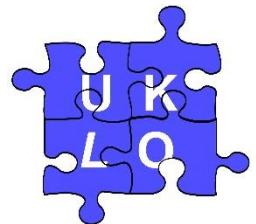


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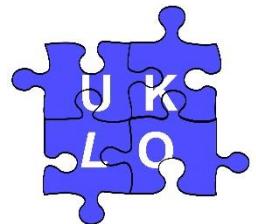


Problem 10. Don't sell the house! (25 marks)

This problem involves the Nung language which is spoken by about a million people in northeastern Vietnam. In this problem, the Nùng Phạn Slinh variety of Nung will be used. The marks above vowels indicate tone and the length of the vowel, and đ and sl are single consonants. You do not need to know how to pronounce Nung in order to solve the problem, but you do need to know that word order is fixed: there is only one way to properly order the words in a sentence to give the meaning indicated.

The table contains a list of sentences and their English translations.

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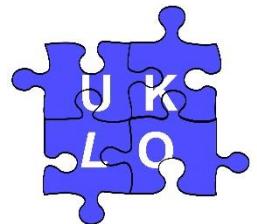


1. Cáu ca vǚhn nhahng kíhn.	I was about to continue to eat it.
2. Cáu cháhn slòng páy mi?	Do I truly want to go?
3. Cáu mi slày kíhn.	I don't have to eat it.
4. Cáu ngám hěht pehn té.	I did it like that just now.
5. Cáu tan đohc hǎhn mưhnng.	I only saw you.
6. Cáu vǚhn nhahng bô sảhm tǎhng hěht hơn.	I also continue to build the house alone.
7. Da kíhn!	Don't eat it!
8. Da khái hơn!	Don't sell the house!
9. Mưhn chóng ca cháhn fải khái.	Then she truly was about to have to sell it.
10. Mưhn mi cháhn đày non.	She truly can't sleep.
11. Mưhn náhc-thày chóng bô sảhm kíhn.	Then she also just previously ate it.
12. Mưhnng náhc-thày slòng tǎhng páy.	You wanted to go alone just previously.
13. Cáu cháhn đày non.	
14. Da páy non!	
15. Mưhn bô sảhm mi slòng hěht hơn mi?	
16. Mưhn ngám bô sảhm páy hơn.	
17.	I wasn't about to eat it just previously.
18.	She didn't have to eat it alone like that just now.
19.	The house truly can't eat you.
20.	Then were you also about to go just previously?

Question 10.1 Write the missing translations in the table in the answer paper.

Question 10.2. Explain as clearly and concisely as you can the main features of Nung that you discovered and how you discovered them. [Your answer to this question will only be marked if your script is shortlisted.]

Your name:



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Problem 10. Don't sell the house! (25 marks)

10.1.

Nung	English
17.	13.
18.	14.
19.	15.
20.	16.

10.2. Explain as clearly and concisely as you can the main features of Nung that you discovered and how you discovered them.

If your answer runs over to an extra sheet, please write your name on the sheet and tick here:



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Problem 10. Don't sell the house! (25 marks)

10.1.

Nung	English
17. Cáu náhc-thày ca mi kíhn. (5)	13. I can truly sleep.
18. Mưhn ngám mi slày tâhng kíhn pehn tê. (8)	14. Don't go (to/and) sleep!
19. Hơn mi cháhn đày kíhn mưhng. (6)	15. Is she also unwilling to build the house?
20. Mưhng náhc-thày chóng ca bô sâhm páy mi? (8)	16. She also went home/to the house just now.

10.2. Open-ended analysis of Nung. (Don't try to mark this!)

Scoring: Question 10.1 (max = 35)

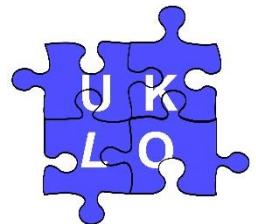
- One point for each correct Nung **word**. (Maximums per sentence are shown, so max = 27.)
 - In Nung, the order of words is crucial so a word is wrong if it is in the wrong position.
So:
 - B A where A B is correct: only one word is correct
 - A Z where A B ...Z is correct: both words are correct
 - accept correct words so as to maximize the score.
 - But accept Nung misspellings.
 - Treat a compound (e.g. náhc-thày) as a single word.
- Two points for each correct English **sentence**. (Max = 8)
 - One point with one wrong word-meaning.
 - Accept English alternatives that convey roughly the same meaning, especially if they include the same words but in a different order. (E.g. 'build a house' is expressed literally in Nung as 'do a house', so this could be accepted.)
 - Ignore minor misspellings or tense changes.

Comment

This is a problem about syntax, and specifically about the order of words in a clause. As explained in the introduction, Nung word order is fixed, meaning that for a given sentence with a given meaning, there is only one correct way to order the words.

- The word-order rules distinguish the following elements also found in English:
 - the subject (e.g. We really like them.)
 - the main verb (e.g. We really like them.)
 - the object (e.g. We really like them.)
 - an adverb (e.g. We really like them.)

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- There is also a question-marker *mi*.
- The only permitted order of these elements is this:
 - subject – adverb – verb – object – question-marker
- But there can be many adverbs, whose order is also fixed (see below).
- Objects:
 - ‘it’ as an object is left unsaid but implied.
 - ‘Like that’ is treated as an object in terms of word order.

If two or more adverbs occur together, they have to follow the order shown in this table:

náhc-thày	ngám	chóng	ca	vǚhn nhahng	bô sahm	mi	cháhn	slòng / slày / fải / đày	tâhng
just previously	just now	then	about to	continue to	also	not	truly	want / [don't] have to / have to / can	alone

In addition, we know that *da* ‘don’t’ and *tan đohc* ‘only’ both occur before the verb, but in our data, no other adverbs occur in the same sentence as *da* or *tan đohc*, so it is unclear what the correct order should be.

Strategy for solving the problem

The main challenge of the problem is to identify the correct positioning of adverbs, which always occur in a fixed order.

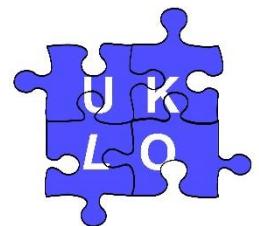
- A strategy for discovering this is to list all the orderings attested (e.g. *ca vǚhn nhahng* in #1), and merge those to create a comprehensive order for all the adverbs provided.
- Crucially, it is necessary to also consider the Nung sentences provided without translations in order to clarify where in the pattern the adverb *ngám* lies.

A secondary challenge is to map Nung sentences onto English ones: not only the word order but also the meaning may differ slightly. For example, in Nung ‘build a house’ is expressed as ‘do house’. For the purposes of this problem, small differences in translation that represent equally valid interpretations of a Nung or English sentence are allowed as long as they follow proper Nung or English word order.

Here is a further list of Nung words used in the problem:

cáu	I
hởhn	see
hởht	do, build

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hơn	house, home
khǎi	sell
kíhn	eat
mi	question marker
mưhn	she
mưhng	you
non	sleep
páy	go
pehn té	like that