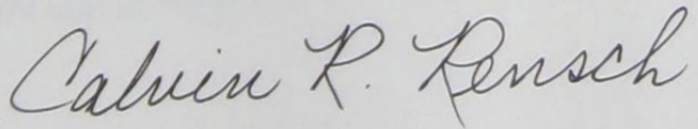


Assoc. Prof. Noranit Setabutr  
Rector  
Thammasat University

A. Yupin Pokthitayuk  
Chairman  
TU-SIL-LRDP

Preface by the Summer Institute of Linguistics

The Summer Institute of Linguistics considers it a privilege to be associated with Thammasat University in the Language Research and Development Project. While research done under this program has more commonly been focused on the lesser known minority languages, members of the Institute also study major languages of the area. They share with the faculty of Thammasat University the desire to stimulate students to enjoy the beauty and variety of these languages. This study is presented as both the product of cooperative research and also as a practical aid to students in their study and appreciation of the Lao language.



Calvin Rensch

Asia Area Director

Summer Institute of Linguistics

Foreward

Pamela Sue Wright wrote "A Lao Grammar for Language Learners" under the auspices of TU-SIL-LRDP (Thammasat University-Summer Institute of Linguistics Language Research and Development Project). Her research on Lao grammar began in March, 1993 and was completed in September, 1993. The study was written with the non-linguist in mind and met a need for an up-to-date description of the Lao language in English.

The study was published initially as a volume of the Thammasat University *Journal of Language and Linguistics*. This initial printing was very quickly sold out and others have since sought to obtain copies of the work. It is with this need in mind and with a view to encouraging the growing number of people interested in Laos and its language and culture that this work is being republished.

*Yupin Pokthituyuk*

A. Yupin Pokthituyuk  
Chairman  
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3.2.5.3 Aspect  
3.2.5.3.1 To "already completed"  
3.2.5.3.2 To "just completed"  
3.2.5.3.3 To "in process"  
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4.1 Characteristics  
4.2 Pronouns  
4.2.1 Personal pronouns  
4.2.2 Interrogative pronouns  
4.3 Modifying nouns

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I would like to thank the many people in Nongkhai, Thailand and Vientiane, Laos who patiently answered questions on how to say things in Lao. I would especially like to thank ຈັນໄຊ ສະຫວັດວິງ (Chansay Sawatwong) who spent many hours with me. Special thanks also to Thammasat University for sponsoring this research time under the TU-SIL-LRDP and to the governor's office in Nongkhai for their cordial welcome. To list the many people who helped by reading a draft and making comments or assisting with the computer programs would take too long. So a general thank you to everyone who helped in this way. Of course any mistakes are solely mine.

*[Faint signature]*

A. Yana Tokdiwuk  
 Chairman  
 TU-SIL-LRDP

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Lao script	ຂ້າງ ທຸ ກະລາດ.
English-gloss	I go market.
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The Lao script, instead of a phonetic one, is used for several reasons. First, most readers will not know the phonetic alphabet. Second, the Lao script is fairly easy to learn and lastly, reading in the Lao script will help with correct pronunciation. For those who have not studied the Lao script, a brief summary is included in Appendix A.

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## 1.0 Introduction

This grammar is meant to be used as a resource by people who are learning Lao as a foreign language. Most of these people will not be professional linguists but will, instead, be business men, students, or simply people who are interested in the beautiful country of Laos. For this reason, technical language has been avoided whenever possible.

When technical words are used, they are usually defined in the paper itself.

Two words that might cause problems are defined here:

**clause:** This is used to refer to a verb and all the noun phrases or additions that go with it. "I see Billy." is a clause. "I see Billy and Billy sees me." contains two clauses joined by the word "and".

**sentence:** A sentence is what a native speaker would consider a full thought. The example above, "I see Billy and Billy sees me." is considered one sentence with two clauses.

The examples are written in this format:

Lao script	ຂ້ອຍ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ.
English gloss	I go market
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The Lao script, instead of a phonetic one, is used for several reasons. First, most readers will not know the phonetic alphabet. Second, the Lao script is fairly easy to learn and lastly, reading in the Lao script will help with correct pronunciation. For those who have not studied the Lao script, a brief summary is included in Appendix A.

APPENDIX B KINSHIP TERMS

This grammar does not pretend to have covered every aspect of Lao. What is included here are the basic sentence structures that need to be mastered as the language is studied. The serious student will soon find areas that should be expanded or even whole topics that have not been covered. This grammar is meant as a beginning place, not an end. I trust that it will be useful in that sense.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Two words that might cause problems are defined here:

class. This is used to refer to a verb and all the noun phrases or additions that go with it. "I see Billy" is a class. "I see Billy and Billy sees me" contains two classes joined by the word "and".

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## 2.0 Basic sentence

### 2.1 The core

The simplest sentence in Lao is a single verb. The subject is often dropped and simply understood from the context.

1. ໄປ!  
go  
Let's go!
2. ແຂບ ທລາຍ.  
delicious very  
This is very delicious.

When a sentence contains a subject, it comes before the verb. The following examples show a variety of sentences containing a subject and a verb:

3. ລາວ ງາມ.  
she beautiful  
She is beautiful.
4. ອາຫານ ແຂບ.  
food delicious  
The food is delicious.
5. ຂ້ອຍ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ.  
I go market  
I go to the market.

6. ຫມາ ແລນ.  
dog run  
The dog runs.

The direct object follows the verb. In example 7 the direct object is ປຶ້ມ "book" and in example 8 it is ເຂົ້າ "rice".

7. ນັກຮຽນ ອ່ານ ປຶ້ມ.  
student read book  
The student reads the book.

8. ແມ່ ຫນັ່ງ ເຂົ້າ.  
mother steam rice  
Mother steams rice.

Indirect objects are introduced with the word ໃຫ້. This word is also used for benefactives, so a sentence with ໃຫ້ can have two meanings. In example 9, a mother is making rice to feed her child. Example 10 would be used when the child is an adult with a family of her own. The mother is cooking to help her child but the people who eat the rice could be the husband and grandchildren. Notice that the Lao is the same although the meaning is different. In example 9, the child is an indirect object while in 10 it is part of a benefactive addition.

9. ແມ່ ຫນັ່ງ ເຂົ້າ ໃຫ້ ລູກ.  
mother steam rice give offspring  
Mother steams rice for her child (to eat).

10. ແມ່ ຫນັ່ງ ເຂົ້າ ໃຫ້ ລູກ.  
mother steam rice for offspring  
Mother steams rice to help her child.

## 2.2 Extras

The basic sentence of subject-verb-object, can be expanded by adding time, location and other ideas. Since these are not central to the meaning of the sentence they are called additions. Example 11 shows a time addition, example 12 shows a location and example 13 shows a benefactive. Notice that these additions occur after the objects:

11. ອ້າຍ ໄປ ມ້ວນນີ້.  
 older.brother go yesterday  
 Older brother went yesterday.

12. ເອື້ອຍ ຈື້ ເຂົ້າ ຢູ່ ຕະຫລາດ.  
 older.sister buy rice be.at market  
 Older sister buys rice at the market.

13. ລາວ ຊຽນ ຈິດຫມາຍ ເພື່ອ ລູກ.  
 he write letter for offspring  
 He writes a letter for his child.

Some additions, like those referring to time, 'can also occur at the beginning of the sentence. These are discussed fully in Section 5.0.

The final element of the sentence is the sentence particle. Example 14 shows a question particle and example 15 shows an imperative particle. Other particles are discussed in Section 6.0. These particles always occur in the final position in the sentence:

14. ລາວ ໄປ ບໍ່?  
 she go question  
 Is she going?



15. ກິນ ຂໍ.

eat command

Eat!

### 2.3 Summary

The basic sentence in Lao must contain a verb. This can be preceded by a subject and followed by a direct object and an indirect object. After the objects can come several additions. The final element may be a particle. Written as a formula it would look like this, where the brackets ( ) mean that the element is optional:

Sentence → (Su) VP (DO) (IO) (Add) (Prt)

More complete information on each of the elements of a basic sentence can be found in other sections of this paper. Information about subjects and objects can be found in Section 4.0, Noun phrase. Objects which are clauses are found in Section 7.0 under complex sentences. Verb phrases are discussed in the next Section, 3.0. Sections 5.0 and 6.0 handle additions and particles, respectively. The final section of the paper, 8.0, contains sentences which are variations on the basic sentence given here.

### 3.0 Verb Phrase

#### 3.1 Characteristics

Verbs can be distinguished from other types of words by three tests. They can be negated with the word ບໍ່ "negative", they can occur with helping verbs, and they are the positive answer to a yes/no question. The verb ກິນ "eat" is used in the following examples to illustrate each test. In example 16 it is negated with ບໍ່, in example 17 it has the helping verb ຄວນຈະ "should" and in example 18 it is the positive answer to a yes/no question.

16. ລາວ ບໍ່ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ.

he negative eat rice

He didn't eat rice.

17. ລາວ ຄວນຈະ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ.

he should eat rice

He should eat rice.

18. ກິນ ເຂົ້າ ບໍ່?

eat rice question

Will you eat rice?

ກິນ.

eat

Yes.

The verb in Lao has only one form, regardless of subject or tense. Examples 19, 20 and 21 show the same verb, ກິນ "eat", with a first, second, and third person subject, respectively. Examples 22, 23 and 24 are in past, present and future tense.

19. ຂ້ອຍ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ.

I eat rice

I eat rice.

20. ເຈົ້າ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ.  
you eat rice  
You eat rice.

21. ລາວ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ.  
he eat rice  
He eats rice.

22. ລາວ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ ແລ້ວ.  
he eat rice already  
He already ate rice.

23. ມັນ ລາວ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ.  
today he eat rice  
Today he eats rice.

24. ມ້ອນ ລາວ ຊິ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ.  
tomorrow he will eat rice  
Tomorrow he will eat rice.

### 3.2 Subcategories

Lao verbs can be subdivided into five groups. These groups are transitive verbs, intransitive verbs, stative verbs, copulative verbs and helping verbs.

#### 3.2.1 Transitive verbs

This is the largest verb class in Lao. This class contains verbs like ກິນ "eat", ຕີ "hit" and ເບິ່ງ "watch". As transitive verbs, these normally occur in a sentence with a direct object. However, Lao is a language where subjects and objects can be dropped if they are understood from the context, so these verbs can also be found in sentences without a direct

object. This is frequently the case in subordinate clauses or commands. Example 25 shows the transitive verb ຕີ "hit" with a direct object while example 26 shows the same verb in a command without a direct object.

25. ເດັກ ນ້ອຍ ຕີ ກອງ.  
 child small hit drum  
 The small child hits the drum.

26. ຢ່າ ຕີ.  
 negative.command hit  
 Don't hit.

There is a subset of transitive verbs that have to do with speech or perception. These verbs can occur without a direct object as shown in example 27 below. (The older brother is an addition as explained in section 5.2.4.) They can also occur with a direct object as shown in examples 28 and 29. In example 28 the direct object is a noun phrase, ພາສາ ລາວ "language Lao". The verb is identical to that in example 27. However, when the direct object is a clause, as in example 29, the word ວ່າ "that" is added.

27. ລາວ ເວົ້າ ກັບ ອ້າຍ.  
 he talk with older.brother.  
 He talks with older brother.

28. ລາວ ເວົ້າ ພາສາ ລາວ.  
 he talk language Lao  
 He speaks Lao.

29. ລາວ ເວົ້າ ວ່າ ແມ່ ບໍ່ ສະບາຍ.  
 she talk that mother negative well  
 She said that mother is not well.

The verbs in this subgroup must always occur with ວ່າ "that" when the direct object is a clause. The following is a partial list of the verbs in this subgroup:

ເວົ້າ	talk	ບອກ	to tell
ປາກ	to speak	ຄິດ	to think
ຫວັງ	to hope	ເຫັນ	to observe
ຖາມ	to ask	ຮຽກ	to call
ປະກດ	to appear		

Transitive verbs using ວ່າ

### 3.2.2 Intransitive verbs

Intransitive verbs are those that occur without a direct object. Examples 30 to 32 show several simple sentences with intransitive verbs:

30. ຫມາ ແລນ.  
 dog run  
 The dog runs.

31. ແອນ ບ່າງ.  
 Ann walk  
 Ann walks.

32. ແມ່ ນອນ.  
 Mother lie down  
 Mother is lying down.

Intransitive verbs can be easily distinguished from transitive verbs by making them into nouns. To form a noun from a transitive verb, the prefix ການ- is added. To form a noun from an intransitive verb both the prefix ການ- and the prefix ຄວາມ- or ຄຳ- can be used. The meaning of the resulting noun will differ depending on the prefix used. Stative verbs, which will be discussed in the next section, can only use ຄວາມ- (See table below).

verb class	verb	ການ-	ຄວາມ-/ຄຳ-
transitive	ອ່ານ to read	ການອ່ານ reading	
intransitive	ເຊື່ອ to believe	ການເຊື່ອ believing	ຄວາມເຊື່ອ belief
	ຖາມ to ask	ການຖາມ asking	ຄຳຖາມ question
stative	ດີ to be good		ຄວາມດີ virtue

Classes of verbs changed into nouns

### 3.2.3 Stative verbs

Stative verbs do not tell of an action but instead describe the state of the subject. The class of stative verbs contains many of the concepts that would be expressed by adjectives in English. These are words like ດີ "good", ສູງ "tall" or ງາມ "beautiful". To show their status as verbs, the tests mentioned in Section 3.1 can be applied. In example 33 the stative verb is used in a simple sentence. Notice that it is the only verb present. In example 34 it is the positive answer to a yes/no question. Example 35 shows it with the negative ບໍ່ while example 36 shows it with a helping verb, ຄົງຈະ "probably".

