The Sentence in Flowery Hmong

Carey McLaughlin
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Abstract

In primarily oral languages, determining sentence divisions in written texts can be challenging. This paper examines linguistic structures which can be used as a basis for dividing sentences in Flowery Hmong (Chuanqiandian Miao). First, elements that mark breaks between sentences are considered, including point of departure, overt change of subject without a disjunctive connector, tail-head linkage, and the end of a direct speech act. This analysis is then followed by an examination of elements that indicate that clauses belong together in complex sentences. Clauses in Hmong can be connected through either grammatical or semantic relationships. Categories of semantic linkage used in Hmong include temporal, consequence, contrastive, additive, and disjunctive. Grammatical relationships include complement clauses and relative clauses. Each type of clausal linkage is analyzed in terms of its function, linguistic markers, clause order, and relationship of focal and supporting clauses.
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Abbreviations

1PL first person plural
1SG first person singular
2PL second person plural
2SG second person singular
3PL third person plural
3SG third person singular
CAUS causative
CLF noun classifier
CMPL compleitive aspect
CMPT complementizer
CNT continuous aspect
CQD Chuanqian Miao orthography
DM development marker
EXCL exclamation
EMP emphatic
FUT future auxiliary
INTJ interjection
LOC locative
NEG negative
OFR object-fronting marker
ORD ordinal number
PFV perfective aspect
PRT particle
REP repeated action
REL relativizer
RPA Romanized Popular Alphabet
SCP scope marker
SFP sentence-final particle
YNQ yes-no question marker
1 Introduction

In languages that are primarily oral and do not have a history of writing, the decision of where to divide sentences in written texts can often be confusing. While some languages have clear grammatical markers for the end of a sentence, such as a grammatical particle or the verb in a verb-final language, in others there are no such indicators (Dixon 2010:133).

For primarily oral languages without sentence-final markers, both native speakers as well as linguists often rely on pauses and intonation in deciding where to write commas and periods. However, this method is not always clear-cut and depends heavily on intuition rather than a scientific method. Sometimes pauses are longer simply because the speaker runs out of breath during a series of clauses within a long sentence. Other times the speaker may be thinking about how best to say something or trying to correct what’s already been said. In tonal languages, intonation can also be a clue but usually plays less of a role than in non-tonal languages.

In such cases, one of the primary clues to sentence division is linkage of clauses. Clauses can be linked semantically, pragmatically, or grammatically. Hmong uses both semantic and grammatical methods to link clauses together to form sentences. There are also a few grammatical clues that can signal breaks between sentences. In this paper, I will present the different signals of sentence breaks as well as the types of interclausal relationships used in Hmong. This will then give a working idea of how to divide sentences in written texts.

2 Method

2.1 Language

The texts used in this study are from two varieties of Hmong, which is part of the Miao-Yao or Hmong-Mien language family. One variety is called Hmong Soud, a language with an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 speakers located in Wenshan and Honghe prefectures of Yunnan Province in Southwest China (McLaughlin 2012:2). The other variety is the “standard” variety of Flowery Hmong. This is an artificial language that is used for official publications and radio broadcasts. It is a standardized form of Flowery Hmong created by scholars based primarily on Hmong Nzuhab as spoken in Wenshan Prefecture and Hmong Lab Hout as spoken in Dananshan village, Guizhou Province. I will henceforth refer to this variety as “Standard Hmong”.

The Hmong language situation is very complex, comprising many different languages and dialects. All varieties of Hmong are considered part of a single “local vernacular” by Chinese linguists. Hmong can be further divided into four branches, one of which is called “Flowery Hmong” (Hua Miao in Chinese) and is classified as a single language in the Ethnologue, “Chuanqianian Cluster Miao” (Lewis et al. 2016). Both Hmong Soud and Standard Hmong are varieties of Flowery Hmong. The grammar of both varieties is virtually identical, as the main difference between varieties of Hmong is primarily lexical and phonological. I noticed no difference between the clausal relationships or sentence divisions in the texts from the two different varieties, thus I am considering them together, since the conclusions apply to both and likely to most varieties of Flowery Hmong. In my examples, I will use the term “Hmong” to refer to both Standard Hmong and Hmong Soud. Occasionally there are lexical or phonetic differences in the relevant markers for clausal relationships between Standard Hmong and Hmong Soud. In those cases, I list both occurrences together with a slash between them.

1 Under the Chinese classification, Hmong varieties are all classified as Chuanqianian Miao dialect, Chuanqianian subdialect, first vernacular.
Hmong is an isolating language that does not use agreement or case marking. Verbal aspect is indicated through the use of aspectual particles or verbal complements. Subject and object are determined primarily by word order, with the default syntax being SVO. Hmong is largely head initial.²

Hmong varieties in China are written with an official orthography developed by the government in the 1950s. This orthography is known by the Chinese name for the dialect cluster, Chuanqianidian Miao, commonly abbreviated CQD. Hmong varieties outside China use a different orthography called the Romanized Popular Alphabet (RPA). All examples in this study are written in the CQD orthography. CQD is a Romanized orthography based on the Chinese Romanization system, Hanyu Pinyin, with tones written as tone letters at the end of the syllable. For more details about the orthography, see the tables in the Appendix.

2.2 Texts

In this study, I analyzed five narrative texts in Standard Hmong and Hmong Soud. The stories were all told orally and then transcribed. “Hangd Sod and Ged Dol” (a retelling of Hansel and Gretel) (HG) and “The Rich Older Brother and the Poor Younger Brother” (DN & GB) are in Standard Hmong. “The Hard-Working Husband” (YN), “The Evil-Hearted Sisters” (SDV), and “The Long-Haired Girl” (NBH) (abbreviated LHG in McLaughlin 2012) are in Hmong Soud.

All five texts were edited by native speakers, including punctuation and sentence division. I also gave the texts to two different literate native speakers without punctuation and asked them to add in the commas and periods. The two speakers did differ slightly in their division of sentences. One preferred to create much longer sentences, linking several clauses with commas. In these cases, she often only used periods in the places where the other speaker used paragraph breaks, but she never put a period in a place where the other speaker had not. For the purposes of this study, I based sentences on the smaller of the two divisions, as this is the minimum unit that is considered to be a sentence. These sentence divisions also matched those in all of my original transcriptions of the texts.

2.3 Sentence

For this study, I will use the basic definition of a sentence as a clause or clauses that are “linked together” (Dixon 2010:132).

2.4 Focal and supporting clauses

In the following analysis, one of the characteristics I observe is whether markers of clausal relationships occur in focal or supporting clauses. In referring to focal versus supporting clauses I use semantic or notional categories rather than purely grammatical, surface-level categories. Thus, the focal clause is the clause that is notionally the focus of the sentence, while the supporting clause is notionally less important to the meaning. The focal clause can also be called the “main” clause, but this can easily be confused for a grammatical rather than semantic category. For this reason, I have followed Dixon (2010:133) in referring to focal clauses instead. In Hmong, in sentences where there is one focal clause (rather than two equal clauses), the final clause is the focal clause, with the previous clause or clauses being supporting.

