

THE SYNTACTIC STRUCTURES OF AMOY AS USED IN THE PHILIPPINES¹

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Amoy, sometimes called Fukienese or Hokienese, is one of the five major Chinese languages. Though not the most widely-spoken Chinese language, it is said to have more than 50 million speakers (Muller, 1964:70), which include 36 million in the mainland, 9 million in Taiwan, and 7 million in Southeast Asia, mainly Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines.

THE PHONOLOGY

The inventory of phonemes made by this researcher consists of twenty consonant phonemes: p, p^h, b, t, t^h, d, k, k^h, g, ' , ts, ch, s, l, m, n, ŋ, h, w, y; eleven vowel phonemes: i, e, a, o, u, ə, ɪ, ē, ā, ǝ, ū; and five phonemic tones: high level, high falling, low falling, low rising, low level.²

BASIC STRUCTURES

1. The Rule for Sentence Formation

The highest node in the underlying structure of an Amoy sentence is generated by the following rule.

$$P-1 \quad S \text{ ——— } (\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{(Neg)} \\ \text{Q} \\ \text{(Imp)} \end{array} \right\}) \text{ NP VP (Adv)}$$

The following are examples of basic statements, each containing an obligatory noun phrase and verb phrase.

- | | | | | |
|----|---------|--------|-----------|--------------|
| 1. | i | lāy | | |
| | 'He' | 'come' | | |
| | or | 'He | comes.' | ³ |
| 2. | dī | si | syān-sī | |
| | 'You' | 'be' | 'teacher' | |
| | or | 'You | are | teacher.' |
| 3. | syān-sī | sàŋ | in | chè' |

¹This summary presents only the basic structures of Amoy and does not include the sections on word order, question types, and transformations for deriving imperative, negative, negative imperative statements, questions and reflexive constructions.

²^h indicates aspiration of the consonant preceding it and ~ indicates nasalization of the vowel below it. Tones are distinguished thus (where V means any vowel):

- | | |
|-----|--------------|
| ̄V | high level |
| ˋV | high falling |
| ˊV | low falling |
| ˊ̇V | low rising |

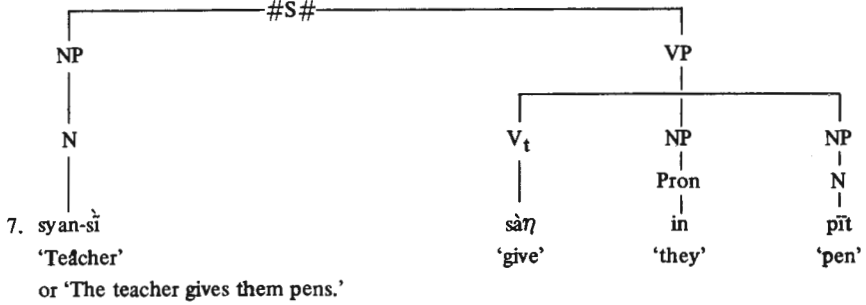
V (unmarked low level)

³Idiomatic glosses for sentences follow the literal glosses, whenever appropriate.

- 'Teacher' 'give' 'they' 'books.'
 or 'The teacher gives them books.'
4. in k^hyà ti-ma-nī-lā
 'They' 'live' 'at' 'Manila'
5. syan-sī̇ dim te
 'Teacher' 'drink' 'tea.'
- or 'The teacher drinks tea.'
6. tsit tè tò' tsin yòŋ
 'This' 'table' 'very' 'durable'
- or 'This table is very durable.'

A sentence is represented in the following structure tree.

Fig. 1



2. The Noun Phrase (NP)

The noun phrase constituent immediately dominated by the #S# is the topic. NP's may also appear in other positions in the Amoy sentence without any change in form. Rule P-2 below generates NP's.

$$P-2 \quad NP \longrightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Pron} \\ \text{(Det) N (S)} \end{array} \right\}$$

The optional S in the above rule represents possible embeddings in the NP, the analysis of which is not undertaken in this study.

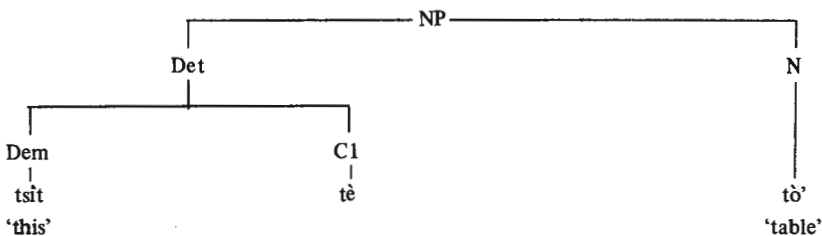
2.1. The Determiner (Det)