33. ນ້ອງສາວ ງາມ ຫລາຍ.  
 younger.sister beautiful very  
 Younger sister is very beautiful.

34. ອາຫານ ແຂບ ບໍ່ ? ແຂບ.  
 food delicious question delicious  
 Is the food good? Yes.

35. ບົມ ບໍ່ ດີ.  
 book negative good  
 The book is not good.

36. ຢູ່ ທີ່ນີ້ ຄິ້ງຈະ ສະບາຍ.  
 be.at there probably comfortable  
 Over there is probably comfortable.

A characteristic of stative verbs which distinguishes them from other verbs, is their ability to use ກວ່າ "more than". With the addition of this word, they can be used in a sentence to compare two objects. These examples show a stative verb with ກວ່າ, example 37 without an object of comparison and example 38 with one.

37. ຮ້ານ ອາຫານ ທີ່ນີ້ ບືນ ດີ ກວ່າ.  
 shop food building that good more.than  
 That restaurant is better.

38. ອ້າຍ ສູງ ກວ່າ ພໍ່.  
 older.brother tall more.than father  
 Older brother is taller than father.

A second characteristic of stative verbs is that they frequently occur at the end of a sentence. For more examples and a discussion on this, see Section 5.2.10. When they are in this position they are frequently reduplicated to make them more intense. Note the slight difference in meaning in the following sentences:

39. ນັກຮຽນ ຜູ້ ນີ້ ຮຽນ ໄວ.

student person this study quick

This student studies quickly.

40. ນັກຮຽນ ຜູ້ ນີ້ ຮຽນ ໄວ ໄວ.

student person this study quick quick

This student studies very quickly.

Both transitive and intransitive verbs can be turned into stative verbs by placing ເປັນຕາ in front of them:

verb class	verb	stative verb
transitive	ຮັກ love	ເປັນຕາຮັກ lovable
intransitive	ເຂື່ອ believe	ເປັນຕາເຂື່ອ believable

Creating stative verbs

When a stative verb has been formed in this way, it can then occur with ກວ່າ like other stative verbs as shown in example 41.

41. ປຶ້ມ ເຮືອງ ນີ້ ເປັນຕາເຂື່ອ ກວ່າ ເລື່ອງ ນັ້ນ.

book story this believable more than story that

This book is more believable than that one.



### 3.2.4 Copulative verbs

A copulative verb is one that can be translated "to be". Although this is a very small class, it is significantly different from the verbs discussed above. Lao has three verbs that can be translated "to be". Each has a slightly different meaning and is used in slightly different contexts:

ຢູ່	used with locations "to be at". Can also mean "exist" or "live"
ເປັນ	used with temporary states
ແມ່ນ	used with permanent states

Copulative verbs

The verb ຢູ່ is significantly different and is easily distinguished from the others. In example 42, it means "to be at". In example 43 it has the meaning of "live" while in example 44 it means "exist".

42. ອາຫານ ຢູ່ ໄຕ້ຍ.

food be.at table

The food is on the table.

43. ຄອບຄົວ ນວນດອມ ຢູ່ ວຽງຈັນ.

family Muandom live Vientiane

Muandom's family lives in Vientiane.

44. ມີ ສັດ ປ່າ ຫລາຍ ຢູ່ ໃນ ປ່າ.

have animal forest many exist in forest

There are many wild animals in the forest.

The other two verbs are easily confused. Although ເປັນ and ແມ່ນ are frequently used in identical sentences, there is a slight difference in meaning. In example 45, the speaker is asking about temporary

characteristics. The expected answer is "a teacher" or some other changable trait. In example 46 the speaker is asking about a permanent state. He expects to hear "my little brother" or "my uncle".

45. ឆ្ល ម៉ី ប៉ែន ដែ ?

person that be who

Who is that person?

46. ឆ្ល ម៉ី ឃែន ដែ ?

person that be who

Who is that person?

If I were drinking a glass of tea because I had a cold, I could describe it in two ways. If it is a type of tea that I drink at other times, then it is only being used as medicine in a temporary sense. Example 47 would describe the tea. However, if the tea is a medicine prescribed by a doctor or something that is only drunk when you are ill, example 48 would be used. The tea has a permanent state of being medicine.

47. ប៉ាឡា ទាត ម៉ី ប៉ែន ឡា.

tea glass this be medicine

This tea is medicine.

48. ប៉ាឡា ទាត ម៉ី ឃែន ឡា.

tea glass this be medicine

This tea is medicine.

### 3.2.5 Helping verbs

#### 3.2.5.1 Characteristics

Helping verbs are those words that occur in the verb phrase but do not meet all the tests for verbs. Although the number of words in this class is small, they are significant. Helping verbs can be subdivided into three classes. The first is modals, which occur before the verb and tell the possibility or importance of the verb. The second is aspect markers which tell when the action is done. The last is verb directionals which occur after the verb and add a meaning of direction.

#### 3.2.5.2 Modal verbs

Modal verbs are normally used with either a transitive, intransitive or stative verb. However, when a question is asked that contains a modal and then a non-modal verb, the modal verb can be used for a positive answer. Modal verbs can be subdivided further into two classes based on how they occur with the negative; modal class 1 occurs between the negative and the main verb and modal class 2 occurs before the negative.

The modals in class 1 include the following words:

ຕ້ອງ	must	ຈຳເປັນຈະຕ້ອງ	necessary to
ຄວນ(ຈະ)	should	ສາມາດ	be able to
ມັກ(ຈະ)	usually	ອາດ(ຈະ)	possible to
ເຄີຍ	ever done	ໄດ້	opportunity/ability to

Modal class 1

Example 49 shows a class 1 modal verb in a positive sentence while example 50 shows one in a negative sentence. Notice that the modal verb comes after the negative. Example 51 shows a question that includes a

modal verb. The positive answer to the question is the modal verb, not the main verb.

49. ອ້າຍ ມັກຈະ ມາ ຢາມ ຍາມແລງ.

older.brother usually come visit evening

Older brother usually comes to visit in the evening.

50. ຜູ້ໃຫຍ່ ບໍ່ ຕ້ອງ ໄປ ໂຮງຮຽນ.

adult negative must go school

Adults don't have to go to school.

51. ສາມາດ ເຮັດ ນີ້ ບໍ່ ? ສາມາດ.

possible do this question possible

Is it possible to do this? Yes.

Modals in class 2 are more restricted. They can never be used in questions, only in statements. They never stand alone, even as the answer to a yes/no question. The class is small and is made up of these members:

ຄິງ (ຈະ) probably ເກືອບ (ຈະ) almost

ເບິ່ງຄື (ຈະ) appears ຈິ່ງ should

Modal class 2

Example 52 shows a class 2 modal in a negative sentence. Notice that it occurs before the negative. Example 53 shows one in a positive sentence.

52. ຝົນ ຄິງຈະ ບໍ່ ຕົກ.

rain probably negative fall

It probably won't rain.

53. ຂ້ອຍ ເກືອບຈະ ເສັດ.  
I almost finish  
I'm almost finished.

There is a disagreement between Lao speakers on the possibility of the modals in class 1 being used like a class 2 modal and occurring before the negative. Some speakers will claim that this is possible for all class 1 modals. Most speakers, however, restrict this to the following two class 1 modals:

ອາດ(ຈະ)	possibly	ມັກ(ຈະ)	usually
---------	----------	---------	---------

Modal class 1 occurring before the negative

Again there is a disagreement on the meaning of these modals when they occur as a class 2 modal. Some speakers claim that the change in position does not affect the meaning. Other speakers claim that there is no difference with ມັກຈະ "usually", but changing the position of ອາດຈະ "possibly" will affect its meaning. Example 54 uses ອາດຈະ "possibly" as a class 1 modal occurring after the negative while example 55 uses it as a class 2 modal. For those that make a distinction in meaning, the different meaning is given in example 55. Some speakers claim that both sentences have the meaning given in example 54.

54. ລາວ ອາດຈະ ບໍ່ ມາ.  
he possible negative come  
It's possible he won't come.
55. ລາວ ບໍ່ ອາດຈະ ມາ.  
he negative possible come  
It's impossible for him to come.

### 3.2.5.3 Aspect

The aspect helping verbs all occur before the main verb. Although these words have been grouped together, there are significant differences in how each word can be used. For that reason each word will be discussed separately, with its own examples. In the following list, there are two words given for some of the meanings. The first one is more literary and formal while the second is casual. Both forms can be heard in daily conversation.

ໄດ້	already completed
ຫາກ	just completed
ກາລິງ or ພວມ	in process
ຍັງ	not yet completed
ຈະ or ຂີ້	unreal or not existing yet

Aspect

#### 3.2.5.3.1 ໄດ້ "already completed"

There are three words in Lao that are pronounced and written ໄດ້. One is the aspect marker that means an action is already completed or in the past. Second, ໄດ້ can also be a verb where it means "to get" or "earn". This is easily distinguished from the aspect marker as it occurs in the position of a verb while the aspect marker always occurs before another verb. The third word is the modal verb that was listed in Section 3.2.5.2. It means "opportunity" or "ability". The modal verb and aspect marker can be easily confused as they occur in the same place in the sentence. In actual practice, neither one is used very frequently and the context makes the meaning clear. The following examples show ໄດ້ in all its possible uses. Example 56 shows it as a verb. Examples 57 and 58 show it as an aspect marker in both a positive and negative sentence. Examples 59 and

60 show it as a modal verb meaning "ability". For a discussion on ໄດ້ occurring at the end of a sentence as shown in example 60, see Section 5.2.10.

56. ລາວ ໄດ້ ເງິນ ເດືອນ.

he earn money month

He earns a salary.

57. ຂ້ອຍ ໄດ້ ຮູ້ຈັກ ກັບ ລາວ.

I completed know with him

I have met him.

58. ຂ້ອຍ ບໍ່ ໄດ້ ຮູ້ຈັກ ກັບ ລາວ.

I negative completed know with him

I have not met him.

59. ຂ້ອຍ ຂີ່ ໄດ້ ຮູ້ຈັກ ກັບ ລາວ.

I will able know with him

I will get to meet him.

60. ນ້ອງ ຂີ່ ລົດຖີບ ໄດ້.

younger.sibling ride bicycle able

Younger brother can ride a bicycle.

In the following examples, each sentence is made into a yes/no question with a positive answer. In example 61 the positive answer is the verb which is what we would expect. In example 62 we see that the aspect marker cannot occur alone, it must have the main verb as well. However, when ໄດ້ is a modal verb as in 63 and 64 it occurs with an aspect marker or alone. Answers to negative questions will be discussed in Section 3.3.

61. ລາວ ໄດ້ ເງິນ ເດືອນ ບໍ່ ? ໄດ້  
 he earn money month question earn  
 Does he earns a salary? Yes.
62. ຂ້ອຍ ໄດ້ ຮູ້ຈັກ ກັບ ລາວ ບໍ່ ? ໄດ້  
 ຮູ້ຈັກ  
 I complete know with him question complete  
 know  
 Have I already met him? Yes.
63. ຂ້ອຍ ຂໍ ໄດ້ ຮູ້ຈັກ ກັບ ລາວ ບໍ່ ? ຂໍ ໄດ້  
 I will able know with him question will able  
 Will I get to meet him? Yes.
64. ນ້ອງ ຂໍ ລີດຖີບ ໄດ້ ບໍ່ ? ໄດ້  
 younger.sibling ride bicycle able question able  
 Can younger brother ride a bicycle? Yes.

3.2.5.3.2 ຫາກ "just completed"

This aspect marker differs from the one above in the amount of time that the action has been completed. When using ຫາກ "just completed", the action is only recently finished while with ໄດ້ "already completed", it is further in the past. Another difference is that ຫາກ cannot be used in a negative sentence.

65. ຫມ ຂອງ ເຈົ້າ ຫາກ ມາ ຢາມ.  
 friend belong you just.comp come visit  
 Your friend recently came to visit.



66. ພວກເຮົາ ຫາກ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ ແລ້ວ.  
 we just.comp eat rice already  
 We just ate.

### 3.2.5.3.3 ກຳລັງ or ພວມ "in process"

The aspect markers ກຳລັງ or ພວມ mean that the action is in process. These words are frequently found in written texts and stories. Although they can be used in the spoken language, they are not frequently heard. It is more typical for people to use ຢູ່ "exist" at the end of the sentence to convey this meaning. This is described in Section 5.2.10. One special characteristic of ກຳລັງ and ພວມ is that they cannot be used in a negative sentence.

67. ແມ່ ພວມ ເຮັດ ກິນ.  
 mother process do eat  
 Mother is making food.

68. ເວລາ ຂ້ອຍ ກຳລັງ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ ແຂກ ມາ ແລ້ວ.  
 time I process eat rice guest come already  
 While I was eating, a guest came.

### 3.2.5.3.4 ຍັງ "not yet completed"

The aspect marker ຍັງ means not completed. In some ways it is similar to ກຳລັງ and ພວມ "in process", except that it can be used in a negative sentence. In that case, the negative comes after ຍັງ and it means that the action has not been begun yet, but is anticipated. Example 69 uses ຍັງ in a positive sentence which can be contrasted with the negative sentence in

70. Compare both these sentences with example 67 given in the last section.

69. ແມ່ ຍັງ ເຮັດ ກິນ.

mother not.complete do eat

Mother is still making food.

70. ແມ່ ຍັງ ບໍ່ ເຮັດ ກິນ.

mother not.complete negative do eat

Mother hasn't made the food yet.

A special use of the aspect marker ຍັງ "not yet completed" is for answering questions. It is used to give a polite negative answer. Answering in this way is less abrupt than using the negative ບໍ່, as can be seen in the following example:

71. ເຈົ້າ ແຕ່ງງານ ບໍ່ ?

you marry question

Are you married?

