

Introduction

In this project, I provide data from two native speakers to show how reciprocals and reflexives are constructed and bound in White Hmong. I argue that White Hmong follows the traditional binding theory ([1]; [2]) and supports that *vP* and CP are phases in Hmong. I also show that the true reciprocal is a Voice head (not a DP) in Hmong and the ‘false’ reciprocal is a reflexive construction with dual or plural pronouns.

Empirically, Hmong has been understudied and most literature of the language are from the 1900s, so this project is a more modern view of how the language is used by immigrant communities and their children in the United States today.

Facts

Fact 1: The standard structure of reflexive DPs in Hmong is [Pro + Clf + *kheej*] (1-2)

Fact 2: *kheej* ‘self’ can occur alone as the object of a clause and bind to the subject (3).

Fact 3: There are two ways to translate reciprocal meanings into Hmong.

- Method 1 is another *kheej*-reflexive construction using a dual pronoun (5).
- Method 2 is a ‘true reciprocal’ where the reciprocal *sib* is a Voice morpheme and not a nominal (4,6)

Data

- kuv pom kuv tus kheej
1SG see 1SG CLF self
"I see myself."
- nws pom nws tus kheej
3SG see 3SG CLF self
"He sees himself"
- kuv pom kheej
1SG see self
"I see myself."
- lawv sib txawb pob zeb
3PL RECIP throw CLF rock
"They threw rocks at each other."
- nkawm tham txog nkawm tus kheej
3DU talk about 3DU CLF self
"They (du.) are talking about each other."
- nkawm sib tham
3DU RECIP talk
"They (du.) are talking to each other."

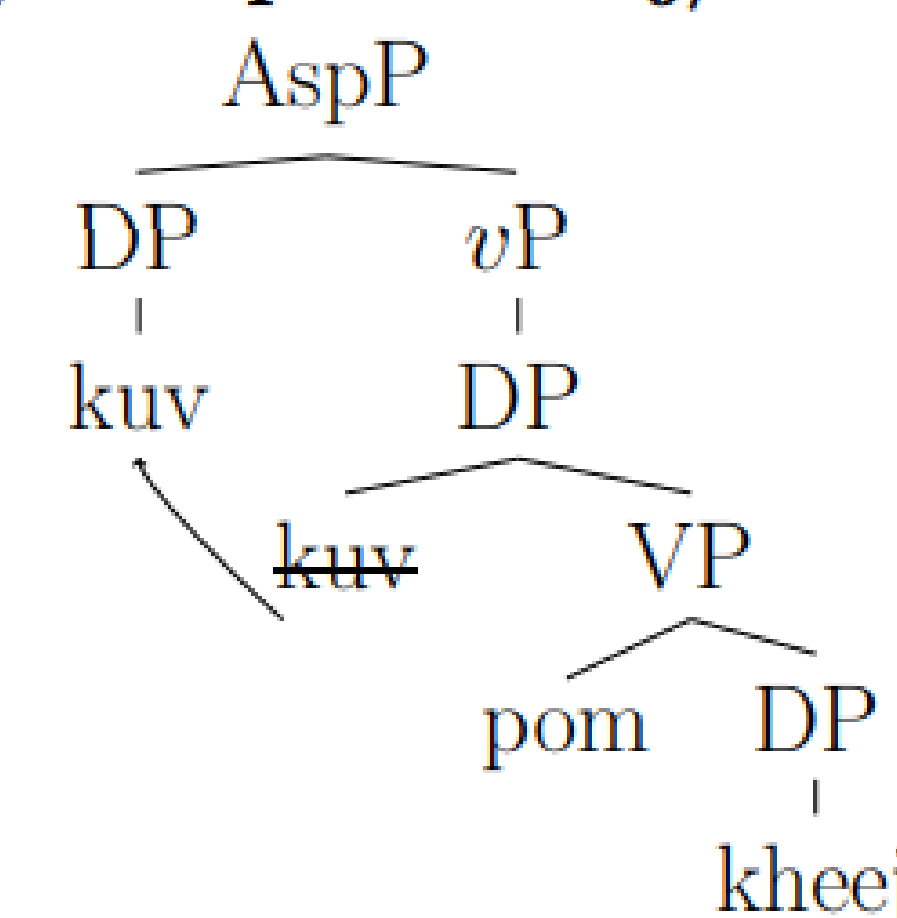
Proposal for Reflexives

The clausal projection in Hmong is AspP instead of IP or TP since it does not mark tense and is an analytic language (see [3] for Mandarin).