(1) SUPPORTING
    Uat nangt, hmaot nil mol but,
    this.way night 3sg go sleep

² For a more comprehensive grammatical analysis, see Lyman 1979 (Green Hmong of Southeast Asia), Xiong and Cohen 2005 (Standard Hmong), and McLaughlin 2012 (Hmong Soud).
This sentence in example (1) is from a scene in which a lazy husband decides to sleep in late in order to avoid having to do any work. It describes him going to bed at night as usual, but then, contrary to ordinary practice and expectation, he doesn’t get out of bed in the morning. The main point being communicated in this sentence is that of the second clause, that the man doesn’t get up in the morning; therefore, it is the focal clause. The first clause describes the usual action, thus it merely supports the focal clause by setting up the scene for what follows.

Focal and supporting clauses are not the same as independent and dependent clauses, which are purely grammatical categories. Since these semantic and grammatical categories are not identical, there is often skewing between the notional and surface-level structure. For example, *jeuf*, a sequential conjunction, is often used to mark sequential relationships in Hmong. Though it occurs in the focal clause, that clause is grammatically dependent, since *jeuf* is a connector and is not normally used in a simple sentence with a single clause. 3 Thus, in such instances, the clause with *jeuf* is both focal and dependent, rather than focal and independent. This is partly due to the fact that *jeuf* has both a grammatical function on the sentence level as a connector and a notional function on the discourse level as a development marker. 4 When we consider the grammatical categories of the previous sentence from example (1), we can see that they do not match with the semantic categories:

(2)  
**INDEPENDENT**  
Uat nangt, hmaot nil mol but,  
this.way night 3SG go sleep  
  
**DEPENDENT**  
daik gil nil jeuf zhit sheud.  
next.morning 3SG DM NEG get.up  
’Soo, (that) night he went (to) bed, then in the morning, he didn’t get up.’ (YN)

In (2), the supporting clause is grammatically an independent clause which can stand on its own. However, the second clause, though semantically focal, is grammatically dependent because it cannot be a sentence on its own. Because *jeuf* occurs after the subject rather than in the clause-initial position, it cannot be separated from the rest of the clause like conjunctions can in languages such as English. The clause containing *jeuf* is the focal clause, carrying the main idea of the sentence, but it is not grammatically independent.

### 3 Markers of sentence breaks

Before considering how clauses can be linked together in sentences, we will first examine disjunctive markers which indicate that clauses do not belong together in a single sentence. There are four different methods which can indicate sentences breaks in Hmong: points of departure, overt change of subject without a disjunctive connector, tail-head linkage, and the end of a direct speech act.

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3 Exceptions to this pattern can occur in inciting events and peak episodes in a narrative.

4 Development markers are used on a discourse level to mark developments in a narrative. See Dooley and Levinsohn 2001:93.
3.1 Points of departure

Points of departure are sentence-initial elements which connect what follows with what has been previously mentioned or implied in the text (Dooley and Levinsohn 2001:68). While there are various categories of points of departure, Hmong most frequently uses temporal and spatial points of departure. Since they only occur in the sentence-initial position, the presence of a point of departure always indicates the start of a new sentence.

(3) Dolyuasyoutyayoisibdolncaik,
   CLFchildsmallbeoneCLFlgirl
   dolncaiknatmuaxlobnbethotdakGedDol.
   CLFlgirlthishav CLFnamenbecalledsayGedDol
   Muaxibxongt,dolboxduasleuf,
existoneyearCLFwifediePFV
dolzidjeufmoyuadoutuibdolnafchab.
   CLFFathernatwantCMPloneCLFmothernew
   'The younger child was a girl, this girl had the name Ged Dol. One year, the wife died, then the
   father went (and) married a new mother.' (HG 1)

In example (3), though there is continuity, there is also a distinct break between the two sentences. The first sentence is the end of the introduction, while the point of departure Muax ib xongt 'One year', is the start of the first episode. The temporal disjunction indicates that the previous clause introducing the girl's name belongs to a different sentence (and paragraph) than what follows.

Spatial points of departure function in the same way as temporal points of departure, showing both continuity and discontinuity with the previous sentence, as in (4):

(4) Nilbuajeufzaoxndaiflobshuabndondt,
   3PLDMfollowCLFsoundchoptree
   molntraddolzid.
golook.forCLFFather
   Molzosdaofitnat,
   goarriveover.therePRT
   zhidoutuasyaboshuabndondt,od!
   NEGbesoundchoptreeEXCL
   yaosaobdoljesndoltshikzhongtekndraod.
   betwoCLFbranchmutuallyknockADDmakesound
   'So they followed the sound (of) chopping wood (and) went (to) look for their father. (When they)
   arrived over there, (they found that it) wasn’t (the) sound (of) chopping wood, (it) was two
   branches knocking against each other and making sound.' (HG 2)

In example (4), the spatial point of departure Mol zos daof it nat, '(When they) arrived over there' connects the two sentences, showing the continuity in the events. Since it can only occur in the sentence-initial position, it cannot be part of the previous sentence but signals the beginning of a new sentence.
3.2 Overt change of subject without a contrastive connector

Hmong often uses pro-drop, leaving the subject unstated when it is already understood from the context (McLaughlin 2012:61). Overt subjects, especially full nouns, occur frequently but not exclusively in sentence-initial clauses. Change in subject normally indicates a new sentence, as in example (5) below:

(5) Dif erf dait gil sheud nzod
ORD two morning early.morning

dol zid sangt nil buab mol ndroux rongd.
CLF father send.off 3pl. go abandon.in.the.woods

Dol nol ib get mol ged ib get dlet njuad
CLF brother SIM walk SIM break.off unleavened.bread

zhaoit drouit shouit ged
put LOC on path

guak nil boub ged draod ghagb lol zhed.
CAUS 3SG know path return come home

‘Early the next morning, the father accompanied them (to) go abandon (them) in the woods. The brother walked while breaking off bread (and) putting (the crumbs) on the path (to) help him know (the) path (to) go back home.’ (HG 2)

The father is the subject of the first sentence in (5), and the brother the subject of the second sentence. The shift in subject without a connector linking them together is an indication of a sentence break. Shifts in subject do occur within a sentence using connectors, which will be discussed in section 4.4.

3.3 Tail-head linkage

Tail-head linkage is a device used in many languages to create cohesion within a text. In tail-head linkage, the verb and often additional elements from the previous sentence are repeated in the next sentence (Dooley and Levinsohn 2001:16). Since the head always occurs at the beginning of a sentence, its presence is a signal of a sentence break.