ຍັງ.

not.complete

Not yet.

### 3.2.5.3.5 ຈະ or ຂີ້ "unreal or not existing yet"

Sometimes ຈະ or ຂີ້ are spoken of as future tense. They do occur whenever the action will be taking place in the future. Examples 72 and 73 show both words in a future sentence:

72. ຂ້ອຍ ຈະ ຂຽນ ປຶ້ມ.

I will write book

I will write a book.

73. ມ້ອນ ແມ່ ຊິ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ.

tomorrow mother will go market

Tomorrow mother will go to the market.

However these words can also occur in sentences that are not future. Example 74 is taken from a folktale. In this story, the lion king has become old and it is difficult for him to hunt. So he uses his authority as king to order different animals to come to his cave each day to be eaten. The result of this is that he becomes very fat. The sentence begins with a description of how fat the king is because...

74. ...ບໍ່ ຈຳເປັນ ຈະ ເສຍ ເວລາ ແລະ ເຫຼ້ອແຮງ

...negative necessary will use time and strength

ອອກ ລາ ຫາ ຈັບ ສັດ ກິນ.

out hunt find catch animal eat

...it was not necessary for him to use time or energy to go hunting for food to eat.

In this example, ຈະ is not used to indicate a future event. Instead it signals that the use of time and energy to hunt food is not taking place. It is an unreal action.

Example 75 is from another folktale. Here the husband has just returned home to find that his wife has fed his fighting rooster to a guest. He loses his temper and slaps her across the face while shouting at her.

75. ຖ້າ ແມ່ນ ໄກ ທຳມະດາ ຊິ ບໍ່ ວ່າ ຫຍັງ...

if be chicken ordinary will negative scold what

If it were an ordinary chicken I wouldn't say

anything...

Again the action is not taking place in the future. Instead it is talking about a situation which did not occur in the past, an unreal situation. Since future actions have not taken place either, it is more accurate to say that **ຈະ** and **ຂີ້** are used with unreal or not yet existing actions. For practical purposes, these aspect markers can generally be translated "will".

Both **ຈະ** and **ຂີ້** combine freely with most of the modal verbs and even with the aspect markers **ກຳລັງ** and **ພວມ** "in process". This is in direct contrast to the other aspect markers which cannot co-occur with a modal verb. In the lists of modal verbs given on pages 16 and 17, the word **ຈະ** has been used, but it could be switched to **ຂີ້** with no change of meaning. There is probably a subtle change of meaning when the modals are used with **ຈະ** or **ຂີ້** compared to when they are used without them, but this has not been explored. However, compare the difference when **ພວມ** "in process" is used alone and when it is used with **ຈະ**:

76. ແມ່ ພວມ ເຮັດ ກິນ.

mother process do eat

Mother is making food.

77. ແມ່ ພວມ ຈະ ເຮັດ ກິນ.

mother process will do eat

Mother is about to make food.

The negative can occur either before or after **ຈະ** and **ຂີ້**. When they occur without a modal, they precede the negative as shown in example 78. When they are attached to a modal verb, they follow the same rules as that modal. This means that they can occur after the negative as shown in example 79.

78. ພໍ່ ຈະ ບໍ່ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ.  
 father will negative go market  
 Father will not go to the market.

79. ພໍ່ ບໍ່ ມັກຈະ ໄປ ດະຫລາດ.  
 father negative usually go market  
 Father does not usually go to the market.

#### 3.2.5.4 Verb directionals

Some verbs are made up of two words. These words are not closely attached like a compound word or a word and a suffix. At times the two parts of the verb can occur in different places in the sentence. English has such verbs as "turn off" or "pick up". These verbs can be split in a sentence like "Turn the light off." In Lao, a few of the intransitive verbs of motion function as the second part of a verb. They indicate the direction of the action. These verbs are:

ໄປ	go	ມາ	come
ລົງ	down	ຂຶ້ນ	up, rise

Verb directionals

When these verb directionals are used with an intransitive or stative verb, the verb and particle occur together. This is shown in examples 80, 81 and 82.

Stative (only with ລົງ and ຂຶ້ນ)

80. ພະຍາ ສົງ ຕຸ້ຍ ຂຶ້ນ.  
 king lion fat rise  
 The lion king got fatter.

## Intransitive

81. ແອນ ອອກ ໄປ ທ້ອງ.

Ann out go room

Ann left the room.

82. ແມວ ປີນ ຂຶ້ນ ຕົ້ນໄມ້.

cat climb rise tree

The cat climbed up the tree.

However, when used with a transitive verb, the object comes between the verb and the directional. In example 83, ອາຫານ "food" separates the verb and directional and in example 84 ມື "hand" does the same thing. These objects are different from ຕົ້ນໄມ້ "tree" in example 82 which is a location addition.

## Transitive

83. ເອົາ ອາຫານ ມາ.

take food come

Bring the food.

84. ຍ້າ ມື ຂຶ້ນ.

lift hand rise

Lift up your hands.

## 3.3 Negatives

There are two negative words in Lao. The most common one is ບໍ່. It should not be confused with the question particle which is spelled the same way but occurs at the end of the sentence. The other negative is ຢ່າ. This is only used in direct commands and can be translated "don't". They

give different meaning to a sentence as can be seen in examples 85 and 86. ຢາ assumes "you" as the subject and that the action has not been done yet. With ບໍ່ the subject and time can be anything.

85. ຢາ ອອກ ໄປ.  
don't out go  
Don't go.

86. ບໍ່ ອອກ ໄປ.  
negative out go  
(someone) didn't go./ (someone) won't go.

Of course, there are other verbs with a negative meaning, for example, "forbid" as shown in example 87. However they are still grammatically verbs, not negatives.

87. ຫ້າມ ຊູບ ຢາ.  
forbid smoke medicine  
It is forbidden to smoke.

One major difference between English and Lao is the answer to a negative question. Example 88 gives a negative question. Both a positive and negative response are given in example 89. Notice that a positive response agrees with the negative question, the food tastes bad.

88. ອາຫານ ບໍ່ ແຂບ ບໍ່ ?  
food negative delicious question  
Is the food not good?

89. ເຈົ້າ.  
yes  
Yes (it is not good).

ບໍ່.  
no  
No (it is good).

From the discussion on the various classes of verbs, it has been shown that the placement of the negative is a determining factor in forming classes. The negative always comes before the main verb, but some modal verbs occur before the negative and some after it.

### 3.4 Summary

There are five classes of verbs in Lao: transitive, intransitive, stative, copulative and helping verbs. The helping verbs can be subcategorized into modal verbs, aspect markers and verb directionals. Modal verbs can be further broken down into those that occur before the negative and those that occur after it. Both modal verbs and aspect markers occur before the main verb, while verb directionals occur after it and may be separated from the verb by an object. The following formula can be written for the verb phrase. This does not contain the aspect markers as each one has its own rules. Most cannot co-occur with a modal verb and two cannot co-occur with a negative.

VP → (Modal 1) (Neg) (Modal 2) V ... (Dir)

Verb phrases with compound or serial verbs are handled in Section 7.0, Complex sentences. The section on additions contains further information on expressing tense (Section 5.3.1, Time) and how the action is done (Section 5.2.10 Manner).



## 4.0 Noun phrases

### 4.1 Characteristics

A noun is the name of a person, place, thing or abstract idea. Most abstract nouns are made from intransitive or stative verbs. A stative or intransitive verb is changed into a noun by adding ຄວາມ- or ຄຳ- while a transitive or intransitive verb uses ການ- (See chart below).

verb class	verb	ການ-	ຄວາມ-/ຄຳ-
transitive	ອ່ານ to read	ການອ່ານ reading	
intransitive	ເຊື່ອ to believe	ການເຊື່ອ believing	ຄວາມເຊື່ອ belief
	ຖາມ to ask	ການຖາມ asking	ຄຳຖາມ question
stative	ດີ to be good		ຄວາມດີ virtue

Classes of verbs changed into nouns

Nouns have only one form. There is no change between singular and plural forms or between subject and object forms. Examples 90 and 91 show ປຶ້ມ "book" when it is singular and when it is plural. Examples 92 and 93 show the first and second person pronoun in both subject and object positions:

90. ລາວ ມີ ປຶ້ມ ເທລັມ ໜຶ່ງ.  
she have book object one  
She has one book.

91.	ລາວ ມີ ປຶ້ມ ສອງ ເຫລັ້ມ. she have book two object She has two books.	
92.	ຂ້ອຍ ເບິ່ງ ເຈົ້າ. I watch you I watch you.	
93.	ເຈົ້າ ເບິ່ງ ຂ້ອຍ. you watch me You watch me.	

## 4.2 Pronouns

### 4.2.1 Personal pronouns

As in English, a person's name or pronoun can fill the space of a noun phrase. Pronouns in Lao do not distinguish between male and female, but they do make a distinction between close friends and others. The pronouns presently used in Laos are listed below:

	1st		2nd		3rd	
	sing.	plural	sing.	plural	sing.	plural
general	ຂ້ອຍ	ພວກຂ້ອຍ (ex) ພວກເຮົາ (in)	ເຈົ້າ	ພວກເຈົ້າ	ເຂົາ	ຂະເຈົ້າ
friends	ເຮົາ	like gen.	ໂຕ	ພວກໂຕ	ລາວ	ຂະເຈົ້າ
formal	ຂ້ານ້ອຍ		ທ່ານ title/kin		ເພິ່ນ	ພວກເພິ່ນ
animals					ມັນ	ພວກມັນ

## Personal Pronouns

Under first person plural there are two words listed. The first one is used when the speaker does not want to include the listener. In example 94 you might be telling a friend that your family is going to the market. Your friend would not be included in the trip. However, in example 95 everyone who is listening is included.

94. ພວກຂ້ອຍ ຈະ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ.

we (exc) will go market

We are going to the market.

95. ພວກເຮົາ ຈະ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ.

we (inc) will go market

We are going to the market.

For the second person formal there is no real pronoun. The word listed, ທ່ານ, means "Mister". Often the title of the person, like ອາຈານ "teacher", is used for the second person pronoun. It is also common to address

someone by a kinship term instead of a pronoun. This is reciprocal. If you address someone as "uncle", you then refer to yourself as "nephew/niece". A list of kinship terms is found in Appendix B.

4.2.2 Interrogative pronouns

A special type of pronoun is the interrogative pronoun. These pronouns are used to form content questions. (A content question is one that cannot be answered with a yes or no.) The grammar remains the same as in a statement except that the noun phrase in question is replaced by an interrogative pronoun. In the following examples, ໄຜ "who" can be seen in subject position, object position and in a benefactive additional phrase. Notice that the order of subject, verb, object remains the same.

96. ໄຜ ເຮັດ ອັນ ນີ້ ?  
 who do thing this

Who did this?  
 97. ເຈົ້າ ຮັກ ໄຜ ?  
 you love who

Who do you love?

98. ເຈົ້າ ເຮັດ ສໍາລັບ ໄຜ ?  
 you do for who

Who did you do that for?

The basic interrogative pronouns are as follows:

ໄຜ	who	ຫຍັງ	what
ໃດ	which, what	ຈັກ	how many
ໃສ	where		

Interrogative pronouns

Most of the interrogative pronouns substitute for a whole noun phrase, but ໃດ substitutes for a determiner as shown in example 99 and ຈັກ for a quantifier as shown in example 100:

99. ຫມາ ໂຕ ໃດ ບໍ່ ຊະບາຍ ?  
 dog body which negative healthy  
 Which dog is sick?

100. ເຈົ້າ ມີ ລູກ ຈັກ ຄົນ ?  
 you have offspring how.many people  
 How many children do you have?

The basic interrogative pronouns can be combined with verbs to create a wide variety of meanings. Some of these will occur in the verb phrase.

ແຕ່ໃສ	where from	ຢູ່ໃສ	where at
ໄປໃສ	where to	ເວລາໃດ	when
ແນວໃດ	how	ຈັ່ງໃດ	how
ທ່ໃດ	how much	ເປັນຫຍັງ	why

Combined interrogative pronouns

Example 101 shows an interrogative pronoun occurring in the verb phrase.

101. ຫມາກນັດ ທ່ໃດ ?  
 pineapple how.much  
 How much is the pineapple?

When an interrogative pronoun is used with the negative ບໍ່ or in a yes/no question formed with a particle, it has the meaning of anyone, anywhere, anything, etc. This is shown in examples 102 and 103. The pronoun ໃຜ can also be reduplicated to mean everyone as shown in example 104.

102. ບໍ່ ມີ ໃຜ ຢາກ ເຮັດ.

negative have who want do

There is no one who wants to do it.

103. ມີ ໃຜ ຢາກ ເຮັດ ບໍ່ ?

have who want do question

Is there anyone who wants to do it?

104. ອາກາດ ເຢັນ ດີ ໃຜໆ ກໍ່ ດີໃຈ.

weather cool good everybody so happy

The weather is cool so everybody is happy.

#### 4.3 Modifying nouns

Normally the noun in Lao is modified by the words following it. (Some of the words that have been borrowed from Pali and Sanscrit do not act this way. However, it is probably better to learn them as units instead of trying to write out all the exceptions.) Lao does not have a class of adjectives. Instead, another noun or verb is used to describe the noun. Example 105 shows a single noun and verb. In example 106 the noun is modified by another noun, ປ່າ "forest". Example 107 shows the noun modified by both a noun ປ່າ "forest" and a stative verb ດຳ "black". A noun modified by a transitive verb phrase, ຕັດ ຜົມ "cut hair", is shown in example 108.

105. ຫມາ ຕຸ້ຍ.

dog fat

The dog is fat.

