

**1) Reanalysis and realignment of /tɔy/ *finish* used as sentence-final perfective particle.**

Thai, Burmese, and Burma Mon all have broadly similar ways of both connecting sentences and clauses, indicating the perfective aspect using forms of verbs meaning *finish*. In Spoken Burma Mon, this verb cannot finish a sentence without being followed by an “assertive” or “focus” particle /raʔ/. In Thai, however, the verb for *finish* /læ:w/ can close a sentence, and denotes a new situation. We find numerous examples of the Thai Mon following the Thai usage, resulting in sentences that sound incomplete or ungrammatical to Burma Mons, but which appear to parallel the Thai usage of introducing a new situation.

1a. Prachern 82<sup>1</sup>  
 mèa rehane kɔ caw tɔi  
 Thai k<sup>h</sup>un.ya: uayp<sup>h</sup>ɔn hây lâ:n lă:w  
 grandmother pray GIVE grandchild FIN<sup>2</sup>  
*Grandmother already prayed for the grandchild(ren).*

The Burma Mon equivalent must have /raʔ/ to be understood in this sense:

mɪʔ.nɔk rɛətəŋɛ kɑ cao tɔy raʔ  
 mother pray GIVE grandchild FIN FOC.

1b. Prachern 84  
 tɛʔ tət hlən tɔi  
 Thai nɔ:ŋ nɔ:n lap lă:w  
 younger.sibling sleep be.asleep FIN  
*(My) younger sibling is already asleep, already sleeping.*

1c. Panpot 123  
 ceaʔ tɔi  
 Thai kin lă:w  
 eat FIN  
*(I've) already eaten, or, (We've) started eating [new situation].*

1d. Bang Khanmak, interview  
 ɲɛh c<sup>h</sup>at ʔa tɔy hə seŋʔ  
 3 die go FIN, NEG correct?  
*S/he's dead, isn't s/he? or S/he died, didn't s/he?*

**2) Reanalysis of /(<sup>ə</sup>)k<sup>h</sup>ɔ, (<sup>ə</sup>)k<sup>h</sup>ɔ/ *while* to indicate action-in-progress.**

Burmese, Thai, and Mon all have similar strategies to convey the idea of action-in-progress or “present progressive.” Burmese and Burma Mon place the verb *be*, in Mon /mɔŋ/ after the main verb, while Thai has two strategies: placing the particle /kamləŋ/ before the verb, or placing the verb /yù:/ *stay* after the phrase. In Thai, both may also be combined. Of further interest is that the Thai form is said to be a very recent creation to translate the English present progressive.

<sup>1</sup> Transcriptions from Thai sources largely follow the original transcription of Mon, with a very few minor differences – no attempt has been made to “standardize” them. Examples from interviews and from Burma Mon follow a modified version of Shorto’s transcription scheme. See final page for references.

<sup>2</sup> Words that are capitalized have been grammaticalized. Abbreviations: DEIC *deictic*; DUR *durative* or *progressive*; FIN abbreviation for FINISH, acting as a conjunction; FOC for *focus* particle; HON = honorific; INT *intensifier*; IRR and REAL for *irrealis* and *realis*; NEG *negative*; REL *relative*; TOP *topic*; a period between two words reflects that they are equivalent to one word in the other language; = indicates that one unit contains a combination of fused meaningful units. Numbers followed by S or P indicate pronouns: 1P is the *first person plural*.

In Thai Mon, we find a reinterpretation of Mon / $(ə)k^{h_3}$ ,  $(ə)k^{h_4}$ / *while*, which Burma Mon speakers only use in subordinate clauses. Speakers of Thai Mon have reinterpreted this particle, placed before the verb, to parallel the use of Thai *kamlaj*. Perhaps the position of this particle before the main verb made it “ripe” to be reinterpreted, although the positioning of the subject has been moved in Thai Mon.

2a. Prachern 84

	tèʔ	ʔakhəw tət	hlən
Thai	nó:ŋ	kamlaj nɔ:n	láp
	younger.sibling	DUR sleep	be.asleep
	<i>Younger sibling is sleeping.</i>		

Contrast with Burma Mon, where:

$k^{h_3}$	təʔ	tɔik	məŋ.....
while	younger.sibling	sleep	DUR
<i>while younger brother was sleeping....</i>			

2b. Panpot 98

	mɛ:	ʔakə:w	chu:	lət
Thai	mê:	kamlaj	k <sup>h</sup> ɪan	nəŋsǔ
	mother	DUR	write	book <sup>3</sup>
	<i>Mother is writing.</i>			

In Burma Mon, this would be a clause:

ʔək <sup>h</sup>	mɪʔ	c <sup>h</sup> u	məŋ	lɔik.....
while	mother	write	DUR	book
<i>while mother was writing...</i>				

To convey the idea of the Thai and the Thai Mon:

mɪʔ	c <sup>h</sup> u	məŋ	lɔik
mother	write	DUR	letter
<i>Mother is writing a letter, Mother is writing.</i>			

### 3) Relativizers

Unlike either Thai or Burmese, spoken Burma Mon has no relativizing particle. The native particle / $mɛʔ$ / is preserved only in Literary Mon and may be used in formal speech. The normal colloquial strategy is place head and attribute side by side, often closing the phrase – particularly if longer – with the combination deictic-topic marker / $kəh$ /. Possibly to fill a “perceived gap” of a form that is prevelant in Thai discourse, Thai Mon speakers have followed different strategies to provide a relativizing particle:

**3a.** Use of /*tam*/. This form is unknown in Burma Mon but found in spoken and written Thai Mon. It appears to be a borrowing of Thai /*ta:m*/ meaning *follow*, but which itself is not used in Thai in this way.