(6) Zos dif aob gab,
arrive ORD two week

Gud Bluas zhas jangb dreuad dol blik
poor.younger.brother again lead.with.rope CNT CLF wildcat

mol daof ged uat shit.
go over.there road play

Uat uat shit, jeuf bof muax ib dol yeus Shuad
play (repeated) DM see exist one CLF man Chinese

5 Tail-head linkage is actually a special type of point of departure (Levinsohn 2011:45-46), though here I have treated it as a separate category.
yuad mol gangd gab.
want go go.to.market
‘The second week, the poor younger brother again led the wildcat on a rope over by the road (to) play. (After) playing (for a while), (he) saw a Chinese man carrying a load (of) cloth on (his) shoulder cross (the) road, wanting (to) go to market.’ (DN & GB 3)

In example (6), the repetition of the verb uat shit ‘to play’ is a form of tail-head linkage. The sentences break between the tail (uat shit) and the head (uat uat shit).

3.4 End of a direct speech act

One of the most obvious indicators of a new sentence is when a character’s direct speech ends. The shift to subsequent action or the beginning of a different character’s speech signals the beginning of a new sentence (and often a new paragraph). Example (7) has three separate sentences, with the sentence breaks signaled by change in speaker and shift from direct speech to narration.

(7) Nil naf jeuf dak:
3SG mother DM say

“Gaox uat jangl uat qif uat luax gat?”
2SG why be.depressed to.such.an.extent

“Od hnob nangt mol bof ib dol naf bos
1SG day this go see one CLF grandmother
congx dleb dleb nit gud dlex lol,
from far far PRT carry.on.the.shoulder water come
ghous ib naf nzheuf,
fall.down one big fall
dlex nquad dangl,
water spill CMPL
beb raol dex nenb duas dangl.”
2PL village CLF person die CMPL

Nil qif, nil zhit naox maot, zhit houd dlex.
3SG be.depressed 3SG NEG eat rice NEG drink water
‘Then her mother said, “Why are you so depressed?” “Today I saw a grandmother carrying water from far away, (she) fell down, the water spilled completely, (and) the people of our village (will) all die.” She was depressed; she didn’t eat, didn’t drink.’ (LHG 2-3)

6 The reduplication of uat in the head indicates that the action is repeated over a period of time.
This example is part of a conversation between a girl and her mother. Making the two sentence divisions here is fairly straightforward. The third line switches from the mother’s question to the daughter’s response, making it obvious that the sentence ends after the mother’s question. Then in the final line, the narration resumes once the girl has finished speaking, requiring another sentence break after the direct speech ends.7

4 Semantic relationships

Now that we have seen how breaks between sentences can be signaled, we will look at how clauses are connected together into a single sentence.

When two or more clauses are semantically linked in a single sentence, the speaker makes some kind of mental association that relates these clauses to one another. There is also often some type of structural marking in one or both of the clauses that confirms this relationship. Dixon has identified five types of semantic linkage that may be present in a given language: temporal, consequence, addition, contrast, and disjunction (2010:134-136). Hmong uses all five of these categories.

4.1 Temporal linkage

With clauses that are temporally linked, some element of time connects the two clauses together. Temporal relationships can include sequential and simultaneous clauses, as well as conditional.

4.1.1 Simultaneous clauses

Simultaneous clauses are those in which two events are portrayed as occurring at the same time. In Hmong, when the two actions are performed by the same subject, the relationship is grammatically marked by the phrase \textit{ib get} before the verb in each clause, as shown below:

(8) \begin{center}
Dol \quad nol \quad \textbf{ib get} \quad mol \quad ged, \\
CLF \quad brother \quad SIM \quad walk
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{ib get} \quad dlet \quad njuad \quad zhaot \quad drout \quad shout \quad ged \\
SIM \quad break.off \quad unleavened.cake \quad place \quad LOC \quad on \quad path
\end{center}

‘The brother walked while breaking off (pieces of) unleavened cake (and) placing (them) on the road…’ (HG 2)

The brother in example (8) is performing two actions at the same time: walking and breaking off pieces of bread. The use of \textit{ib get SIMULTANEOUS} in both clauses marks the actions as happening simultaneously. Both clauses are focal and of equal importance.

When the actions or situations involve different subjects, \textit{touk} ‘time, when’ is commonly used to show a simultaneous relationship, as below:

(9) \begin{center}
\textbf{Touk} \quad guk \quad yuad \quad zhouk \quad ndox, \\
when \quad REL \quad about.to \quad dark \quad sky
\end{center}

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7 The beginning of a conversation is not usually marked by a sentence break, since the first speech act in a conversation normally begins with a quotation formula, which may or may not be linked with the previous clause.
When it was about to get dark, they saw that there was a small house over there. (HG 3)

In (9), *touk* ‘time, when’ occurs in the supporting clause, showing that the event described in the following clause occurs at the same time as the situation in the first clause. The supporting clause sets the time frame for the focal event of the two children seeing the house.

Sometimes there is no grammatical marker for a simultaneous relationship:

(10) Hmaot gat xik dol zaid mol nuaf,
    night that lead CLF father go look
    dol zaid drout ngeuf shued haix ndraod ndraod nit mol.
    CLF father wear pair rainboots noisy noisy PRT go
    ‘That night, (when she) took her father (to) go look, her father (was) wearing (a) pair of very noisy rainboots (to) go.’ (SDV 4)

In this sentence, the father is wearing rainboots at the same time as he goes to look in the cowpen. Both clauses are focal and of equal importance. Yet the two clauses are simply juxtaposed, leaving listeners and readers to deduce the simultaneous relationship from the content alone.

### 4.1.2 Sequential clauses

In narrative texts, sequential relationships are very common. They are used to show that one event follows another event. Hmong has several methods for grammatically marking sequential relationships. The most basic is to connect the clauses with the sequential conjunction *jeuf* ‘and then’. *Jeuf* follows the subject in the second clause:

(11) Hmaot gat dol ncaik nyaob nyaob,
    night that CLF girl sit sit
    dol ncaik *jeuf* mol nuaf.
    CLF girl DM go look
    ‘That night, the girl sat for a while, then the girl went (to) look.’ (SDV 3)

In (11), *jeuf* is used in the focal clause to express that the girl’s action of going to look takes place after her sitting.

Another way of expressing sequential relationships is to use a perfective marker in the supporting clause, as shown in (12):

(12) Dol ncaik hlob lox dad ncaik *lak*,
    CLF girl grow.up become girl/young.woman PFV
    nil naf hab nil zaid menk
    3SG mother and 3SG father SCP

    hend nuaf drous ib dol hluak
    very take.a.fancy.to one CLF young.person
    ‘After/once the girl grew up (and) became (a) young woman, her mother and father took a fancy to a young man...’ (YN)
In example (12), the lak perfective marker is used to show that the action in the initial clause, the girl growing up, precedes the action in the following clause, the parents becoming interested in a young man for her to marry. In this type of sequential relationship, the supporting clause with the perfective action always precedes the focal clause.