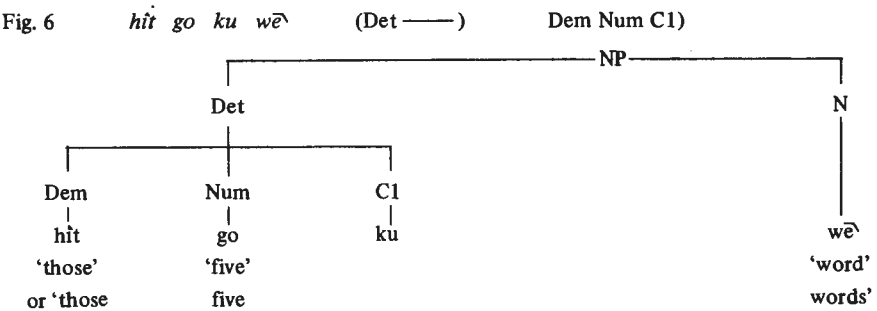
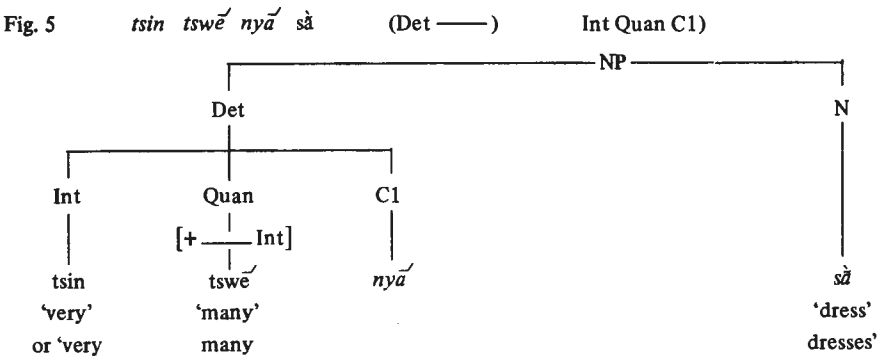
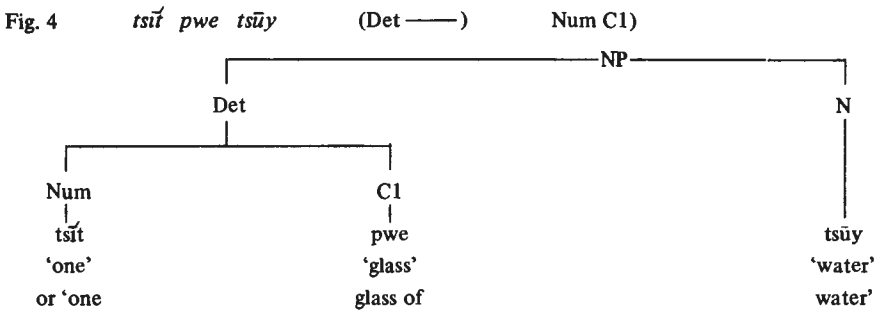
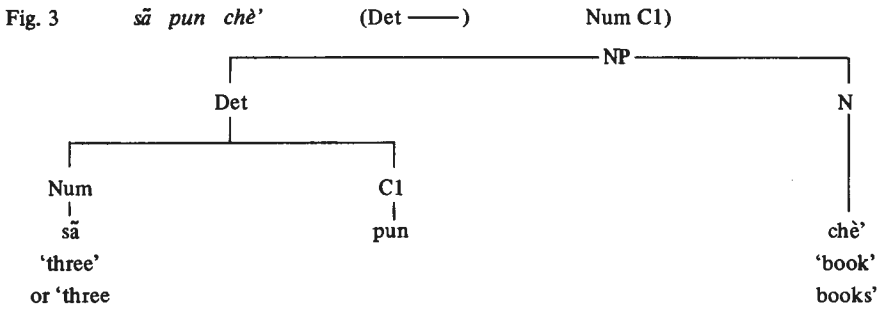
Determiners in the NP are generated by the following rule.

$$P-3 \quad \text{Det} \longrightarrow \left[(\text{Dem}) \left(\begin{array}{c} \text{Dem} \\ \text{Num} \\ \text{(Int) Quan} \end{array} \right) \right] \text{CI}$$

The above rule conflates the rules for the types of determiners that may occur with the noun, such as those in the following NP's.

Fig. 2 tsit tè tò' (Det —) Dem C1)





2.1.1. The Demonstratives (Dem)

The following rule generates demonstratives.

P-4 Dem —) [± near Sp] [± Sq]

The following are the demonstratives in Amoy.