106. ຫມາ ປ່າ ຕຸ້ຍ.

dog forest fat

The wolf is fat.

107. ຫມາ ປ່າ ດຳ ຜູ້ຍ.  
 dog forest black fat  
 The black wolf is fat.

108. ລົງວ ຊ້າຍ ທີ່ ຮ້ານ ຕັດ ຜົມ.  
 turn left place shop cut hair  
 Turn left at the barbers.

One potentially difficult construction is that involving "a half". The half needs to be stated first then modified by telling what it's a half of. If it's put the other way around, it's taken to mean one and a half. See the examples below:

109. ເຄິ່ງ ຈອກ  
 half cup  
 one half cup

110. ຈອກ ເຄິ່ງ  
 cup half  
 one and one half cups

111. ຈອກ ກັບ ຫນຶ່ງ ສວມ ສີ່  
 cup with one slash four  
 one and one fourth cups

#### 4.4 Possessive

When you wish to say that an object belongs to someone, the possessor follows the noun and any descriptive words. Ownership can be stated in two ways. One way is to use the word ຂອງ before the owner. As a general rule, ຂອງ is used with long noun phrases or in a formal setting. In

casual conversation or where there is no danger of being misunderstood, ຂອງ is often left out. Example 112 shows a noun phrase that contains ຂອງ, while example 113 shows the same phrase without it. Notice that the meaning is the same.

112. ທມາ ປ່າ ດຳ ຂອງ ຂ້ອຍ ຖ້ຍ.  
 dog forest black belong me fat  
 My black wolf is fat.

113. ທມາ ປ່າ ດຳ ຂ້ອຍ ຖ້ຍ.  
 dog forest black me fat  
 My black wolf is fat.

#### 4.5 Counting nouns

Counting objects in Lao is more complicated than in English. Nouns that have to do with time, like ຊົ່ວໂມງ "hour", ມື້ "day" ປີ, "year", are counted just like we would in English. The number is placed before the noun as shown in the examples below:

114. ສອງ ຊົ່ວໂມງ  
 two hour  
 two hours

115. ສາມ ມື້  
 three day  
 three days

116. ສິບ ປີ  
 ten year  
 ten years



Other nouns require a classifier if you want to state the number of objects. The number comes after the noun and is followed by the classifier as shown in examples 117 to 119 below:

117. ນ້ຳ ຫ້າ ຈອກ  
water five glass  
five glasses of water

118. ເຂົ້າໜົມໄຂ່ ສີ່ ແຜ່ນ  
cake four slice  
four slices of cake

119. ລູກ ສອງ ຄົນ  
offspring two person  
two children

Classifiers are a special group of nouns. They have a relationship to a noun or nouns and are not interchangeable. You cannot use the classifier for soap when counting children or the classifier for cabbage when buying bananas. Some nouns can take a wide variety of measurement classifiers. These are like the mass nouns in English "water", "rice" and "sand". You can get water by the glass, cup, liter, jug, etc. However, most nouns like "cat", "car" or "tree" have a special classifier associated with them. Fortunately, there is a general classifier ອັນ "unit" which can be used with everything but people. For a list of classifiers and what they are used with, see Appendix C.

The quantifier and classifier come after the descriptive words and the possessor. Quantifier is used here instead of number since words like ບາງ "some" or ທຸກ "every" can also be used in this position. The normal order is noun, modifiers, possessive, quantifier, then classifier. The number one

is an exception to this. It occurs after the classifier instead of before it. Example 120 shows a noun with a modifier followed by a classifier then the number one. Note that the order is different than in example 121, where the noun and modifier are followed by the number two and then a classifier. Example 122 shows a possessive followed by the quantifier "all" and a classifier.

120. ຫມາ ດາ ໂຕ ຫນຶ່ງ ຕຸ້ຍ.

dog black body one fat

The one black dog is fat.

121. ຫມາ ປ່າ ດາ ສອງ ໂຕ ຕຸ້ຍ.

dog forest black two body fat

The two black wolves are fat.

122. ຫມາ ຂອງ ລາວ ທຸກ ໂຕ ຕຸ້ຍ.

dog belong him every body fat.

All of his dogs are fat.

There are two other ways of indicating the number of a noun. One way is with ordinal numbers. This does not tell how many objects there are, but tells their position: first, second, third, etc. Since it is describing the noun, not counting it, ordinal numbers occur with the other modifiers before the possessive. They are formed by placing ທີ່ in front of a number. See the following example:

123. ຫມາ ທີ່ ສອງ ຂອງ ຂ້ອຍ ບໍ່ ສະບາຍ.

dog that two belong me negative well

My second dog is sick.

The other way of indicating number is with the plural word ພວກ. This word can only be used with living things such as people and animals. It is frequently used to form plural pronouns, as can be seen by looking at the chart in Section 4.2.1. This word cannot co-occur with a quantifier and classifier. Compare the two sentences below, example 124 with the plural ພວກ and example 125 with a quantifier and classifier:

124. ພວກ ນັກຮຽນ ໄປ ໂຮງຮຽນ.  
 plural student go school  
 The students go to school.

125. ນັກຮຽນ ທຸກ ຄົນ ໄປ ໂຮງຮຽນ.  
 student every person go school  
 All the students go to school.

#### 4.6 Determiners

To make a noun phrase specific, ນີ້ "this", ນັ້ນ "that" or ພຸ່ນ "that distant" can be placed after the classifier. They must always have a classifier even if no quantifier is present. However, they can also co-occur with a quantifier. Example 126 shows a specific noun phrase with a quantifier and example 127 shows one without a quantifier.

126. ຫມາ ປາ ດຳ ສອງ ໂຕ ນີ້ ຖ້ຽມ.  
 dog forest black two body this fat  
 These two black wolves are fat.

127. ຫມາ ໂຕ ນັ້ນ ຖ້ຽມ.  
 dog body that fat  
 That dog is fat.

#### 4.7 Relative clause

The last element to add to the noun phrase is a relative clause. This is a clause which is included inside the noun phrase. An English example would be "The man who sang a song is famous." The noun phrase is "The man who sang a song" and the relative clause is "who sang a song". Since a sentence which contains a relative clause has two clauses, it should be classified as a complex sentence. However, a relative clause is part of the noun phrase and must be understood in relation to the other elements of the noun phrase. For this reason, relative clauses will be discussed here, instead of in Section 7.0, Complex sentences. A relative clause in Lao is always introduced with ທີ່, as in example 128 below:

128. ບໍ່ມີ ທີ່ ເຈົ້າ ໃຫ້ ອີມ ມີ ເລື້ອງ ມ່ວນ.

book that you give borrow have story fun

The book that you lent me has good stories.

Relative clauses come after the modifiers and possessive, but before the quantifier and classifier. The following examples contain the elements that have been discussed in this section. Although they are grammatical, they are much longer than usual. Lao tends to get very long verb phrases, but when a noun phrase starts to get too long, they break it into two sentences. Examples 129 and 130 show a relative clause before a quantifier and classifier. Example 131 shows an ordinal number before a relative clause. Example 132 shows a possessive, relative clause, quantifier, classifier and determiner.

129. ພວກ ທີ່ ມາ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ ສອງ ຄົນ ນີ້ ແມ່ນ ຄູ.

plural that come eat rice two person this be teacher

These two people who came to eat are teachers.

130. ຫມາ ທີ່ ຂ້ອຍ ຊື້ ຢູ່ ຕະຫລາດ ສອງ ໂຕ ນີ້ ຖ້ຍ.

dog that I buy be.at market two body this fat

These two dogs that I bought at the market are fat.

131. ຜູ້ ທີ່ ສອງ ທີ່ ມາ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ ແມ່ນ ຄູ.

person that two that come eat rice be teacher

The second person who came to eat is a teacher.

132. ຫມາ ຂອງ ລາວ ທີ່ ຊື້ ຢູ່ ຕະຫລາດ ສອງ ໂຕ ນີ້ ຖ້ຍ.

dog belong him that buy at market two body this fat

These two dogs of his that he bought at the market are fat.

#### 4.8 Summary

A noun phrase can be composed of a pronoun, a person's name or a noun and its related concepts. The noun may be modified by either another noun or a verb coming immediately after it. This may be followed by a possessive, either with or without the word ຂອງ. The possessive can be followed by a relative clause which may be followed by a quantifier and classifier. The last element is a determiner. All of these elements following a noun are optional, although there are some restrictions on how they combine. If a quantifier or determiner is present, then the classifier is required. This gives the following formula for noun phrases:

NP → Noun (Mod) (Poss) (Rel) (Quant) (Cl) (Dem)

## 5.0 Additions

### 5.1 Characteristics

Additional phrases are not central to the meaning of the sentence. They tell such things as when, where or for whom. Most additions are formed by placing a special word before either a noun phrase or a clause. Each type of addition has its own special word or words that signal that the following phrase is that type of addition. For some of the additions, there are several words listed with the same meaning. This is probably not accurate. There are probably some subtle differences in meaning and situations where one word can be used but another cannot. Although most additions are phrases, there are some that are made up of a single word. Some additions actually make the sentence into a complex sentence, or a sentence which contains more than one clause. In each case, however, the clauses which are part of an addition are subordinate, or not equal to, the main clause. Those additions which make the sentence complex are: reason, cause, conditional, and some time additions. These additions can be compared with the complex sentences discussed in Section 7.0, Complex sentences.

All additional phrases can occur at the end of either a main clause or a subordinate clause. However, there are some types of phrases that can also occur at the beginning of the sentence. Those phrases that can occur at the beginning are usually preferred in that position.

## 5.2 Occuring at the end

### 5.2.1 Reason

These words introduce a reason addition that is a clause. The two words appear to be interchangeable. They are more formal or correct with ວ່າ, but are frequently heard without it.

ເພາະ (ວ່າ)	because	ຍ້ອນ (ວ່າ)	because
------------	---------	------------	---------

Reason

Examples of both words in a sentence:

133. ຂ້ອຍ ຕ້ອງ ຮຽນ ເພາະ ວ່າ ມື້ອື່ນ ມີ ເສງ.

I must study because that tomorrow have test

I must study because I have a test tomorrow.

134. ລາວ ໄປ ໂຮງຫມໍ ຍ້ອນ ບໍ່ ສະບາຍ.

she go clinic because negative health

She went to the doctor because she was not well.

### 5.2.2 Cause

This is the logical reordering of the reason addition given above. Instead of result because reason these sentences are reason therefore result.

Sentences with a cause addition always use the word ຈຶ່ງ "so":

ດັ່ງນັ້ນ...ຈຶ່ງ	therefore
ສະນັ້ນ...ຈຶ່ງ	therefore
ຈຶ່ງຂັ້ນ...ຈຶ່ງ	therefore (spoken only)

Cause

Compare example 135 below with examples 133 and 134 above.

135. ລາວ ບໍ່ ສະບາຍ ສະນັ້ນ ຈຶ່ງ ໄປ ໂຮງຫມໍ.

she negative health therefore so go clinic

She was not well therefore she went to the doctor.

### 5.2.3 Benefactive

These words introduce a benefactive noun phrase or clause. All speakers say that ສູ່ is significantly different from the others; but were not able to describe the difference.

ສຳລັບ	for (formal, written style)
ເພື່ອ	for (casual, spoken style)
ໃຫ້	for the benefit of or in place of
ແກ່/ແດ່	for
ສູ່	for

#### Benefactive

136. ແມ່ ໃຫ້ ເງິນ ສຳລັບ ຂີ້ ສັ້ນ.

mother give money for buy skirt

Mother gave (me) money to buy a skirt.

137. ເດັກ ນ້ອຍ ເຮັດ ນາ ເພື່ອ ພໍ່.

child small work field for father

The young child works in the field for his father.

138. ແມ່ ຊຽນ ຈົດຫມາຍ ໃຫ້ ລູກ.

mother write letter for offspring

Mother writes a letter in place of her child.

139. ນາງ ເຮັດ ແກງ ສູ່ ພະຍາ ກິນ.

woman do curry for ruler eat

The woman made curry for the ruler to eat.



#### 5.2.4 Accompaniment

Expressing that an action is done with someone can be handled in three ways. Two noun phrases can be joined together with a conjunction, as discussed in Section 7.2.3. Something can be added to the verb phrase, as discussed in Section 7.3.4, or it can be expressed in an additional phrase as described here. The words listed below constitute the entire additional phrase. They are not followed by either a clause or a verb phrase.

ນຳກັນ	together in the same place
ພ້ອມກັນ	together but not necessarily in same place

Accompaniment

In example 140, the students are walking in one group. In example 141, they are all walking to school at the same time, but may be in several small groups.

140. ນັກຮຽນ ໄປ ໂຮງຮຽນ ນຳກັນ.  
student go school together

The students go to school together.

141. ນັກຮຽນ ໄປ ໂຮງຮຽນ ພ້ອມກັນ.  
student go school together

The students go to school together.

The following two words are used before a noun phrase to create an accompaniment additional phrase.

ກັບ	with, must be followed by a noun
ນຳ	with, must be followed by a noun

Accompaniment "with"

The next two examples show these phrases used in a sentence.

142. ລາວ ໄປ ໂຮງຮຽນ ກັບ ນ້ອງ.  
 she go school with younger.sibling  
 She goes to school with her younger sister.

143. ລາວ ໄປ ໂຮງຮຽນ ນຳ ອ້າຍ.  
 he go school with older.brother  
 He goes to school with his older brother.

### 5.2.5 Location

Normally, an additional locative phrase is introduced by the word ຢູ່. This can be seen in the sentences below:

144. ແມ່ ເຮັດວຽກ ຢູ່ ເຮືອນ.  
 mother work be.at home  
 Mother works at home.