Dangt is another perfective marker used only in Hmong Soud. It can also be used to show a sequential relationship between two clauses:

(13) rongx bof
see
dol nyuas bux jeuf muab paob deut nyongx hlet hlaot dangt, nyongs
CLF male.calf DM OFR CLF skin cow take.off at.once PFV
yaos ib dol nyuas hluak rongt rongt ngoux shangb
be one CLF child young beautiful extremely
‘...(she) saw the calf take off the cow hide, (then he) became an extremely handsome young man...’ (SDV 3)

In (13), dangt is used in the supporting clause to show that the calf's removal of his hide takes place prior to the revelation of him as a handsome young man.

Sometimes a perfective marker occurs together with the jeuf sequential marker, as in (14):

(14) Dol naf box duas leuf,
CLF old.woman die PFV
dol ncaik jeuf ntrad dout yof shix lol kheb lob nzhol
CLF girl DM find CMPL key come open CLF lock
jat dol nol deuf lol.
allow CLF brother go.out come
‘After the old woman died, the girl found (the) key (to) open the lock (and) allow the brother (to) come out.’ (HG 4)

In (14), the perfective leuf occurs in the first clause, which is the supporting clause, while the jeuf sequential connector occurs in the second clause, which is the focal clause. Together, the two mark the sequential order of events, with the old woman's death followed by unlocking the door to set the brother free.

Like perfective particles, a completive particle can also be used to mark a sequential relationship between clauses, as shown in (15):

(15) Haik dangl,
speak CMPL
dol Nzhao Nbol jeuf haik dak
CLF Nzhao Nbol DM say
‘After (he) finished speaking, Nzhao Nbol said...’ (DN & GB 3)

8 Standard Hmong has two different perfective markers, leuf and lak, and Hmong Soud also has a third, dangt. The differences in meaning and usage between these three particles are unclear.
In (15), the *dangl* completive particle marks that the previous character finished speaking before Nzhaos Nbol started to talk, showing the sequential relationship between the two clauses. The *jeuf* sequential conjunction also reinforces this relationship. The first clause with *dangl* is secondary in importance, supporting the main action of the focal clause containing *jeuf*.

Another sequential marker is *cax nit* / *cax let* ‘only then’:

(16) Dol yeus ib zhix daol zos gangx ndos nit touk,
\[ \text{CLF husband continually wait until daylight time} \]

dol yeus cax nit mol hot nil sheud.
\[ \text{CLF husband only.then go call 3sg get.up} \]

‘The husband continually waited until daylight, only then did he call her (to) get up.’ (YN)

In example (16), *cax nit* is used in the focal clause to show that only after daylight comes does the husband wake up his wife.

Additionally, sequential relationships can be shown with simple juxtaposition of clauses:

(17) Naox zhout houk ghous,
\[ \text{eat full drink be.drunk} \]

dol dix lous Dix Nbol nos dak...
\[ \text{CLF older.brother Dix Nbol ask say} \]

‘(Once he had) eaten (and) drunk (his) fill, the older brother Dix Nbol asked...’ (DN & GB 5)

In (17), there is no grammatical marking of the relationship between the clauses. They are grammatically linked through a shared subject, ‘the older brother Dix Nbol’, but this connection tells nothing about what type of relationship the clauses have.9 The relationship can only be understood semantically through the contents of the two juxtaposed clauses: the brother finishes eating and drinking before speaking, showing a sequential relationship in which the first clause is supporting and the second clause focal. Similarly:

(18) Zaid haik dak
\[ \text{father say} \]

zhit muax dob tab zaid gud vongf,
\[ \text{NEG exist son with father carry.on.shoulder plow} \]

nyuas bux nyongs tab zaid gud vongf draod lol...
\[ \text{male.calf with father carry.on.shoulder plow return come} \]

‘(When) Father said there was no one to carry (the) plow with Father, (then the) calf carried (the) plow back with Father.’ (SDV 6)

Again, in (18), the two clauses are simply juxtaposed, though unlike in (17), there is no shared argument grammatically connecting the clauses. Only context tells the listeners that the second event, the calf carrying the plow, follows after the first event of the father saying he wishes he had a son to carry it for him. In such cases where there is no grammatical marking of the sequential relationship, the action in the first clause often contains a notional sense of completion.

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9 Shared arguments are one way of grammatically identifying clauses which belong to the same sentence (Cumming 84:367).
In the preceding examples, the sequential relationship expresses the concept of ‘after’, with the first event occurring in the initial clause. This is the most common type of sequential relationship in Hmong. In such cases, as seen in the examples above, the initial clause is the supporting clause, and the second clause is the focal clause.

Sentences with the event described in the initial clause occurring later in time are much less common but also used. There were no clear examples of this construction in the texts I studied for this paper, but it is occasionally used in other texts. In such cases, the sequential relationship is often expressed by using a negative such as *hax zhit dout* ‘not yet’ in the supporting clause, as in (19):

(19) Go cax jangb jangb mol zos ib ndangt gid,
     1SG only just go to halfway
     *hax zhit dout* drik mol zos lob qeut muas roub let touk,
     not.yet carry.on.back go to CLF vegetable.market PRT when
     god draod ghous lak ib bluad,
     1SG again fall.down PFV once

‘(When) I had only just gone halfway, when I hadn’t yet carried (it) to the vegetable market, I fell down once again.’

The negative ‘hadn’t yet carried (it)’ in the second clause of (19) shows the time sequence of the events in the sentence, that falling down occurs before the supporting event of arriving at the market.

### 4.1.3 Conditional relationships

Conditional relationships can be considered a subcategory or extension of temporal relationships (Dixon 2010:135). Structures that convey the meaning that a certain event must occur before another event can occur have a temporal aspect to them. This is a common structure in Hmong, as in:

(20) Guak gao x hot ngoux,
     command 2SG sing
     gaox jeuf hot ngoux lak max.
     2SG DM sing SFP SFP

‘(When/if) I tell you (to) sing, then you sing.’ (DN & GB 6)

As shown in the free translation of (20), the clausal relationship expressed in this sentence can be one of time ‘when’ or condition ‘if’. The result occurs in the focal clause and is marked with *jeuf*, which can be used in both sequential and conditional sentences.

Additionally, Hmong also has conditional constructions that are not temporal. These structures are commonly marked by *yaos* or *yaos dak* ‘if’ plus the particle *nangt* in the supporting clause (McLaughlin 2012:81).