3a1. Panpot 142

	neah	moŋ	hɔi	tam	num	nɔ:m.chuʔ	kla:ŋ
Thai	k <sup>h</sup> ǎw	yù:	bâ:n	t <sup>h</sup> ɪ:	mɪ:	tôn.máy	mâ:k
	3S	live	house	REL	have	tree	many
	<i>She lives in a house with a lot of trees.</i>						

<sup>3</sup> In both Thai and Mon, “book” in this context is a non-specified, “dummy” object of *write*.

3a2.

Panpot 88

hnih.krak tam kata? kala? tɔh ʔa:wa:w ʔu:a  
 Thai p<sup>h</sup>ũ:c<sup>h</sup>a:y t<sup>h</sup>ĩ: sũam sũa pen p<sup>h</sup>ĩ.c<sup>h</sup>a:y c<sup>h</sup>ǎn  
 man REL wear shirt be older.brother 1s

In Burma Mon, this would be:

(bɛəʔ) nih.kraoh (kə)tak lɔ̄ pəla? kɔh tɔh kao<sup>4</sup> ʔoə  
 it<sup>5</sup> man wear PUT shirt DEIC be older.brother 1S

In the Burma Mon version, the clause is closed with the deictic/topic marker and optionally (optimally?) headed with a dummy subject.

**3b** The use of the particle /heaʔ/, sometimes written as /kea/, of unknown origin, although its shape suggests that it is Mon and not Thai.

ʔi:bũ:a chan.du: hnih.pla:y hea? num sokpa:n Panpot 142  
 Thai p<sup>h</sup>ĩ: rák p<sup>h</sup>ũ:c<sup>h</sup>a:y t<sup>h</sup>ĩ: mi: nùat  
 older.sister love young.man<sup>6</sup> REL exist moustache  
*Older sister loves the young man with the moustache.*

**3c** Direct importation of Thai /thii/

kon.klɔ̄ thi p̄ih kɔ̄ ʔoə chɔat tɔi Prachern 162  
 Thai lûkmǎ t<sup>h</sup>ĩ: t<sup>h</sup>ə: hây c<sup>h</sup>ǎn ta:y lǎ:w  
 puppy REL 2S give 1S die FIN  
*The puppy you gave me died, the puppy you gave me is dead already.*

**4) Repositioning and possible reinterpretation of *exist* to mean *possess*.**

As with many other Southeast Asian language, the verb *exist* conveys also the idea of *have, own*. The usage of the verb /mi:/ in Thai may be in the process of grammaticalization to take on such a meaning. In Burmese as well as Burma Mon, the verb “exist” is placed after a noun, and the possessor is usually marked with a locative like *in* or *to*, to render an expression like “in me money exists” to mean “I have money.”

In Thai Mon /num/ *exist* can be positioned in ways that exactly parallel the Thai:

4a.

Yowaluk 73

ʔua num lə:c ka: tah.hakəʔ  
 Thai c<sup>h</sup>ǎn mi: nəŋsũ<sup>7</sup> léʔ dɪnsɔ̄:  
 1S exist book and pencil  
*I have books and pencils.*

In Burma Mon, this sentence would be arranged rather differently:

lɔik ka tɔ.həko nʊm ka ʔoə  
 book with pencil exist with 1S

<sup>4</sup> ʔəwao for “older brother” is also known in Burma.

<sup>5</sup> This noun functions more as a dummy head.

<sup>6</sup> The Thai gloss provided does not exactly match the Mon, which in Burma means *young, unmarried man*.

<sup>7</sup> Yowaluk has glossed this as /pə:kka:/ *pen*, which it clearly cannot be.

/ka/ can be replaced with /pəðə/ *in, at*. The order subject + /nəm / + complement is possible, but the complement must be preceded by /ka:/:

dəh nəm ka sətətə?  
 3S exist with courage  
*She has courage*

4b.

Panpot 103

Thai pea? num sɔ:n mu:a hke:<sup>8</sup>  
 k<sup>h</sup>ǎw mi: ɲən nùŋ bà:t  
 3 exist money one baht  
*He has a baht.*

4c.