145. ຂ້ອຍ ພົບ ແອນ ຢູ່ ຕະຫລາດ.  
 I meet Ann be.at market  
 I met Ann at the market.

However, when a verb of motion is present the ຢູ່ is dropped as seen in examples 146 and 147:

146. ຂ້ອຍ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ.  
 I go market  
 I go to the market.

147. ເດັກ ນ້ອຍ ນັກຮຽນ ຢ່າງ ໄປ ໂຮງຮຽນ.

child small student walk go school

The young students walk to school.

After the ຢູ່ or a verb of motion, there is frequently a word that describes the position of the noun phrase. Some of the more common ones are listed here:

ໃນ	in	ເຂົ້າໃນ	into
ທາງນອກ	outside	ອ້ອມ	around
ເທິງ	on	ໃສ່	in, on, to
ກ້ອງ	under	ລຸ່ມ	under
ຕາມ	along	ຂ້າງ	beside
ທາງຫລັງ	behind	ທາງໜ້າ	in front of
ທາງຂວາ	right side	ທາງຊ້າຍ	left side
ລະຫວ່າງ	between	ກາງ	middle
ນີ້ or ພີ່	here	ນັ້ນ or ທັ້ນ	there
ທຸກບ່ອນ	everywhere	ຕໍ່	to
ແກ່ or ແດ່	to, towards	ມໍ່ or ໃກ້	near
ໄກ	far		

Positional words

The following examples are of sentences using a positional word. Examples 148 and 149 use the verbs of motion ໄປ "go" and ລົງ "down". Example 150 uses ຢູ່ "be at".

148. ມົດ ແກ່ ຂົນເດືອນ ໄປ ໃກ້ ຂອກ ທາງ.

ant drag worm go near edge way

The ants dragged the worm near to the edge of the path.

149. ນັກຮຽນ ເອົາ ດິນ ໂຍນ ລົງ ໃສ່ ບວກນ້ຳ ກາງ ທິ່ນທາງ.  
 student take dirt throw down in puddle middle road  
 Students threw dirt in the puddle in the middle of the road.
150. ໄວ້ ຂະໜົມ ຢູ່ ໃນ ຕູ້.  
 keep snack be.at in cabinet  
 Store the snacks in the cabinet.

5.2.6 Reflexive

The reflexive consists of a single word or compound word that occurs at the end of the sentence. The words ເອງ and ຕົວຕົນເອງ can be used interchangeably and can refer to either a person or an animal. The words ຕົນເອງ and ຕົວເອງ have the added meaning of "for the actor's own benefit". They can only be used with people. To express an animal doing something for his own benefit ໂຕເອງ is used.

ເອງ	myself
ດ້ວຍຕົນເອງ	by myself
ຕົນເອງ	for myself (person)
ຕົວເອງ	for myself (person)
ໂຕເອງ	for myself (animal)

Reflexives

Notice the difference in meaning between example 151 and 152. In example 151 the person could be washing the whole family's clothes instead of having a maid do it. In example 152 the person is only washing her own clothes.

151. ຂ້ອຍ ຂ້າ ເຄື່ອງ  
I wash clothing self  
I wash the clothes myself.

152. ຂ້ອຍ ຂ້າ ເຄື່ອງ ຕົນເອງ.  
I wash clothing for.self  
I wash my clothes myself.

153. ແມວ ຊອກ ກິນ ເອງ.  
cat search eat for.self  
The cat finds food for itself.

### 5.2.7 Instrumental

There is only one word that starts an instrumental phrase. It is used before a noun phrase to show what instrument was used to do the action.

ດ້ວຍ	with
------	------

Instrumental

As shown in the following examples, this cannot always be translated "with".

154. ເຈົ້າ ມາ ສອນ ດ້ວຍ ລົດຖີບ.  
you come teach with bicycle

You came to teach on a bicycle.

155. ລາວ ຂຽນ ດ້ວຍ ປາກກາ.  
he write with pen  
He writes with a pen.

When the word ດ້ວຍ "with" is used with the verb ເຮັດ "do", it carries the meaning of made from. This is shown in example 156.

156. ໂຕະ ເຮັດ ດ້ວຍ ໄມ້.  
table do with wood

The table is made of wood.

### 5.2.8 Goal/source

When describing the goal or what you are moving toward, the word ຮອດ is used to introduce a noun phrase. For the source or what you are moving away from, the word ແຕ່ or ຈາກ is used.

ຮອດ	to, until
ແຕ່	from
ຈາກ	from

Goal / source

157. ຂ້ອຍ ຮຽນ ຮອດ ປະລິນຍາໂທ  
I study to master's degree  
I studied up to a master's degree.

158. ນັກຮຽນ ໄປ ຮອດ ໂຮງຮຽນ.  
student go goal school  
The students arrived at school.

159. ແມ່ ມາ ແຕ່ ຕະຫລາດ.  
mother come from market  
Mother comes from the market.

160. ມົດ ແກ່ ຂີ້ກະເດືອນ ອອກ ຈາກ ກາງ ທາງ ອີກ.  
 ant drag worm out from middle way again  
 The ants dragged the worm out of the middle of the road again.

### 5.2.9 Quantity

The following words are used after a stative verb to express the quantity:

ໄພດ	too much
ກວ່າ	more than
ທີ່ສຸດ	the most

Quantity

Example 161 shows a simple sentence with a quantity addition. Examples 162, 163 and 164 show how they can be used to form comparisons.

161. ແພງ ໄພດ !  
 expensive too.much  
 Too expensive!

162. ດີ  
 good  
 good

163. ດີ ກວ່າ  
 good more.than  
 better

164. ດີ ທີ່ສຸດ  
 good most  
 best

For a sentence containing a transitive or intransitive verb, the quantity is noted by a stative verb which is attached to the end of the sentence. These stative verbs are then used as the positive answer to a yes/no question. The more common verbs are listed here. Also see the next section on manner.

ພໍແລ້ວ	enough already	ຫມົດ	all, finished
ຫລາຍ	much	ເຕັມທີ	full
ອີກ	again	ເຫລືອ	some remaining

Stative verbs used to express quantity

Examples 165 and 166 show the verb ກິນ "eat" with a stative verb at the end of the sentence telling how much was eaten. Example 167 is a question using both a transitive verb ມີ "have" and a stative verb ຫລາຍ "much". Notice that the positive answer can be either both verbs or the stative verb alone.

165. ລາວ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ ຫມົດ

she eat rice all

She ate all the rice.

166. ລາວ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ ເຫລືອ.

she eat rice some.remaining

She ate (until satisfied) but there's still rice left.

167. ມີ ເຮັດວຽກ ຫລາຍ ບໍ່ ?

have work much question

Do you have alot of work?

ມີ ຫລາຍ. or ຫລາຍ.

have much much

I have alot. Alot

An idiomatic way of saying "not very" is by placing a stative verb in the following construction: ບໍ່ \_\_\_\_\_ ບານໃດ



168. ຂ້ອຍ ເວົ້າ ພາສາ ລາວ ບໍ່ ແກ້ງ ປານໃດ.  
 I speak language Lao negative good when  
 I don't speak Lao very well.

### 5.2.10 Manner

There are a few verbs that occur at the end of a sentence and express something about the manner of the verb. Some people say that when they occur in this position they are adverbs. Other people say that since they are the positive answer to a yes/no question, they are the main verb and the rest of the sentence is a complex subject. Whichever way you want to analyze it, these are the verbs that do this:

ໄດ້	ability (physical)	ເປັນ	ability (learned)
ຢູ່	occurring now		

Manner

The words ໄດ້ and ເປັນ have a significant difference. In example 169, I am not able to read Lao because I forgot my glasses or have some other physical limitation. In example 170, I cannot read Lao because I have not studied it and do not know how.

169. ຂ້ອຍ ອ່ານ ພາສາ ລາວ ບໍ່ ໄດ້.  
 I read language Lao negative able(physical)  
 I am not able to read Lao.

170. ຂ້ອຍ ອ່ານ ພາສາ ລາວ ບໍ່ ເປັນ  
 I read language Lao negative able(learned)  
 I am not able to read Lao.

The stative verbs can also be used to show manner. There is frequently a slight shift in meaning when this happens. A complete list would be too long to give but a few examples should give the general idea:

171. ລາວ ເກ່ງ.  
he good.clever  
He is clever.

172. ລາວ ເຮັດ ອາຫານ ເກ່ງ.  
he do food good.clever  
He cooks well.

173. ລາວ ສ້າງ ເຮືອນ ໃໝ່.  
he build house new  
He builds a new house.

174. ລາວ ໄປ ປະເທດ ຈີນ ໃໝ່.  
he go country China new  
He goes to China again.

### 5.3 Preferred at beginning

The additions that are discussed in this section usually come at the beginning of the sentence. They are not limited to that place, however, but can also come at the end of the sentence like the additions discussed in the previous section.

#### 5.3.1 Time

Time additions are not always introduced by a certain word or words. They are often simply noun phrases like ມື້ນີ້ "today" or ແຕ່ດົນແລ້ວ "long ago". Since this is the case, it is impossible to list all the possible phrases

or words that can be used. The following is a list of some of the more common time words to give an idea of what is possible.

ມື້ຂຸນ	day before yesterday	ມື້ວານນີ້	yesterday
ມື້ນີ້	today	ມື້ອັນ	tomorrow
ມື້ຮື	day after tomorrow	ມື້ໜ້າ	sometime
ອາທິດ	week	ເດືອນ	month
ປີ	year	ມື້ເຂົ້າ	morning
ຕອນທຽງ	noon	ຕອນບ່າຍ	afternoon
ມື້ແລງ	evening	ກາງຄືນ	night
ຕອນ	time	ຂະນະ	time

Specific times

These specific times can be used as the entire additional phrase as shown in example 175.

175. ຕອນບ່າຍ ພວກເຂົາ ຈະ ຕ້ອງ ເຕັນ ຂ້ານ ບວກ ແຫ່ງ ນີ້ ອີກ.  
 afternoon they will must jump cross puddle dry this again

In the afternoon they would have to jump across the dried up puddle again.

The specific times listed above can also receive a determiner or a cardinal number like other noun phrases. Several possibilities are given in the box below and example 176 shows one in a sentence.

ອາທິດທີ່ແລ້ວ	last week	ປີກາຍ	last year
ປີນີ້	this year	ປີໜ້າ	next year

Specific time words which can receive a determiner or a cardinal number

176. ເຂົ້າ ມື້ ນີ້ ທົນທາງ ມີ ບວກນ້ຳ ເພາະ ຜົນ ຕົກ  
 morning day this path have puddle because rain  
 fall  
 ຕອນຂ້ອນແຈ້ງ.  
 early morning  
 This morning the path had puddles because it had  
 rained at dawn.

Or the specific times can be introduced with one of the following words and a number:

ໃນ	in, during	ອີກ	in another
ຈົນ	until	ແຕ່	since
ຫລັງຈາກ	after	ກ່ອນ	before
ລະຫວ່າງ	between	ພໍ	as soon as

Specific time words which occur with a number

5.3.2 Conditional

An example of this type of time addition is shown in 177.

177. ອີກ ສາມ ອາທິດ ຂ້ອຍ ຈະ ໄປ ວຽງຈັນ .  
 in another three week I will go Vientiane  
 In three weeks I'm going to Vientiane.

A few other common phrases are listed here. This list is by no means complete:

ບືດຫນຶ່ງ	in a minute	ດຽວນີ້	right now
ເວລານີ້	at this time	ແຕ່ດົນແລ້ວ	long ago
ຫວ່າງແລ້ວນີ້	before this	ບາງທີ	sometimes
ຕໍ່ໄປ	next	ທັນໃດນັ້ນ	suddenly

Common time phrases

Time additions are the most flexible and diverse of any of the additions. As well as using all the words or phrases already discussed, they can be made from any action by adding the word ຕອນ "time". In example 178 below, ເລີກ ໂຮງຮຽນ "end school" has been changed to "when school ended" by using the word ຕອນ. They also can occur at the beginning or end of a sentence, or even both. In example 176 above, there are two time additions, one at the beginning and one at the end. Another possibility is to have two time additions in a row, one right after the other, as shown in example 179.

178. ຕອນ ເລີກ ໂຮງຮຽນ ພວກ ນັກຮຽນ ພາກັນ ເຕ້ມ ຂ້ານ

ບວກ.

time end school plural student together jump cross  
puddle

When school got out all the students jumped across the  
puddle.

179. ມື້ ທນ້າ ຂະນະ ທີ່ ນາງ ກວາດ ເຮືອນ ຢູ່  
day one time that woman sweep house be.at

ກໍ ມີ ຄົນ ແປກ ທນ້າ ມາ ຢາມ.

\* have person strange face come visit

One day, while the woman was sweeping the house, there  
was a stranger who came to visit.

The following words are also used to express the time of the action but they are different from the words discussed above. They cannot occur at the beginning of a sentence but always occur at the end.

ແລ້ວ	-already
ເລື້ອຍໆ	often, frequently
ສະເໝີ	always, forever
ເທື່ອ	times

Sentence final time words

In the following examples, note that ແລ້ວ is used in a positive sentence, example 180, while ເທື່ອ is used in a negative one, example 181.

180. ພວກເຮົາ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ ແລ້ວ.  
 we eat rice already  
 We already ate.

181. ພວກເຮົາ ຍັງ ບໍ່ ກິນ ເຂົ້າ ເທື່ອ.  
 we still negative eat rice time  
 We haven't eaten yet.