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10 This example is from the text “Nzeuf Ghous Ib Bluad”, which was originally recorded in another Flowery Hmong variety but here has been edited to Standard Hmong.
(21) **Yaos** nil zhit zeux hot **nangt,**
if 3SG NEG be.able sing PRT
gas nil kuangd rangx douf dlangd douf beb nongs.
command 3SG tell CLF story to 2PL listen
‘If he can’t sing, make him tell us a story.’ (SDV 5)

In example (21), there is no temporal relationship between the clauses, only a purely conditional one: if the boy can’t sing, he should tell a story.
Sometimes the **yaos** ‘if’ is left out of conditional constructions:

(22) **Nil** haik las,
3SG say other.person

nil nchait
3SG fear

dol dlangb Juat Dlob gat jeuf muab nil xik mol leuf.
CLF spirit Juat Dlob that DM OFR 3SG carry go PFV
‘(If) she told other people, she was afraid that spirit Juat Dlob would carry her (away).’ (NBH 1)

In this case, there is no overt marking of the conditional relationship between the clauses. Only context tells the readers or listeners that the girl’s telling other people is a condition that would lead to the spirit taking her away.

4.2 **Consequence relationships**

Clauses that have a consequence relationship express the idea of reason, purpose or result (Dixon 2010:136).

4.2.1 **Clauses with purpose or result markers**

Universally, purpose markers are more common than reason markers (Dixon 2010:136). Hmong has a few markers used in purpose or result clauses. One of these is **guak/gas** ‘so that, in order that’:

(23) Lol, god jat mex nyaob haod nad,
come 1SG allow 2PL be.at here

god muab cuat yangf cuat zhangd dongb xib drout mex naox
1SG take every.kind thing to 2PL eat

**guak** mex mangx mangf let draos deuf duax.
so.that 2PL slowly PRT fat go.out come
‘Come, I’ll let you stay here, (and) I’ll give you every kind (of) thing (to) eat so that you slowly fatten up.’ (HG 3)

In (23), **guak** ‘so that’ is used in the focal clause to express the purpose behind the old woman’s actions: she will give them lots of food in order to fatten them up.

**Jat** ‘allow’ is used in a similar way:

(24) dol ncaik jeuf ntrad dout yof shix lol kheb lob nzhol
CLF girl DM find CMPL key come open CLF lock
jat dol nol deuf lol.
allow CLF brother go.out come
‘...the girl found (the) key (and) opened the lock, (in order to) allow the brother (to) come out.’ (HG 4)

In example (24), jat is used in the focal clause to express the idea that the purpose for the girl unlocking the door is to let her brother come out.

Jeuf can also be used to mark a result clause:

(25) nyuas bux nyongs nchait duas,
male.calf fear die
nyuas bux nyongs jeuf zhid mol
male.calf DM flee go

tab Nzux Nyongs Loul yis ncaik nzeuf uat get
with Nzux Nyongs Loul family youngest.daughter together
‘...(the) calf was afraid (to) die, (so) the calf ran away (and stayed) with Nzux Nyongs Loul’s youngest daughter...’ (SDV 6)

In (25), jeuf is used in the focal clause to show that the calf’s running away was a result of his fear of dying.¹¹

4.2.2 Clauses with reason markers

Due to Chinese influence, Hmong also has markers for reason. Sometimes the Chinese word is directly borrowed (yenb wef ‘because’)¹²; other times a calque wef dak ‘because’ is used instead.

(26) Dangb shik dol naf lob shab langx langx nyaob tab nbout nbout deul
but CLF mother CLF liver very.sad and very.angry

yenb wef nil sangd jaox aob dol nyuas nat mol ndroux rongt
because 3SG want carry two CLF child this go abandon.in.the.woods
dangb shik zhit dout ndroux chenx
but NEG abandon succeed

ek lob shab zhit rongt nyaob.
ADD CLF liver NEG comfortable

‘But the mother’s heart (lit. liver) was very sad and very angry because she wanted to take the two children and abandon (them) in the woods, but she didn’t succeed (in) abandoning (them), and her heart was uncomfortable.’ (HG 2)

¹¹ Hmong has additional purpose or result markers that are used to show consequence relationships between sentences, rather than clauses. These include uat nat/nangt ‘in this way’, uat gat ‘in that way’ and uat let/ uat nit ‘so, therefore’.

¹² From Mandarin 因为 yinwei.
Here *yenb wef* ‘because’ is used in a supporting clause in example (26) to show that the reason the stepmother is sad and angry is because she wanted to abandon the children, but they returned safely home. Because the reason is so long, the result is stated both before and after the reason in an inclusio.\(^\text{13}\)

Another marker of reason clauses is *uat luax nat* ‘so much that, to the extent that’:

(27) Ga ox zid, *beb uat nen* \(^\) \(\text{x} \) zaof nyef \(\text{uat} \) luax nat  
2\text{SG} father 1\text{PL} live pitiful to\text{such.an.extent} 

\(\text{nchait} \) *beb yuad zhof muab aob dol nyuas nat*  
be\text{afraid} 1\text{PL} must \text{OFR two CLF child this} 

\(\text{jaox} \) mol ndroux rongt.  
carry go abandon\text{in.the.woods}  
‘Father, our lives are so pitiful (that I’m) afraid we must take these two children (and) abandon (them) in the woods.’ (HG 1)

*Uat luax nat* occurs in the supporting clause of (27), giving the family’s extreme poverty as the reason for abandoning the children.

### 4.2.3 Unmarked consequence clauses

The vast majority of consequence clauses in Hmong are grammatically unmarked. The clauses are simply juxtaposed, and the relationship between them is purely semantic. In such cases, the reason normally occurs in the initial, supporting clause, with the result in the second clause, which is focal.

(28) God hlob god aob dol nyuas dek hend,  
1\text{SG} love 1\text{SG} two CLF child ADV very 

\(\text{god} \) \(\text{zhit} \) zeux \(\text{muab} \) \(\text{nil buab} \) \(\text{laif ndrof} \) \(\text{let.} \)  
1\text{SG} NEG be\text{able} \text{OFR} 3\text{PL} get\text{rid.of} \text{PRT}  
‘I love my two children very much, I can’t get rid of them.’ (HG 1)

In example (28), context helps the reader understand that the father’s love for his children is the reason that he cannot abandon them, even though there are no markers showing this relationship.

Short commands are an exception to the default order, since the command precedes the reason:

(29) Zhit \(\text{nchait}, \)  
\text{NEG be.afraid} 

\(\text{god} \) boub ged mol zhed.  
1\text{SG} know path go house  
‘Don’t be afraid, I know (the) way (to) go home.’ (HG 1)

Here, the command to not be afraid occurs in the initial, supporting clause, while the reason occurs in the following clause.