Panpot 149

Thai num ko:n ha:  
 mi: lù:k rǔ:, mi: lù:k mǎy  
 exist child INT  
*Do you have children?*

While the other above Thai Mon sentences in this set were generally understandable to Burma Mons, 4c was not. A more natural treatment, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> person arranged topically would be:

(pəh) kon nəm mɔŋ ha  
 2S child exist DUR INT

### 5) Interrogative Strategies

Burmese and Burma Mon share a distinction between relative and absolute questions, each marked by a different sentence final particles, absolute /ha/ and relative /rao/. Question strategies are markedly different in Thai, with particles being used to seek confirmation or indicating an assumption.

In Burma Mon, these particles can be dropped off in certain situations, but their use appears to be very common. In Thai Mon, however, these particles appear with much less frequency, especially the relative question marker, which does not have a direct equivalent in Thai.

**5a.** The particle /ha/ can still mark an absolute question, as in Burma Mon, although the Thai gloss in the following example shows that it could also be interpreted following the Thai meaning.

Thai mɛ: ʔao kəh klə:ŋ ha:  
 mɛ: mǎy dáy ma rǔ  
 mother NEG GET come INT  
*Didn't mother come?*

Panpot 151

**5b.** /ha/ has also come to be reinterpreted to parallel the use of Thai /rǔ:/ meaning, *or*, used both with alternatives and in asking questions based on an assumption:

Thai pih tɛh.cət fa? caŋ ha fa? chun<sup>9</sup>  
 t<sup>h</sup>ə: c<sup>h</sup>ɔ̃:p kɛ:ŋ káy rǔ: kɛ:ŋ núa  
 2S like curry chicken or curry beef  
*Do you like chicken or beef curry?*

Prachern 102

<sup>8</sup> In Burma, this term means *kyat*, the currency of Burma.

<sup>9</sup> The semantics of the Thai Mon seems to follow the Thai, where /núa/, when said in contrast to other meats implies *beef*, whereas in Burma Mon, this term (in Burma Mon pronunciation /p<sup>h</sup>yun/) merely means “meat.”

In Burma Mon, the simple addition of a final /ha/ makes the sentence grammatical, but Burma Mon speakers understand this construction as a parallel alternates, not two alternatives separated by *or*.

5b2

Panpot 212

Thai      ?akhə:n kata:w ca? a: kwi:ka: hkao ?ə:n  
season hot IRR go car body self<sup>10</sup>

Thai      ha: ?a: kwi:.kaləŋ kəh khəh  
rũ pay rót.me      đay di:<sup>11</sup>  
or go bus GET good.

*In the hot season, will it be better to go by car or by bus?*  
*In the hot season, going either by car or by bus is fine.*

**5c.** Thai Mon speakers have developed another strategy, one not found in Burma Mon, to ask absolute question, repeating the main verb in the negative. This strategy neither exactly parallels a Thai usage, nor is it found in Burma Mon, suggesting some kind of transitional strategy.

5c1

Prachern 167

mɛ      cea? pəŋ ha      hɨ? cea?  
mother eat rice INT NEG eat  
*Does mother eat? Is mother eating?*

5c2

Prachern 168

rəh ha      hɨ? rəh kwəŋ nə?  
tasty INT NEG tasty, snack this  
*Is it good, this snack?*

## 6. Areas for Future Work:

Many examples of convergence found in written Thai Mon texts from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century are not present in this small sample of Thai theses. This may reflect the fact that only very short samples of speech have been provided. Further in-depth study of the Mon dialects may hold more surprises.

### 6a. Quotative particle.

Burma Mon, unlike Burmese and Thai, has no particle to mark direct speech. Natural strategies are to preface or close a quotation with a verb of saying. Written Thai Mon sources feature the reinterpretation of [kəh] *say* as a quotation marker.

In his dictionary of Spoken (Thai) Mon, Sakamoto provides such examples as:<sup>12</sup>

na?      ham kəh      tɛh.kəmoik mɨ?.koy kam      Sakamoto 104  
HON say QUOT need what ALSO  
*Please tell me what you want/need.*<sup>13</sup>

I have not yet found evidence of this in the Thai theses, although Sakamoto again has numerous examples.

<sup>10</sup> The English gloss follows the Mon; /ə:n/ (or \*əiŋ in Burma Mon, if it existed) is Thai Mon rendering of Thai /eŋ/ *self*.

<sup>11</sup> Panpot provides a smoother Thai rendering of the sentence, “ฤดูแล้วจะไปรถยนต์สวนตัวหรือรถประจำทางก็ดีทั้งนั้น”

<sup>12</sup> 坂本ヤスユキ、『モン語辞典』(東京:東京外国大学)[Yasuyuki Sakamoto, *Mon-Japanese Dictionary* (Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Languages) 1994. Sakamoto did his research in Thailand and the usage throughout the dictionary clearly reflects Thai Mon, not Burma Mon.

<sup>13</sup> The original gloss is 何がほしいのか言って下さい。



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Umpaporn Sungkaman, *An Analysis of Mon Conversation* (PhD Thesis, Mahidol University) 2006.

Note that all except for Umaporn provide word-for-word Thai glosses of the Mon.

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