A. [+ near Sp] [+ Sg] : *tsít* 'this'

- B. [-near Sp] [+Sg] : hit 'that'
- C. [+near Sp] [-Sg] : (tsit) tswāy 'these'
- D. [-near Sp] [-Sg] : (hit) hwāy 'those'

The forms *tsit* and *hit* are optional in the plural forms.

Demonstratives may be followed by numerals. They always occur with classifiers, except in pluralization when the classifiers are deleted, as provided for by Rule T-1 below.

$$T-1_{ob} \quad [Dem \quad C1]_{Det} \quad \Longrightarrow \quad [Dem]_{Det}$$

(where Dem is [-Sg])

2.1.2. The Numerals (Num)

Numerals, which are always followed by classifiers, may occur with the noun alone or after demonstratives. They may indicate plurality of nouns without changing the forms of the demonstratives following.

Examples:

- tsit* te tò 'one table'
- nðŋ* pwe tsūy 'two' 'glass' 'water' or 'two glasses of water'
- sā* pun chè 'three' 'book' or 'three books'
- tsit* *sā* pun chè 'this' 'three' 'book' or 'these three books'

In the formation of ordinals, *te* is added to the equivalent cardinal as generated by the following rule.

$$P-5 \quad Num \longrightarrow (te) \quad Card$$

However, in the ordinals 'first' and 'second'; likewise, in the environment of *tsāp* 'ten', the forms for 'one' and 'two' change, hence -

$$MP-1 \quad \left[\begin{array}{c} tsit \\ nðŋ \end{array} \right] \Longrightarrow \left[\begin{array}{c} it \\ di \end{array} \right] / \left\{ \begin{array}{c} te \\ tsāp \end{array} \right\} \text{ ---}$$

Examples:

- te-it* pun chè 'first' 'book'
- te-di* pun chè 'second' 'book'

2.1.3. The Quantifiers (Quan)

Quantifiers in Amoy are generated by the following rule.

$$P-6 \quad Quan \longrightarrow [\pm \text{ --- Int}]$$

Quantifiers that carry the feature [+ --- Int] always occur with the intensifiers *tsin* or *yā* 'very' and never with demonstratives. Examples of such quantifiers in NP's are the following.

Fig. 7 *yǎ tswē pun chè'*

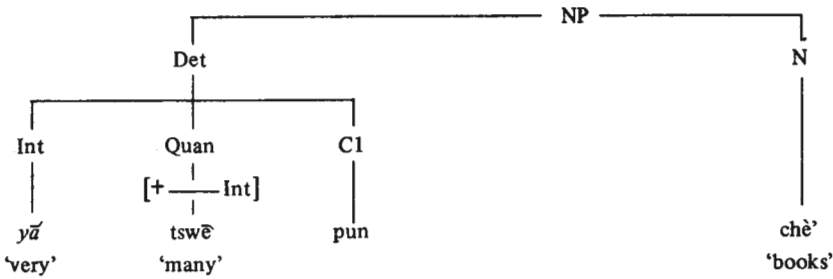
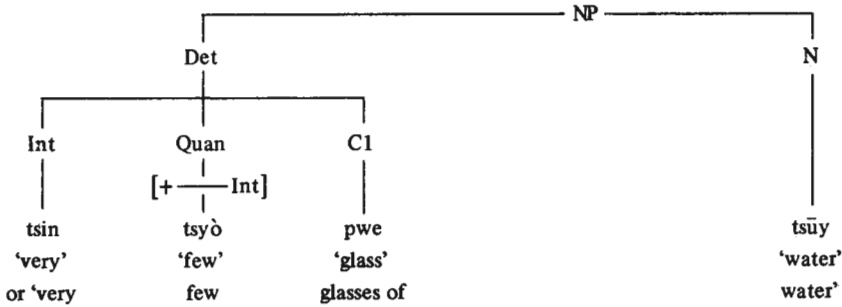


Fig. 8 *tsin tsyò pwe tsūy*



Quantifiers that carry the feature [- Int] always occur with demonstratives as illustrated by the following examples.