The subject raises from Spec,*vP* to Spec,AspP due to a strong EPP on Asp [4]. Binding domains are synonymous with phases [5], so binding between the antecedent (in Spec,*vP*) and the reflexive (the sister of V) happens at the *vP* phase (7). The reflexive can either be *kheej* or a full reflexive DP.

Proposal for Reflexives

(7) Kuv pom kheej/kuv tus kheej

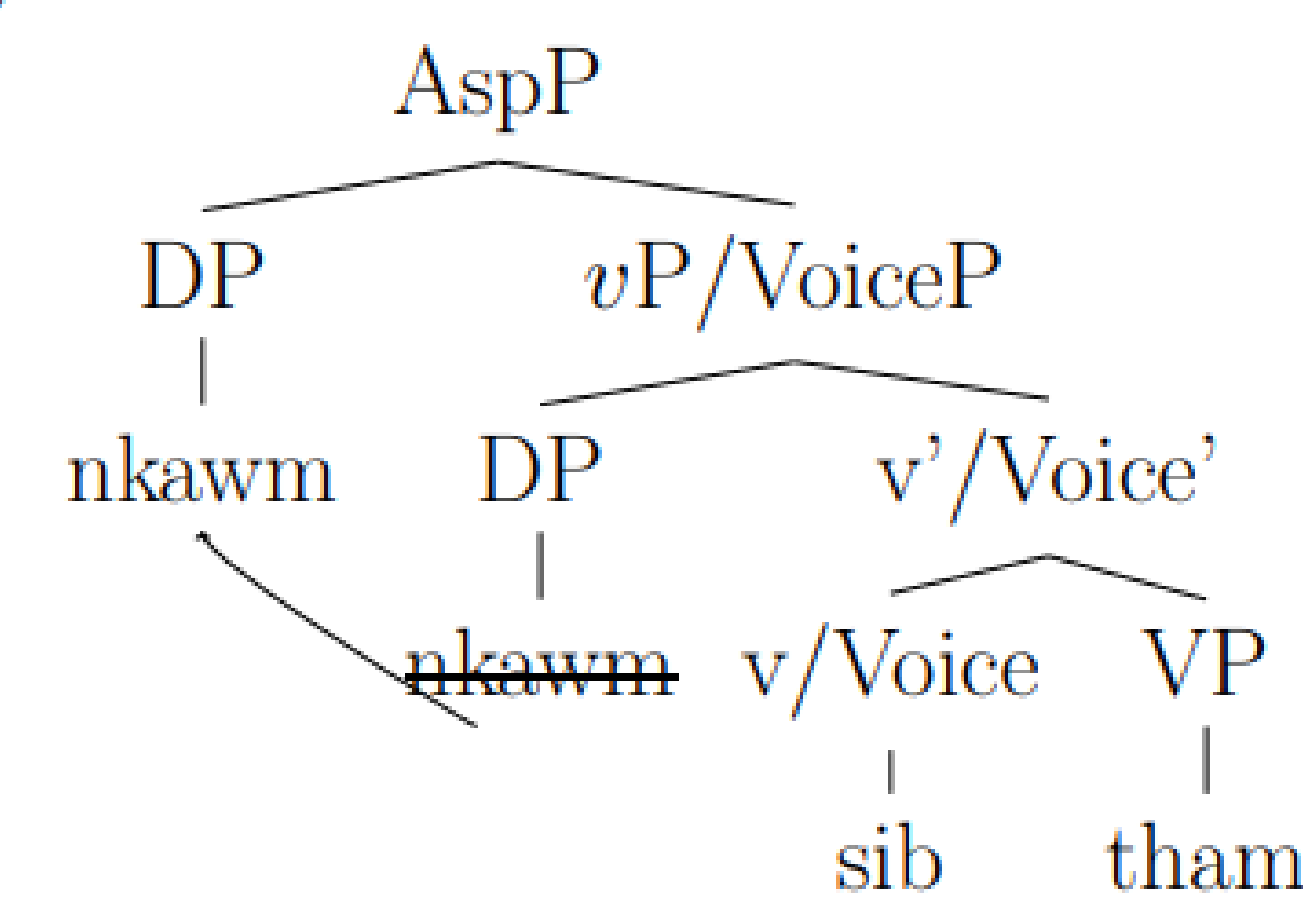


I argue that the word *sib* is a Voice head and not an anaphoric DP

The word order poses no issues for the SVO word order’s syntax.

It’s not novel to associate Voice with reciprocity [6], although this has never been discussed with Hmong data.

(8) Nkawm sib tham



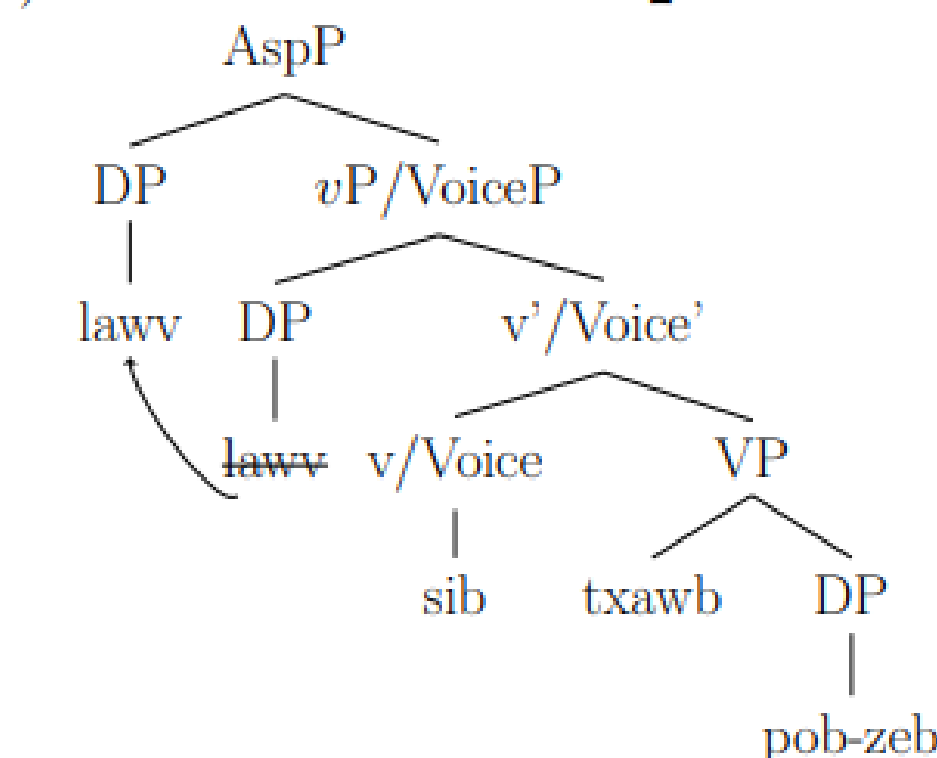
Acknowledgements

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Proposal for reciprocals

The final structure, (9), shows that the SVO word order truly is maintained when we have both *sib* and a DP object

(9) Lawv sib txawb pob zeb



The domain of the reciprocal meaning is the phase.

Before the subject raises out of the *vP* structure, it is established as the agent of the reciprocal action.

Not only is the domain of the reciprocal clear, but the timing of the reciprocal mapping is also clear.

References

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- [6] Kratzer, A. Severing the External Argument from Its Verb. *Phrase Structure and the Lexicon*, 1996.