5.3.2 Conditional

A conditional clause is introduced by one of these words:

ຖ້າ	if
ຖ້າ	if
ຖ້າຫາກ or ຖ້າຫາກ	provided that
ຖ້າບໍ່ດັ່ງນັ້ນ	otherwise (cannot start the sentence)

Conditional

In example 182, the conditional clause comes at the beginning of the sentence and in example 183, it comes at the end.

182. ຖ້າ ຝົນ ຕົກ ຂ້ອຍ ບໍ່ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ.  
 if rain fall I neg go market  
 If it rains, I won't go to the market.

183. ເວລາ ຝົນ ຕົກ ຕ້ອງ ກັງ ຄັນຮົ່ມ ຖ້າ ບໍ່ ຕັ້ງມັນ ຈະ  
 time rain fall must hold umbrella if not like.this  
 will

ປຽກ.

wet

When it rains you must carry an umbrella, if not,  
 you'll get wet.

### 5.4 Summary

Additional phrases are not central to the meaning of the sentence. The following additional clauses occur at the end of the clause: reason, cause, benefactive, accompaniment, location, reflexive, instrumental, goal/source, quantity and manner. There are two additional phrases that can occur at either the beginning or the end of a clause, with the beginning usually preferred. These are time and conditional phrases.

Conditional

A conditional clause is introduced by one of these words

otherwise (cannot start the sentence)

Conditional

but notice that the end of the sentence is also the end of the conditional clause

in example 182, the conditional clause comes at the beginning of the sentence and in example 183, it comes at the end

182. ຖ້າ ຝົນ ຕົກ ຈະ ຈຳເປັນ ທ້າວ ຈຳເປັນ ຈະ ຈຳເປັນ ຈະ ຈຳເປັນ ຈະ ຈຳເປັນ  
 If it rains, I won't go to the market

183. ຖ້າ ຝົນ ຕົກ ຈະ ຈຳເປັນ ທ້າວ ຈຳເປັນ ຈະ ຈຳເປັນ ຈະ ຈຳເປັນ ຈະ ຈຳເປັນ  
 If it rains, I won't go to the market

## 6.0 Particles

### 6.1 Characteristics

Particles are the last element in the sentence. They can make a sentence into a command or question or express the speaker's attitude. Sometimes they do both things at once. For the most part, particles are considered to be part of the spoken and not the written language, so they are not included in dictionaries. When you combine this with regional variations in pronunciation and tones which are rarely used elsewhere, inconsistent spelling is the result. Most particles can be said with either a long or short vowel. In general, the short vowel is more abrupt and commanding, while the long vowel is more formal or pleading. The actual shades of meaning are difficult to distinguish and require much exposure to spoken Lao. The meanings given here are only approximate.

### 6.2 Imperative particles

Imperative particles are placed at the end of a sentence to create a command as shown in example 184:

184. ຂໍ ນ້ຳ ແດ່ .  
 request water polite.imperative  
 Can I have some water please?

The following list of particles is arranged from the most polite or formal to the least polite. The words at the end of the list should only be used with children or someone of lower status.

Again, these particles need to be heard in many situations to develop a sense of when they are appropriate. They have many shades of meaning and the translation given is only approximate.



ທ້ອນ/ເຖິກ	used in blessings or vows, formal
ຕູ	very polite
ແດ່	polite
ເຫາະ	suggest or urge
ນາ	urging, pleading, making excuses, explaining
ເນີ/ເນີ້/ເດີ້	recommend
ແມ ແຫມ	strongly urge - not toward elders
ເສັງ/ສາ/ຂະ	command to decide or let something go
ຕີ	order

Politeness particles

### 6.3 Question particles

The use of these particles makes the sentence a question. The question can be either a real question as shown in example 185 or a rhetorical one as shown in example 186:

185. ລາວ ໄປ ບໍ່?  
she go question  
Is she going?

186. ມີ ແຂບ ຫນ້ ?  
this delicious rhetorical  
Isn't this good?

The following particles are grouped according to the type of question. This is only a basic grouping as each particle has several shades of meaning and is best learned by hearing it in many different situations.

ບໍ່	yes/no question.
ເທີ	yes/no question, familiar
ເບາະ	yes/no question, urges action
ຫວະ	yes/no question
ລະ	follows yes/no question, demands a definite answer
ເກົ່າ	content question
ນໍ່	content question, used in an interview situation
ເດີ	always used with second person. means "and you?"
ແນ່ / ແດ່	"who all" or "what all". Also for polite requests.
ເກົ່າະ	to ask that previous statement be repeated
ເນາະ	urging agreement, "OK?"
ລະບໍ່	"why not this?"
ຕວ່າ	assumes yes, of course?
ໜໍ່	rhetorical question, talking to self
ວະ	informal, "oh, is that so?" surprise, puzzlement
ຮີ	or not, puzzlement or wonder. didn't hear speaker.

Question particles

#### 6.4 Speaker attitude

The remaining particles express how the speaker feels about the situation.

One of the more frequently used particles is shown in example 187:

187. ຂ້ອບ ເວົ້າ ຫລິ້ນ ຂໍ ດອກ.

I speak play straight truly

I'm only teasing.

Again, these particles need to be heard in many situations to develop a sense of when they are appropriate. They have many shades of meaning and the translation given is only approximate.

ပံ	doubt
ပု	short for ပံနွ means "I don't know"
ဝေ	sincerity, emphasis
ဝစာ	absolutely, truly
လးစား	emphasis
စားလး/လး/စားလး	emphasis
ဝေ/ဝေ/ဝေ	intensifier
ဝေ့	slang, strong feelings, exuberance or annoyance
ဝေ့	satisfaction
ဝေ	deliberation
ဝေ	warning
ဝေ	contradict previous statement or action
ဝေ	remind, change subject back, turn attention
ဝေ	introduce new subject, draw attention
ဝေ	polite, heard what was said
ဝေ့	general politeness

Attitudinal particles

### 6.5 Summary

Particles are the final element of a sentence. They can make the sentence a command or question or they can express the speaker's attitude. Each particle has several shades of meaning and they are best learned by listening to how native speakers use them.

## 7.0 Complex sentences

### 7.1 Characteristics

A complex sentence is one that contains more than one clause. Two ways of forming complex sentences have already been discussed. One way is with a relative clause contained in the noun phrase as discussed in Section 4.7. A second way is with an additional phrase as discussed in Section 5. Complex sentences can also be formed with conjunctions or with a series of verbs.

### 7.2 Marked complex sentences, conjunctions

#### 7.2.1 Characteristics

Many of the additional phrases, like conditional or reason, are actually a clause and can be said to form a complex sentence. They are different from complex sentences formed with conjunctions, however. An additional phrase is subordinate to the main clause, while a conjunction is used with two equal clauses or phrases. The conjunction always occurs between the two clauses or phrases that it is joining. There are three types of conjunctions in Lao: those that occur between clauses, those that only occur in the noun phrase and special conjunctions.

#### 7.2.2 Conjunctions for clauses

The following words are used to join two clauses into one sentence. They occur between the two clauses they are joining.

ແລະ	and	ຫລືວ່າ	or
ແຕ່ວ່າ	but (same subject)	ແຕ່	but (different subject)
ແລ້ວກໍ	and then		

## Clause conjunctions

The following examples show the conjunctions used in sentences. In example 189, the use of ຫລືວ່າ does not imply an either or choice. I could do both things, one thing or nothing. Examples 190 and 191 show the difference between ແຕ່ວ່າ and ແຕ່. In 190 the subject of both clauses is the same while in 191 it is different.

188. ແມ່ ຂໍ ຫມູ ແລະ ເອ້ອຍ ຂໍ ໂກ.  
 mother buy pig and elder.sister buy chicken  
 Mother bought pork and my older sister bought chicken.

189. ມື້ອນ ຂ້ອຍ ຂໍ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ ຫລືວ່າ ໄປ ຫາ ຫມູ.  
 tomorrow I will go market or go visit friend  
 Tomorrow I will go to the market or to visit my friend.

190. ນາງ ນ້ອຍ ຜູ້ ນີ້ ບໍ່ ງາມ ແຕ່ວ່າ ເປັນຕາຮັກ.  
 girl small person this not beautiful but lovable  
 This little girl is not beautiful but she is lovable.

191. ແດນ ໄປ ກຸງເທບ ແຕ່ ແນນຊີ ບໍ່ ໄປ.  
 Dan go Bangkok but Nancy negative go  
 Dan went to Bangkok but Nancy didn't go.

192. ພໍ່ ໄປ ທະນະຄານ ແລ້ວກໍ ເຮັດ ນ້ຳ.  
 father go bank then do field  
 Father went to the bank and then worked in the field.

The conjunction ແຕ່ "but" is also used with the verb ມີ "have" where it has the meaning of "only".

193. ຂ້ອຍ ມີ ແຕ່ ໂດລາ.

I have but dollar

I only have dollars.

### 7.2.3 Conjunctions for noun phrases

The following conjunctions are used in the noun phrase. The word ກັບ can only occur in the noun phrase or in an additional accompaniment phrase.

The word ຫລື has the same meaning as ຫລືວ່າ which is used between clauses. With the ວ່າ attached, it can only be used between clauses. Without the ວ່າ, it can only be used between nouns. The last word, ແລະ, is identical with the one used between clauses.

ແລະ	and	ກັບ	with
ຫລື	or		

Noun phrase conjunctions

These examples show the conjunctions occurring in the noun phrase:

194. ແມ່ ແລະ ເອື້ອຍ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ.

mother and elder.sister go market

Mother and my older sister went to the market.

195. ແມ່ ກັບ ເອື້ອຍ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ.

mother with elder.sister go market

Mother, with my older sister, went to the market.

196. ຂະເຈົ້າ ຈະ ຂໍ ຫຼື ຫລິ ໄກ່.  
 they will buy pig or chicken  
 They will buy pork or chicken.

#### 7.2.4 Special conjunctions

There are a few words that seem to be conjunctions, but which occur after the subject of the second clause. Each of these will be discussed separately as there are several differences.

##### 7.2.4.1 ເລີຍ

There are several verbs that mean "to pass" in Lao. These words can be used like a conjunction by placing them immediately after the subject and before the main verb. When in this position, they mean "then". The verbs involved are:

ເລີຍ	pass, exceed	ຜ່ານ	pass, go through
ກາຍ	pass by		

Verbs "to pass"

These words cannot be used to join two clauses with different subjects. The subject of the second clause is always assumed to be included in the first clause, even if this is not explicitly stated. In example 197, the subject of both clauses is Ann. In example 198, the subject of the second clause, Ann, is only part of the subject of the first clause, Ann and Sue. Example 199 shows how the subject of the second clause is assumed to be included in the first clause as well. In this sentence, Ann and Sue are walking together. Ann turns off at the market, but Sue continues on to the post office.

197. ແອນ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ ແລ້ວ ເລີຍ ໄປ ໄປສະນີ.

Ann go market already then go post.office

Ann goes to the market and then to the post office.

198. ແອນ ກັບ ຊູ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ ແລ້ວ ແອນ ເລີຍ ໄປ ໄປສະນີ.

Ann with Sue go market already Ann then go post.office

Ann and Sue go to market and then Ann goes to the post office.

199. ແອນ ໄປ ຕະຫລາດ ແລ້ວ ຊູ ເລີຍ ໄປ ໄປສະນີ.

Ann go market already Sue then go post.office

Ann goes to market and Sue continues on to the post office.

#### 7.2.4.2 ຈຶ່ງ so that, therefore

This word shows that the clause following it is the direct result of the clause preceding it. Although this is often used in a complex sentence, it does not have to be. It can be used to show a relationship between two separate sentences. Example 200 shows ຈຶ່ງ acting like a conjunction with the meaning of "so". Example 201 shows ຈຶ່ງ establishing a relationship between two separate sentences. In this sentence the rabbit has been ordered to go to the lion to be eaten. The rabbit plays all morning and only shows up in the afternoon.

200. ປຶ້ມ ສັ້ນ ຫລາຍ ແອນ ຈຶ່ງ ອ່ານ ຫ້າ ນາທີ.

book short much Ann so read five minute

The book was very short so Ann read it in five minutes.



201. "ເປັນຫຍັງ ຄື ມາ ຂ້າ ແທ້?" ກະຕ່າຍ ຈຶ່ງ ຕອບ ວ່າ :  
 why like come late truly rabbit so answer that  
 "Why have you come so late?" So the rabbit replied:

The word ຈຶ່ງ can also be used to establish the relationship between two clauses when the word order is different from usual. In Section 5.2.1 it was stated that a reason addition comes at the end of the sentence. However this addition can be moved to the front by using ຈຶ່ງ to show the relationship. This is shown in example 202. Example 203, from Section 5.2.2, is repeated here for comparison since ຈຶ່ງ is mandatory with a cause addition.

202. ເພາວ່າ ຂ້ອຍ ບໍ່ ສະບາຍ ຈຶ່ງ ໄປ ໂຮງຫມໍ.  
 because I not well so go clinic  
 Because I was not well, I went to the clinic.

203. ລາວ ບໍ່ ສະບາຍ ສະນັ້ນ ຈຶ່ງ ໄປ ໂຮງຫມໍ.  
 she negative health therefore so go clinic  
 She was not well therefore she went to the doctor.

#### 7.2.4.3 ກໍ່

This word is very hard to translate. It probably does not belong in a grammar on sentence structure but in one that handles whole paragraphs or texts. The closest meaning seems to be "then" or "also". The following examples should give an idea of the scope of this word, although specific rules on when to use it have not been formulated:

204. ຂ້ອຍ ຕາກ ເຄື່ອງ ບໍ່ ແຫ້ງ.  
I hang clothes neg dry

ເຈົ້າ ກໍ ຄື ກັນ ບໍ່ ?

you \* same together question  
I hung out clothes but they didn't dry. Is it the same with you?