\(^\text{13}\) Note that the normal clause order for reason and result clauses is for the result to follow the reason. When the speaker wants to make the reason focal, the order can be reversed. With a long reason as in this example, an inclusio form is used to restate the result and keep it focal.
4.3 Additive relationships

In additive relationships, two clauses are linked by simple addition. The clauses have equal importance semantically, rather than one clause being focal and the other supporting. In Hmong, one of the most common ways to show an additive relationship between clauses is through the use of the additive connector *ek*:

(30) “Naf hab zaid, nix zhit mol nuaf yais ek
mother and father 2PL NEG go consult.spirits ADD

gab shik nix yat zhaot beb duas dangt gax?”
PQN be 2PL FUT allow 1PL die PFV EMP
‘ “Mother and Father, you didn’t go consult the spirits, and is it (true that) you’re going to let us die?” ’ (SDV 2)

In (30), the additive *ek* occurs in the initial clause, showing that the parents’ refusal to consult the spirits is related to their intention to let the sisters die. Clause-final scope particles such as *mens* and *zhek* are used to signal that the sentence is not complete (McLaughlin 2012:71ff):

(31) Ndouk ndouk zhit jes mens,
hit hit NEG light SCP

dol zhod dak…
CLF tiger say
‘(He) struck (and) struck, but (it) didn’t light, (and) the tiger said… (WBL)

Here, *mens* in the initial clause of (31) signals that the sentence is semantically incomplete, linking it with the following clause. Another additive marker is *lak* ‘also’:

(32) Huaf nangt zhit yuad sheud nzod nzod
now NEG need get.up early early

lak zhit yuad hout nbuat khoud
also NEG need boil pig feed
‘Now (we) don’t need (to) get up early early, (we) also don’t need (to) boil pig feed… (YN)

*Lak* ‘also’ is used at the beginning of the second clause in (32) to link the two clauses together in an additive relationship. The conjunction *tab* or *hab* ‘and’ at the end of a clause can also function as an additive, often in combination with *lak* ‘also’:

(33) nil naf hab nil zaid menk
3SG mother and 3SG father SCP

hend nuaf drous ib dol hluak,
very take.a.fancy.to one CLF young.person

dol hluak gat lak hend nyaf dol ncaik gat hab
CLF young.person that also very like CLF girl that also
‘...her mother and father took a fancy to a young man, (and) the young man also liked the girl a lot...’ (YN)
The *hab* along with *lak* in the second clause of (33) connects the parents’ feelings towards the young man with the girl’s feelings toward him.

Another form of additive relationships in Hmong is repetition. A concept expressed in one clause is repeated in the second clause, often with additional information.

(34) **Zeux ak,**

    be.able INTJ

    god dol blik, nil zeux hot ngoux ak.

    1SG CLF wildcat 3SG be.able sing INTJ

    ‘(He) can; my wildcat, he can sing.’ (DN & GB 2)

In (34), the second clause repeats the content of the first clause, adding additional words to clarify the meaning. Pragmatically, this kind of repetition serves to emphasize the content.

As in many languages, additive relationships in Hmong do not always use grammatical markers to show the relationship. Often the clauses are simply juxtaposed:

(35) **Dol nyuas hlob yaos ib dol dob,**

    CLF child older be one CLF boy

    dol dob nat lob nbet hot uat Hangd Sob.

    CLF boy this CLF name be.called Hangd Sob

    ‘The older child was a boy, this boy’s name was Hangd Sob.’ (HG 1)

In such cases, the decision of whether or not the clauses belong in the same sentence is highly subjective. With no overt markers, it is up to the speaker or writer to decide if the clauses have a close enough association to be considered a single sentence. In (35), the reference to the boy’s name continues the introduction and can therefore be considered closely linked to the statement of his gender.

Sometimes clauses with an additive relationship are not marked with a connector but are linked grammatically through a shared argument:

(36) **Nil buab uat nenx bluas bluas zhit ront,**

    3PL live poor poor NEG good

    Ø zhit muax zax leuf,

    NEG have money PFV

    Ø zhit muax maod leuf,

    NEG have rice PFV

    Ø zhit muax roub leuf,

    NEG have vegetables PFV

    Ø zhit muax nghaix leuf,

    NEG have meat PFV

    Ø zhos muax ib lob njuad maos.

    only have one CLF cake wheat

    ‘They lived (a) very poor (life), (they) didn’t have money, didn’t have rice, didn’t have vegetables, didn’t have meat, (they) only had one wheat cake.’ (HG 1)

In (36), the clauses have an additive relationship. The first clause states the fact that the family was very poor, and the following clauses give further information that describe their poverty. Though there’s no connector between the clauses, they are grammatically linked through a shared argument. The second
through fifth clauses do not have an overt subject but use pro-drop. The subject is *nil buab* ‘3PL’, which is found in the first clause. The next overt subject, *dol naf* ‘the mother’, does not occur until the following sentence. Thus, the shared, unexpressed subject shows that the clauses are connected. This is similar to example (17), though in this case the context shows that the relationship between the clauses is additive rather than sequential.

### 4.4 Contrastive relationships

Contrastive relationships show a difference between the events or situations described in the two clauses. One of the most common ways of marking a contrastive relationship between clauses in Hmong is with the Chinese loanword *dangb shik* ‘but’:

(37) Dix Nbol haik dak
Rich.Older.Brother say

nil dol blik nat zeux hot ngoux nat,
3SG CLF wildcat this be.able sing PRT

dangb shik hax lak zhit hot tab
but still also NEG sing also
‘Rich Older Brother said that his wildcat could sing, but he still hadn’t sung...’ (DN & GB 8)

*Dangb shik* ‘but’ is used in the focal clause of (37) to show the contrast of what actually happens (the wildcat doesn’t sing) with the expectation (that the wildcat will sing when told).

Sometimes *jeuf dak* ‘even though’ is used in combination with *dangb shik* ‘but’. In such cases, *jeuf dak* ‘even though’ is used in the supporting clause to present the idea that is being contrasted in the focal clause with *dangb shik* ‘but’.

(38) Jeuf dak gaox hax zhit dout pangf,
even.though 2SG not.yet fat
dangb shik god daol zhit doul lak.
but 1SG wait NEG POT EMP
‘Even though you haven’t yet gotten fat, I can’t wait (anymore)...’ (HG 4)

In example (38), the old woman had planned to wait until the boy had fattened up before eating him, so *jeuf dak* ‘even though’ in the supporting clause and *dangb shik* ‘but’ in the focal clause show the contrast with her previous plans.