205. ກິນ ອັນ ໃດ ກໍ ໄດ້.  
eat thing what \* able  
I'll eat anything.

206. ໄປ ກໍ ໄດ້.  
go \* able  
OK, I'll go.

207. ລາວ ເປັນ ກຳພາ ພໍ່ ກໍ ບໍ່ ມີ ແມ່ ກໍ ບໍ່ ມີ  
he be orphan father \* negative have mother \*  
negative have  
He is an orphan, having neither father nor mother.

208. ຂ້ອຍ ຫາກ ດື່ມ ນໍ້າ  
I just drink water  
ເຖິງດັ່ງນັ້ນ ກໍ ດີ ຂ້ອຍ ຍັງ ຫິວ ນໍ້າ ຢູ່  
however \* good I still hungry water continuous  
I have just drunk the water but nevertheless I am still thirsty.

209. ກິນ ເຂົ້າ ແລ້ວ ກໍ ຈະ ໄປ ຫາ ຫມ.  
eat rice already \* will go visit friend  
After I eat, I will go visit my friend.

### 7.3 Unmarked complex sentences

#### 7.3.1 Characteristics

Some complex sentences do not have a conjunction or other special marking. These sentences show up with a string of verbs occurring one after the other. There are actually several things that can be happening in a string of verbs. The verbs might form a compound verb, the second verb might be subordinate to the first verb or they might express a series of actions.

#### 7.3.2 Compound verbs

Compound verbs are made up of two verbs from the same class: two transitive, two intransitive or two stative verbs. Often the two verbs have very close meanings, but this is not always the case. In example 210, ແຍງ "look" and ເບິ່ງ "watch" form a compound. They describe only one action. However, the word ຍືນ "stand" is not included in the compound as it describes a separate action.

210. ລາວ ຍືນ ແຍງ ເບິ່ງ ໄກ່.  
 he stand look watch chicken  
 He would stand watching the chicken.

To change the order of the words in a compound changes its meaning:

211. ແຍງ ເບິ່ງ  
 look watch  
 to look at something because it is pretty or  
 interesting

212. ເບິ່ງ ແຍງ-

watch look

to guard, protect, or look after

The test to determine if two verbs are a compound or something else is to put them in a yes/no question. The first verb in the string is generally the positive answer. If the first verb is a compound, the answer will contain both verbs. Example 213 has a verb ຢືນ "stand" and then a compound, while example 214 has only the compound verb ແຍງ ເບິ່ງ "look watch".

213. ລາວ ຢືນ ແຍງ ເບິ່ງ ກ໌ ບໍ່ ? ຢືນ.

he stand look watch chicken question

stand

Does he stand watching the chicken?

Yes.

214. ລາວ ແຍງ ເບິ່ງ ກ໌ ບໍ່ ? ແຍງ

ເບິ່ງ.

he look watch chicken question

look

watch

Does he watch the chicken?

Yes.

The example given above is a compound made of two transitive verbs. Further proof of these words forming a compound is that there is no direct object occurring after the first verb. Instead it follows both verbs. Since the examples of compound verbs already given are with transitive verbs, example 215 shows a compound verb formed from stative verbs and example 216 shows one from intransitive verbs.

215. ເຢັນ ສະບາຍ ບໍ່ ? ເຢັນ ສະບາຍ.

cool comfortable question

cool

comfortable

Is it comfortably cool?

Yes.

- |                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| 216. ຕົກ ລົງ ບໍ່ ? | ຕົກ ລົງ.  |
| fall down question | fall down |
| Did he fall down?  | Yes.      |

The last example could be considered a verb directional, and not a compound verb in the same sense that the others are. For more information on verb directionals see Section 3.2.5.4.

### 7.3.3 Subordinate

A string of verbs where the second verb is subordinate to the first verb can be formed with either a transitive verb or an intransitive verb as the first verb. Stative verbs do not normally occur in this construction although a few exceptions are given at the end of this section. With a transitive verb, the second verb and any objects that accompany it can be considered to be the object of the first verb. This is clearly seen in the following examples. In example 217, the ants dragging a worm is what the child watches. In example 218, the thing that is desired is that you cut down the tree.

217. ເດັກ ເບິ່ງ ມົດ ແກ ຂ້າຍເດືອນ.

child watch ant drag worm

The child watched the ants drag the worm.

218. ຂ້ອຍ ຢາກ ເຈົ້າ ຕັດ ດົນໄມ້.

I want you cut tree

I want you to cut the tree down.

In both the cases above, the verbs are separated by the subject of the second clause. However, if the subject of the second clause is the same as the subject of the first clause, it is not repeated. The result is a string of

verbs as in the following examples. In example 219, cutting down the tree is the thing that is wanted. It is the object of ຢາກ "want". In example 220, going out to hunt is what Mother enjoys.

219. ຂ້ອຍ ຢາກ ຕັດ ດົນໄມ້.

I want cut tree

I want to cut down the tree.

220. ແມ່ ຍາກ ອອກ ໄປ ຊອກ ກິນ.

mother enjoy out go hunt eat

Mother enjoys going out to hunt (things) to eat.

When the first verb of the string is an intransitive verb, the relationship is a little different. The second verb gives the reason or purpose for the first verb. Look at example 220. In this sentence there are five verbs in a row. The verbs ອອກ ໄປ "out go" can be considered either a compound verb or a verb with a verb directional. This reduces the number of verbs in the string to four. As already stated, "out go hunt eat" is the object of "enjoy". The same relationship exists between ຊອກ "hunt" and ກິນ "eat". The thing which is eaten is the object of "hunt". However, the relationship between "out go" and "hunt eat" is different. It gives the reason or purpose for going out.

The following two examples are from folk tales. In example 221, ກັບ ມາ "return come" is a verb and verb directional. The clause ຫາ ລູກ "find offspring" is the reason or purpose. The second example is part of a longer, more complex sentence. In this one, the lion king has become old and cannot hunt so he gives an order to all the animals to come every day to be food for him. The first two verbs ຂຶ້ນ ມາ "come up" are a verb and verb directional so they can be counted as one unit. The reason is ເປັນ

ອາຫານ "be food". This is followed by an additional benefactive clause and time clause.

221. ແມ່ ກັບ ມາ ຫາ ລູກ.  
mother return come find offspring

Mother returned to find her children.

222. ພະຍາ ສົງ ສົງ... ຂຶ້ນ ມາ ເປັນ ອາຫານ ແກ່ ຕົນ ທຸກໆ  
ວັນ.

king lion order... up come be food for self every  
day

The lion king ordered (them to) come up to be food for  
him every day.

Stative verbs do not normally form a part of a string of verbs. They can form compounds as mentioned in Section 7.3.2 and they can occur with a verb directional as discussed in Section 3.2.5.4. However, even in these constructions they always occur last when there is another verb present. In this position they function more like an adverb, and are quite different from what is being discussed here. See the section on additions of manner 5.2.10 for more information on this. The one exception to stative verbs occurring in a string are the derived stative verbs shown in examples 223 and 224. The second verb has the meaning of reason or purpose:

223. ຂ້ອຍ ຍິນດີ ຮູ້ຈັກ (ເຈົ້າ).

I happy know (you)

I'm happy to meet you.

224. ລາວ ຂ້າໆນ ເຮັດ ວຽກ.

he lazy do work

He's too lazy to work.

The derived stative verbs that can be used in this manner are listed here:

-ໃຈ Creates a feeling from intransitive or stative verbs.

ຕົກ + ໃຈ = ຕົກໃຈ

fall + heart = startled, frightened

ໜັກ + ໃຈ = ໜັກໃຈ

heavy + heart = disappointed

ຂີ້- used before stative verbs. Gives a habitual meaning.

ຂີ້ + ເມົາ = ຂີ້ເມົາ

habit + drunk = drunkard

-ເປັນຕາ used after transitive verbs. Means "worthy of".

ເປັນຕາ + ຮັກ = ເປັນຕາຮັກ

worthy + love = lovable

ຍິນດີ "to be happy"

Derived stative verbs

#### 7.3.4 Series of actions

The last category for strings of verbs is a series of actions. These can be formed from both transitive and intransitive verbs in any combination. Sometimes these can be difficult to distinguish from the subordinate strings of verbs discussed above. Example 220, where Mother goes out to hunt, can be read as either a series of actions (goes out then hunts) or purpose (goes out to hunt). However, other examples cannot be read as a series of actions. Examples 225 and 226 show this clearly.



225. ຂ້ອຍ ຍິນດີ ຮູ້ຈັກ (ເຈົ້າ).

I happy know (you)

I'm happy to meet you.

226. ລາວ ຂ້າໆ ເຮັດ ວຽກ.

he lazy do work

He's too lazy to work.

In example 225, being happy and meeting you are not two separate actions, instead the reason for the happiness is meeting you. In the same way, being lazy and working cannot be understood as a series of actions. Instead he is lazy about work.

However, in other sentences the verbs must be understood as a series of actions, not as subordinate to each other. Look at the following example:

227. ບັງເອນ ນາງ ໄປ ພໍ ພະຍາ ຢູ່ ເຮືອນ ນີ້ ອີກ.

by.chance woman go meet ruler be.at house this again

By chance the woman went and met the ruler again at this house.

Here the woman going and her meeting the ruler have no connection, except that they happen right after each other. This sentence must be read as a series of events and not as verbs which are subordinate to each other. The following examples can all be read as a series of actions. Examples 228 and 229 show an intransitive verb occurring first in the string. Examples 230 and 231 show a transitive verb in that position. Notice that the direct object of the first verb breaks up the string of verbs.

228. ລາວ ຢືນ ແຍາ ເບິ່ງ ໄກ່.  
 he stand look watch chicken  
 He would stand watching the chicken.

229. ພໍ່ ມຶ່ງ ກິນ ເຫລົ້າ.  
 father sit eat whiskey  
 Father sits and drinks whiskey.

230. ປົກກະຕິ ພໍ່ ຊື້ ເຫລົ້າ ມາ ໄວ້ ເຮືອນ.  
 usually father buy whiskey come keep house  
 Usually father buys whiskey and keeps it in the house.

231. ແມ່ ຂຽນ ຈົດໝາຍ ສົ່ງ ລູກ.  
 mother write letter send offspring  
 Mother writes a letter and sends it to her child.

A special use of a series of actions is to say that an action is done together. Instead of adding an additional accompaniment phrase, the verb ພາ "to lead" is combined with ກັນ "together" and placed first in the series. See example 232 below:

232. ນັກຮຽນ ພາກັນ ໄປ ໂຮງຮຽນ.  
 student lead.together go school

234. The students go to school together.

#### 7.4 Summary

Complex sentences are those that contain more than one clause. A complex sentence can be either marked or unmarked. A marked complex sentence uses a conjunction. Most conjunctions occur between the two clauses that they join but there are a few special conjunctions that occur

after the subject of the-second clause. Conjunctions can also be used to form a complex noun phrase.

An unmarked complex sentence uses several verbs in a row. It is easy to confuse compound verbs with unmarked complex sentences. Compound verbs, which are formed by joining two verbs, cannot be considered a type of complex sentence as there is only one clause involved. The string of verbs in an unmarked complex sentence may be subordinate to each other or describing a series of actions. Sometimes a string of verbs will be quite long with some of the verbs being compound verbs while others are subordinate and still others describe a series of actions.

## 8.0 Special sentence types

### 8.1 Characteristics

This section gives examples of sentences which do not fit the basic grammar given. Sometimes the modification is slight but significant. The sentences handled here are causative, impersonal and other. There are probably other special sentence types that have not been included.

### 8.2 Causative

A causative sentence is one in which someone or something is made to do an action. To form a causative, the word ໃຫ້ is placed after the person causing the action and before the action caused.

233. ທົ່ວໜ້າຄອບຄົວ ໃຫ້ ຄົນສວນ ຕັດ ດົ້ນໄມ້.

village.leader cause gardener cut tree

The village leader had the gardener cut down the tree.

When an action of the subject has caused the second action to occur, the word ໃຫ້ is placed after the first verb. This is shown in example 234. If that verb is transitive, it is placed after the direct object as in example 235.

234. ທົ່ວໜ້າຄອບຄົວ ບອກ ໃຫ້ ຄົນສວນ ຕັດ ດົ້ນໄມ້.

village.leader speak cause gardener cut tree

The village leader ordered the gardener to cut down the tree.

235. ຄົນສວນ ຕັດ ດົ້ນໄມ້ ໃຫ້ ຕົກ ລົງ.

gardener cut tree cause fall down

The gardener cut the tree making it fall down.

The causative can also be used in a negative sentence as shown in the following example:

236. ຂ້ອຍ ບໍ່ ຢາກ ໃຫ້ ເຈົ້າ ມາ.  
 I negative want cause you come  
 I don't want to make you come.

### 8.3 Impersonal

An impersonal sentence does not have a regular subject. In English we use this type of construction for weather, "It is raining.", "There was a snow storm last night." In Lao this sentence construction is often used to start a story or to introduce new characters. It is created by placing ມີ in front of the regular subject.

237. ມີ ຜົວ ເມຍ ຄູ່ ຫນຶ່ງ ຢູ່ ເຮືອນ ນ້ອຍ ແກມ ປ່າ.  
 have husband wife pair one live house small edge  
 forest  
 There were a husband and wife who lived in a small  
 house at the edge of the forest.

238. ຢູ່ ໃນ ປ່າ ມີ ສັດ ປ່າ ຫລາຍ.  
 be.at in forest have animal forest many  
 In the forest there are many wild animals.

### 8.4 Other

The following two sentences are both different from the basic sentence structure given. However, the frequency of their use has not been established.