Another way to show contrast between two clauses is with the phrase *shit guangd* ‘no matter what’ in the supporting clause:

(39) Zhit guangd haik let jangl,
no.matter.what speak how
dol blik jeuf zhit hot.
CLF wildcat DM NEG sing
‘No matter what (he) said, the wildcat didn’t sing.’ (DN & GB 7)

In (39), the action described in the phrase with *shit guangd* ‘no matter what’ of the man speaking to the wildcat contrasts with the action in the focal clause. As in (37), the expectation is that the wildcat will sing when the man asks him to, but the wildcat acts contrary to this expectation and doesn’t sing.

Contrastive relationships can also be shown in a negative–positive structure, in which the event or description in the first clause is negative, while that in the second clause is positive:
In (40), the event in the supporting clause is negative: the spirit did not permit the girl to tell his secret to other people. The event in the focal clause is positive: the girl told the secret. This structure shows a contrast between the girl’s actions and the spirit’s command.

4.5 Disjunctive relationships

In disjunctive relationships, there is a choice between two different options. In Hmong, this kind of relationship can be shown with the disjunctive "lak…lak ‘either…or’ in two focal clauses:

(41) Mex nyaob haod nad
    2PL be.at here

    mex uat shit lak dout,
    2PL play also be.acceptable

    mex but dlangb ndlob lak dout.
    2PL sleep also be.acceptable

    ‘(While) you’re here, it’s ok either (to) play, (or) it’s also ok (to) sleep. (HG 2)

In (41), lak occurs with the options in both clauses, expressing the idea that both of the options are valid for the children to follow.

5 Grammatical relationships: complex clauses

In addition to sentences in which two or more clauses are semantically related, Hmong also uses sentences with complex clauses, in which one clause is embedded within another clause. These types of clauses are identified by structural rather than semantic criteria. In Hmong, types of complex clauses include complement clauses and relative clauses.

5.1 Complements

In complement clauses, one clause functions as an argument of the verb in the focal clause. In Hmong, several verbs commonly take complement clauses, primarily verbs of perception or speech. In these constructions, dak or haik dak ‘say’ is often used as a complementizer (McLaughlin 2012:83).

Verbs of perception that commonly take complement clauses in Hmong include boub ‘know’, bof ‘see’, and shaib/nuaf ‘look’. These verbs all occur in the focal clause with a complement clause embedded as the grammatical object of the focal clause.

The verb boub ‘know’ can take a complement clause that describes the content of a person’s knowledge:

(42) nil buab zhit dout boub haik dak
    3PL NEG know CMPT
In example (42), the fact of the two children standing outside the door acts as the object of the parents' knowing.

Another perception verb that commonly takes a complement clause is *bof* ‘see’:

(43) Uat uat shit,
play

jeuf **bof**
DM see

muax ib dol yeus Shuad
exist one CLF man Chinese
gud dout ib ndangt ndoub tlout ged,
carry.on.shoulder CMPL one load cloth cross road

‘(He) played for a while, then (he) saw a Chinese man carrying a load (of) cloth on (his) shoulder cross (the) road...’ (DN & GB 1)

Here in (43), the clause describing a Chinese man carrying a load of cloth acts as the object of the man's sight.

Similarly, *shaib/nuaf* ‘look, see’ also frequently takes a complement clause:

(44) Jat god mol nos nil **shaib**
allow 1SG go ask 3SG look

nil uat jangl muax deuf duax let.
3SG how have come.out come PRT

‘Let me go ask him (and) see how he came (to) have (so much).’ (DN & GB 5)

In (44), the object of the brother's looking is the supporting clause 'how he came (to) have (so much)'.

Verbs of emotion such as *sangd/xangd* ‘think, want’ and *nchait* ‘fear, be afraid’ can also take complement clauses.

(45) God **sangd**
1PL want

dis draod ghangb mol shaib
turn.around return go look
gaox dol mid gab leud ghangb duax.
2SG CLF cat PNQ follow behind come

‘I think (I'll) turn around (and) see whether or not your cat is following behind (us).’ (HG 1)

(46) Nil haik las
3SG speak other.person

nil **nchait**
3SG be.afraid
In (45), the boy considers turning around to see if the cat is following them. The second clause thus acts as the object of his desire in the focal clause. Similarly, in (46), the content of the girl's fear is expressed in the second clause, acting as the object of the verb in the supporting clause.

The causative guak/gas can also take a complement:

(47) Dol nol ib get mol
    CLF brother SIM go

    ib get dlet njuad zhaot drout shout ged
    SIM break.off unleavened.cake place LOC on path

    guak nil boub ged draod ghantb lol zhed.
    cause 3SG know path return come house

    ‘The brother walked while breaking off (pieces of) unleavened cake (and) placing (them) on the path (to) allow him (to) know the path (to) return home.’ (HG 2)

The final clause in (47) functions as the object of the focal verb guak ‘cause’.

5.2 Relative clauses

In addition to complement clauses, the other type of complex clause that is commonly used in Hmong is relative clauses. Relative clauses in Hmong use the relativizer guk followed by a clause in the normal SVO syntax (McLaughlin 2012:82), as in (48):

(48) Aob dol nyuas, hnom nat mex yuad tab god mol bel
    two CLF child today 2PL need with 1SG go up

    hangd rongd guk god ndod ndongt.
    forest REL 1SG chop tree

    ‘Children, today you must go with me up (to the) forest where I (am going to) chop wood.’ (HG 1)

In this sentence, the clause following the relativizer gives further, supporting information about the forest. Grammatically, this clause is embedded inside the noun phrase, creating a single sentence with a complex clause.

6 Conclusion

In considering the ways to define sentences in Hmong, we have looked at ways that sentence divisions can be marked, as well as ways in which clauses can be linked together in a single sentence. We have seen that sentence breaks can be shown by points of departure, overt change of subject without a contrastive conjunction, tail-head linkage, and the end of a speech act. Table 1 lists the categories of disjunctive markers along with their location either at the beginning or end of a sentence.

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14 With the third clause as the object of shaib ‘look, see’ in the second clause.
Table 1. Markers of sentence breaks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overt change of subject without contrastive conjunction</td>
<td>Sentence-initial clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tail-head linkage</td>
<td>Tail at end of sentence, head at beginning of sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of speech act</td>
<td>New speaker or resumption of narration at beginning of sentence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also saw that Hmong uses a variety of ways to connect two or more clauses into a single sentence. These different methods can be classified as either semantic or grammatical. Categories of semantic linkage used in Hmong include temporal, consequence, contrastive, additive and disjunctive. These relationships are often structurally marked in some way. As we have seen, while many markers clearly show the reader what type of relationship exists between the situations or events described in the clauses, there are also cases where there is overlap of one marker used for more than one type of semantic relationship. For instance, *jeuf* can be used with both sequential relationships and conditional relationships. Juxtaposition is also used for more than one type of semantic relationship; it can be used with simultaneous, sequential, conditional, reason, and additive relationships. In such cases, readers and listeners must rely on the content of the clauses to determine the correct relationship between them.