Example 239 could be called topic-comment. A sentence of this type has two noun phrases in a row. The first noun phrase expresses the topic. This is followed by a clause, complete with subject, that makes a comment on or asks a question about the topic.

239. ແມ່ຍ່ງ ສາມ ຄົນ ນີ້ ຜູ້ໃດ າມ ກວ່າ ຫມູ່ ?  
 girl three person this who beautiful more.than friend  
 Of these three girls, who is the most beautiful?

In example 240, the direct object and indirect object have changed place. This seems to be possible with only one verb in Lao, the verb ໃຫ້. To compare all the uses of this verb, see Section 2.1 where it is an indirect object, Section 5.2.3 where it introduces an additional benefactive phrase and Section 8.2 where it is a causative.

240. ພໍ່ ໃຫ້ ປຶ້ມ ລູກ.  
 father give book offspring  
 Father gives the book to his child.

## 8.5 Summary

The sentences covered in this section do not follow the rules given in the rest of the paper. They include causative, impersonal, and what I have called, *other*. Both causative and impersonal are frequently used while the sentences listed in *other* are more infrequent.

### 9.0 Summary

The basic sentence in Lao follows a set pattern. It can consist of a single verb but in most cases one or more of the optional elements is present. The most common of these is the subject which precedes the verb. After the verb comes the direct object and indirect object. Following the objects can come several additions which in turn may be followed by a particle. The formula for a basic sentence is given below:

Sentence → (Su) VP (DO) (IO) (Add) (Prt)

The verb is the most important part of the sentence. In Lao there are five classes of verbs: transitive, intransitive, stative, copulative and helping verbs. The helping verbs can be subcategorized into modal verbs, aspect markers and verb directionals. Modal verbs can be further broken down into those that occur before the negative and those that occur after it. Both modal verbs and aspect markers occur before the main verb, while verb directionals occur after it and may be separated from the verb by an object. The following formula can be written for the verb phrase. This does not contain the aspect markers as each one has its own rules.

VP → (Modal 1) (Neg) (Modal 2) V ... (Dir)

After the verb, the most important part of the sentence is the subject and object. These are expressed as noun phrases. A noun phrase can be composed of a pronoun, a person's name or a noun and its related concepts. There are several things that can be added to a simple noun. The noun may be modified by either another noun or a verb coming immediately after it. This may be followed by a possessive, either with or without the word ຂອງ "belong". The possessive can be followed by a

relative clause which may be followed by a quantifier and classifier. The last element is a determiner. All of these elements following a noun are optional, although there are some restrictions on how they combine. If a quantifier or determiner is present, then the classifier is required. The following formula summarizes the parts of a noun phrase:

NP → Noun (Mod) (Poss) (Rel) (Quant) (Cl) (Dem)

The next elements to be discussed, additional phrases, are not central to the meaning of the sentence. The following additional phrases occur after the objects: reason, cause, benefactive, accompaniment, location, reflexive, instrumental, goal/source, quantity and manner. There are two additional phrases that can occur at either the beginning or the end of a clause, with the beginning usually preferred. These are time and conditional phrases.

Particles are the final element of a sentence. They can make the sentence a command or question or they can express the speaker's attitude. Each particle has several shades of meaning and they are best learned by listening to how native speakers use them.

More complicated than basic sentences are complex sentences which contain more than one clause. A complex sentence can be either marked or unmarked. A marked complex sentence uses a conjunction to join two clauses which follow the rules for basic sentences. Most conjunctions occur between the two clauses that they join but there are a few special conjunctions that occur after the subject of the second clause. Conjunctions can also be used to form a complex noun phrase.

An unmarked complex sentence uses several verbs in a row. It is easy to confuse compound verbs with unmarked complex sentences. Compound



verbs, which are formed by joining two verbs, cannot be considered a type of complex sentence as there is only one clause involved. The string of verbs in an unmarked complex sentence may be subordinate to each other or describing a series of actions. Sometimes a string of verbs will be quite long with some of the verbs being compound verbs while others are subordinate and still others describe a series of actions.

The last section of this paper contains several sentences which do not follow the rules given in the rest of the paper. They include causative, impersonal, and *other*. Both causative and impersonal are frequently used while the sentences listed in other are more infrequent.

## Appendix A The writing system of Lao

The Lao writing system is completely regular. A word is spelled exactly how it is pronounced. In order to read Lao, the sound for each letter in the Lao script must be learned and the rules for determining tone must be memorized.

### Vowels

Lao vowels can be placed in several different positions in relationship to the consonant. In the chart below, an x is used to stand for the consonant. Lao has both long and short vowels. In this chart, the long and short vowels are placed next to each other for ease of describing the sound that they make. For some of the vowels, there is a different symbol when it occurs in a syllable with a final consonant. These symbols are listed under "closed".

Phonetic symbol	Sound	Short		Long	
		open	closed	open	closed
i	see	$\tilde{x}$	$\tilde{x}$	$\tilde{x}$	$\tilde{x}$
e	may	$\text{ixe}$	$\text{ixx}$	$\text{ix}$	$\text{ix}$
ɛ	cat	$\text{axɛ}$	$\text{axx}$	$\text{ax}$	$\text{ax}$
ɨ	leaded	$\tilde{x}$	$\tilde{x}$	$\tilde{x}$	$\tilde{x}$
ə	her	$\tilde{x}$	$\tilde{x}$	$\tilde{x}$	$\tilde{x}$
a	father	$xɛ$	$\tilde{x}$	$x\eta$	$x\eta$
u	blue	$x$	$x$	$x$	$x$
o	go	$\text{ixɛ}$	$\tilde{x}$	$\text{ix}$	$\text{ix}$
ɔ	law	$\text{ix}\eta$	$x\tilde{o}x$	$\dot{x}$	$x\tilde{o}x$
iə	Leah	$\tilde{x}\text{e}$	$\tilde{x}\text{jx}$	$\text{ixe}$	$x\text{jx}$

Phonetic symbol	Sound	Short		Long	
		open	closed	open	closed
iə		ເືອ	ເືອ	ເືອ	ເືອ
uə	<u>doer</u>	ໄວຍ	ໄວຍ	ໄວ	ໄວຍ
ai	<u>by</u>	ໄຍ / ໄຍ			
au	<u>cow</u>	ເວາ			
am	<u>sum</u>	ຊໍາ			

Vowels

### Consonants

The consonants are divided into three classes. These classes are important for the tone rules, so must be learned along with the sound. In this chart the phonetic symbol comes first. Next is an English word with a similar sound underlined. Then comes the Lao symbol placed in the right class.

Phonetic symbol	Sound	Consonant class		
		ກາງ	ຕໍ່າ	ສງ
p	<u>p</u> in		ຟ	ຜ
t	<u>t</u> ea		ທ	ຖ
k	<u>k</u> id		ຄ	ຂ
f	<u>f</u> an		ຟ	ຝ
s	<u>s</u> ee		ຊ	ສ
h	<u>h</u> ot		ຫ	ຮ
m	<u>m</u> an		ມ	ຫມ
n	<u>n</u> ot		ນ	ຫນ
	<u>c</u> anyon (like Spanish ñ)		ຍ	ຫຍ

Phonetic symbol	Sound	Consonant class		
		ກາງ	ຕ່ຳ	ສູງ
ŋ	song		ງ	ຫງ
l	lid		ລ	ຫລ
w/v	west/vest		ວ	ຫວ
b	big	ບ		
p	split	ປ		
d	dog	ດ		
t	stone	ຕ		
k	skid	ກ		
tʃ	jaw	ຈ		
j	yawn	ຢ		
ʔ	_air (catch of air before vowel)	ອ		

Consonants

**Tone rules**

The tone rules have been placed in a chart so that they are easy to see. In this chart, V stands for a short vowel and VV stands for a long vowel. N is used for any nasal (m, n, ŋ, ɲ) as well as j or w. The symbol K stands for any stop (p, t, k). Items in brackets are optional.

Class	V (K)	VV (N) VN	VVK	with tone mark	
				˥	˨
ກາງ	high	low	low fall	high fall	mid
ຕ່ຳ	mid	high	high fall	high fall	mid
ສູງ	high	rise	low fall	low fall	mid

Tone rules

Appendix B Kinship terms<sup>1</sup>

Term	Father's side	Mother's side
great grandfather	ປຸ່ມອນ	ພໍ່ຕູ້ມ່ອນ
great grandmother	ຍາມອນ	ແມ່ຕູ້ມ່ອນ
grandfather	ປູ່	ພໍ່ຕ້ອຣພໍ່ເຖົ້າ
grandmother	ຍ່າ	ແມ່ຕ້ອຣແມ່ເຖົ້າ
uncle	* ລຸງ	ລຸງ
(older than parent)		
(by marriage)	ລຸງເຂີຍ	ລຸງເຂີຍ
(younger than parent)	ອາວ	ນາບາວ
(by marriage)	ອາວເຂີຍ	ນາເຂີຍ
aunt		
(older than parent)	* ປ້າ	ປ້າ
(by marriage)	ປ້າໃໝ່	ປ້າໃໝ່
(younger than parent)	ອາ	ນ້າສາວ
(by marriage)	ອາໃໝ່	ນ້າໃໝ່

Term	Older	Younger
brother	* ອາຍ	ນ້ອງຊາຍ
(by marriage)	ອາຍເຂີຍ	ນ້ອງເຂີຍ
sister	* ເອີ້ຍ	ນ້ອງສາວ
(by marriage)	ເອີ້ຍໃໝ່	ນ້ອງໃໝ່
cousin	ຫລານ	ຫລານ

Starred items ( \* ) mark kinship terms frequently used as a second person pronoun. For a younger person, ນ້ອງ "younger sibling" is often used.

Term	Biological	By Marriage
father	ພໍ່	ພໍ່ (husband) ພໍ່ເຖົ້າ (wife)
mother	ແມ່	ແມ່ຍາ (husband) ແມ່ເຖົ້າ (wife)
son	ລູກ	ລູກເຂຍ
daughter	ລູກ	ລູກໃພ້
grandchild / nephew / niece	* ຫລານ	
great-grandchild	ຫລານ	
great-great-grandchild	ຫລອນ	
father of child's spouse	ພໍ່ຄອງ	
mother of child's spouse	ແມ່ຄອງ	

### Appendix C Classifiers

The classifiers are grouped according to the type of noun they are used with. Some classifiers could be included in more than one group, but have only been listed under the most important one. The classifiers listed under places can be used as both a regular noun and as a classifier as shown in this example:

ເຮືອນ ຂ້ອຍ ມີ ຫ້ອງ ສາມ ຫ້ອງ.  
house I have room three room  
My house has three rooms.

### People and Animals

ຄົນ	person	ທານ	respected person
ອົງ	Buddhist monk	ຮູບ, ຮູປ	Buddhist monk
ກຸ່ມ	group, party	ຫນວດ	team, group, unit, band
ຫມ	squad, group	ຕົວ	animal, clothing
ໄຕ	animal, insect, bird, card, clothing		

### Places

ທີ່ງ	rice field	ໄຮ່	worked rice field
ບ່ອນ	place	ແຫ່ງ	place
ຫ້ອງ	room	ຫລັງ	building

Starred items ( \* ) mark kinship terms frequently used as a second person pronoun. For a younger person, the "younger sibling" is often used.

Plants

ຫວີ	hand of bananas	ແຫນາບ	rolled banana leaves
ກະຈຸກ	tuft, branch	ກໍ	clump of grass, banana tree, bamboo
ກີກ	tree	ຕົ້ນ	tree
ດົມ	log	ທຸ່ມ, ທຸ່ມ	bush
ເຄືອ	vine	ໃບ	leaf, hat, plate, round object
ດອກ	flower, key	ຫມາກ	fruit
ເມັດ	seed, medicine, precious stone		

Measurement

ກຳ	handful	ຫອບ	armful
ກັບ	box	ແອບ	box, carton
ຫໍ່	parcel, package	ຮີ່	package (except cigarettes)
ຫໍ່ຍ່ຽມ	small package	ກອງ	stack or pile of objects
ມັດ	bundle, bunch	ລົມ	bundle, cylindrical objects
ແກ້ວ	bottle	ຫອນ	piece
ຊຸດ	suit, set	ຄູ່	pair of something
ຫລາ	yard	ໂຫລ	dozen
ພັນ/ຫັນ	roll, thousand		



## Objects

ເລກ	telegram, number	ເຮືອງ	movie, story
ພິມ	history, story	ສະບັບ	letter, document, printed matter
ຫົວ	book, tuber, head	ເຫລັ້ມ	book, boat, plane, pencil
ລ່າ	boat, tubular item	ກະບອກ	tubular item, firearm
ບອກ	artillery, firearm	ຄ້າມ	umbrella, vehicle, fork/spoon, pipe
ຄິດ	spiral object	ກ້ຽວ	twisted object like rope
ເສັ້ນ	road, thread, hair	ດາງ	fishnet
ໄຫມ	cloth, silk	ຜືນ	net, cloth, clothing
ແມ່	joists	ຕອນ	cloth, wood/iron piece, meat slice
ຂໍ້	photograph, item	ແຜນ	plank, some flat objects
ດ້າມ	handle	ກ້ອນ	piece of stone/dirt, brick, battery
ວິງ	hoop, ring	ໜ່ວງ	cloud, fruit, unit, breast, button
ຄາບ	meal	ນວງ	fruit, egg, furniture
ປຸງງ	wax cakes, tablets	ປັງ	splinter, fuse
ຮ່າ	rolled up article	ມ້ວນ	cigarette, rolled article
ທາດ	mine	ບາດ	sound of shot, bell, gong
ຫີບ	box, suitcase	ຂວດ	bottle
ຫາບ	basket	ອັນ	general
ດວງ	light, star, knife, round/heart shaped		

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