Below in Table 2 is a summary of the various types of semantic relationships used to link clauses in Hmong along with their markers.

Table 2. Semantic relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Linguistic Marker</th>
<th>Focal or Supporting Clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td>Simultaneous</td>
<td><em>ib get</em>...<em>ib get</em> SIMULTANEOUS</td>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>touk</em> ‘when, time’</td>
<td>supporting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequential</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>jeuf</em> sequential conjunction</td>
<td>focal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>leuf</em>, <em>lak</em>, <em>dangt</em> perfective markers</td>
<td>supporting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>dangl</em> completive marker</td>
<td>supporting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>cax nit/cax let</em> ‘only then’</td>
<td>focal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shared argument</td>
<td>focal</td>
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<td>none</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td><em>(hax) zhit dout</em> ‘not yet’</td>
<td>supporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>jeuf</em> sequential conjunction</td>
<td>focal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>yaos (dak) ‘if’ + nangt</em></td>
<td>supporting</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequence</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>yenb wef/wef dak</em> ‘because’</td>
<td>supporting (reason)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>uat luax nat</em> ‘to the extent that’</td>
<td>supporting (reason)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>gas/guak</em> CAUSATIVE</td>
<td>focal (result)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>jat</em> ‘allow’</td>
<td>focal (result)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>jeuf</em> sequential conjunction</td>
<td>focal (result)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>none</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to complex sentences in which clauses are linked in order to express semantic relationships, Hmong also has structurally complex clauses. Table 3 shows the two types of complex clauses used in Hmong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Linguistic Marker</th>
<th>Focal or Supporting Clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contrastive</td>
<td>Subcategory</td>
<td><em>dangb shik</em> ‘but’</td>
<td>focal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>jeuf dak</em> ‘although’</td>
<td>supporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>zhit guangd</em> ‘no matter what’</td>
<td>supporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>negatives such as <em>zhit</em> ‘not’, <em>zhit dout</em> ‘not yet’</td>
<td>supporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additive</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>ek</em> additive conjunction</td>
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<td><em>zhek, mens</em> scope markers</td>
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<td><em>lak, hab</em> additives</td>
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<td>repetition</td>
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<td>shared argument</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disjunctive</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>lak…lak</em> ‘either…or’</td>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These various markers for clausal relationships are helpful in deciding where to divide sentences in oral Hmong texts, giving more clues to clauses that belong together than merely pause, length and intonation patterns. However, they do not provide an absolute formula that will work in every case. There are still many clauses that are semantically linked together which are not grammatically marked at all. Since these clauses are simply juxtaposed, it is somewhat subjective whether they belong in one sentence or two. Yet finding temporal, conditional, consequential, or additive relationships between the clauses gives a good indication that they belong together in a single sentence.
Appendix: Hmong Phonology

Standard Hmong has fifty-eight initial consonants and consonant clusters. Table 4 shows all fifty-eight initials in the Chuanqiandian orthography with IPA equivalents.

Table 4. Initial Consonants (including clusters)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plosive</th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Alveo-palatal</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Retroflex</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Uvular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b [p]</td>
<td>d [t]</td>
<td>x [c]</td>
<td>sh [ʃ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p [pʰ]</td>
<td>t [tʰ]</td>
<td>y [z]</td>
<td>r [z]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-nasalized Plosive</td>
<td>nb [ⁿp]</td>
<td>nd [ⁿt]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>np [ⁿpʰ]</td>
<td>nt [ⁿtʰ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td>f [f]</td>
<td>s [s]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ngg [ⁿɡ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v [v]</td>
<td>x [ɕ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-nasalized Fricative</td>
<td></td>
<td>y [ʑ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affricate</td>
<td>z [ʦ]</td>
<td>j [ʨ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>zh [ʨʰ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c [ʦʰ]</td>
<td>q [ʨʰ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ch [ʨʰ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-nasalized Affricate</td>
<td>nz [ⁿʦ]</td>
<td>nj [ⁿʨ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>nzh [ⁿʨʰ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nc [ⁿʦʰ]</td>
<td>nq [ⁿʨʰ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>nch [ⁿʨʰ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>m [m]</td>
<td>n [n]</td>
<td>ny [ŋ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hm [ⁿm]</td>
<td>hn [ⁿŋ]</td>
<td>hny [ŋɦ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral Fricative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral Affricate</td>
<td>bl [pl]</td>
<td>dl [tl]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pl [plʰ]</td>
<td>tl [tlʰ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-nasalized Lateral Affricate</td>
<td>nbl [ⁿpl]</td>
<td>ndl [ⁿtl]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>npl [ⁿplʰ]</td>
<td>ntl [ⁿtlʰ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-sibilant Affricate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dr [tɾ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tr [tɾʰ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-nasalized non-sibilant Affricate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ndr [ⁿtɾ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ntr [ⁿtɾʰ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximant</td>
<td>w [w]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral Approximant</td>
<td>l [l]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hmong finals include simple vowels, diphthongs, and simple vowels plus final nasals. The nasal [ŋ] is the only syllable-final consonant used in Hmong languages. Table 5 contains a list of the syllable-final sounds of Hmong.

Table 5. Finals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Vowels</th>
<th>Diphthongs</th>
<th>Vowels plus nasal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>ai</td>
<td>ang [aŋ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ao [au]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>[ei]</td>
<td>en [eŋ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eu [əu]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i [i] or [ɪ] or [ŋ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>ou</td>
<td>ong [oŋ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>ua</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to these native Hmong finals, Hmong also has several additional finals used in more recent loanwords from Chinese. Table 6 shows the additional finals used in Chinese loanwords.

Table 6. Finals used in Chinese loanwords

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diphthongs</th>
<th>Vowels plus nasal</th>
<th>Vowel plus consonant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>iu</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>er [ər]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iao [iau]</td>
<td>iang [ian]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uai</td>
<td>un</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ue</td>
<td>uang [uan]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Hmong orthography, tones are represented by a consonant at the end of the syllable. Table 7 lists the CQD tone letters and their phonetic values in Standard Hmong. Hmong Soud has the same tone categories as Standard Hmong, though there are slight variations in the phonetic values of some of the tones.

Table 7. Tones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone Letter</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Phonetic Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-b</td>
<td>extra high level</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-x</td>
<td>falling</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-d</td>
<td>rising</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-l</td>
<td>low falling breathy</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-t</td>
<td>high level</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-s</td>
<td>mid level breathy (“voiced aspirated”)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-k</td>
<td>mid level</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-f</td>
<td>low falling</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 There are slight variations in vowels between different areas. In Hmong Soud, the diphthongs [ai] and [eu] have merged to [eu] in one county, while [a] and [ai] have merged to [a] elsewhere.
References