Fig. 9 *hit kuy pun chè'*

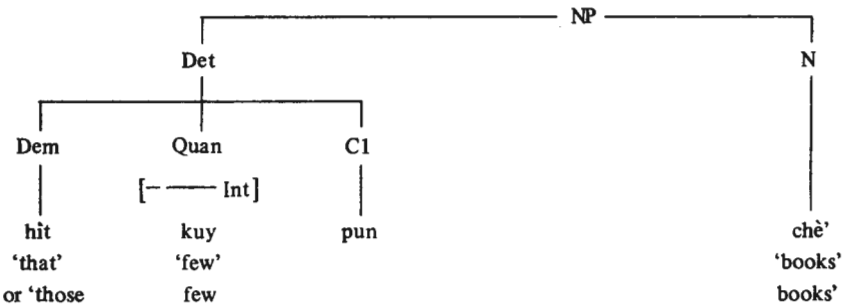
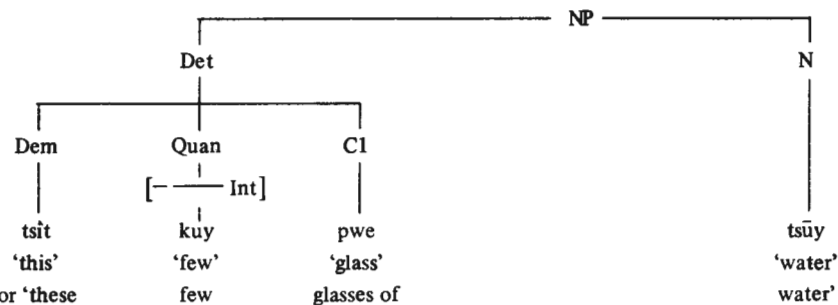


Fig. 10 *tsit kuy pwe tsūy*



The following are therefore, ungrammatical NP's

- * *tsin kuy pun chè'*
- * *tsit tsyò pwe tsūy*

2.1.4. The Classifiers (C1)

Classifiers are a characteristic of all Chinese languages. They are sometimes called “measures” (Ko, 1960:129). Though classifiers serve as indicators of measurement, quantity or portion, they can not be fully classified on the basis of such semantic considerations. One classifier may sometimes occur with several nouns of similar characteristics of size or shape, but the same classifier may sometimes also occur with some other noun of altogether different shape or size. The following substitution slots are examples of NP’s with some of such classifiers.

$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{tsit} \\ \text{'this} \\ \text{hit} \\ \text{'that'} \\ \text{sā} \\ \text{'three} \\ \text{sī} \\ \text{'four} \\ \text{go} \\ \text{'five} \end{array} \right\}$	<i>tè</i>	<i>pō</i>
		cloth'
	<i>tè</i>	tò'
		table'
	<i>nyà</i>	sā
		dresses'
	<i>tyū</i>	tswà
		papers'
	<i>tsyà'</i>	kàw
		dogs'

2.2 The Nouns (N)

Nouns in Amoy are never inflected either for number or for gender. Plurality of nouns is designated by the use of plural demonstratives, quantifiers and numerals.

Examples:

tsit	ge	<i>hak-sòŋ</i>
'this		student'
tswāy		<i>hak-sòŋ</i>
'these		students'
tsin	tswē	<i>hak-sòŋ</i>
'very	many	students'
tsāp	ge	<i>hak-sòŋ</i>
'ten		students'

To indicate gender of nouns, certain modifiers are used.

Examples:

<i>tša-bò</i>	<i>kīn-nā</i>		
'female	child'	or	'girl'
<i>ta-po</i>	<i>kīn-nā</i>		
'male	child'	or	'boy'
<i>tša-bò</i>	<i>lāŋ</i>		
'female	person'	or	'woman'
<i>ta-po</i>	<i>lāŋ</i>		
'male	person'	or	'man'
<i>dù</i>	<i>hak-sòŋ</i>		
'female	student'		
<i>lam</i>	<i>hak-sòŋ</i>		
'male	student'		

The features of Amoy nouns are generated by the following rule.

P-7 N —) [± Count]

- A. [+Count] —) [± Animate]
- B. [+Animate] —) [± Human]
- C. [±Human] —) [± Proper]
- D. [-Animate] —) [± Time]
- E. [+Time] —) [± Proper]
- F. [-Time] —) [± Locative]
- G. [±Locative] —) [± Proper]
- H. [-Count] —) [± Abstract]

On the page following is a system tree for the features of nouns, with examples under each set of features.

2.3. The Pronouns (Pron)

Amoy pronouns are always personal. They are not distinguished for gender, and are used to refer to the first person, the second person, or the third person, as generated by the following rule.

$$P-8 \quad \text{Pron} \longrightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} [+ I] \quad [\pm \text{Incl}] \\ [+ II] \\ [+ III] \end{array} \right\} [\pm \text{Sg}]$$

Pluralization of pronouns is done by the adjunction of *-n*, as shown by the following chart.

	<i>+ Singular</i>	<i>- Singular</i>		
[+ I]	<i>gwā</i> 'I'	<i>lān</i>	(+ Incl)	'we'
		<i>gūn</i>	(- Incl)	'we'
[+ II]	<i>dī</i> 'you'	<i>dīn</i>	'you (pl)'	
[+ III]	<i>i</i> 'he or she'	<i>in</i>	'they'	

Pronouns never change in form in whatever position in the sentence.

3. The Verb Phrase (VP)

The verb phrase constituent expresses a comment on the noun phrase in topic position. It is generated by the following rule.

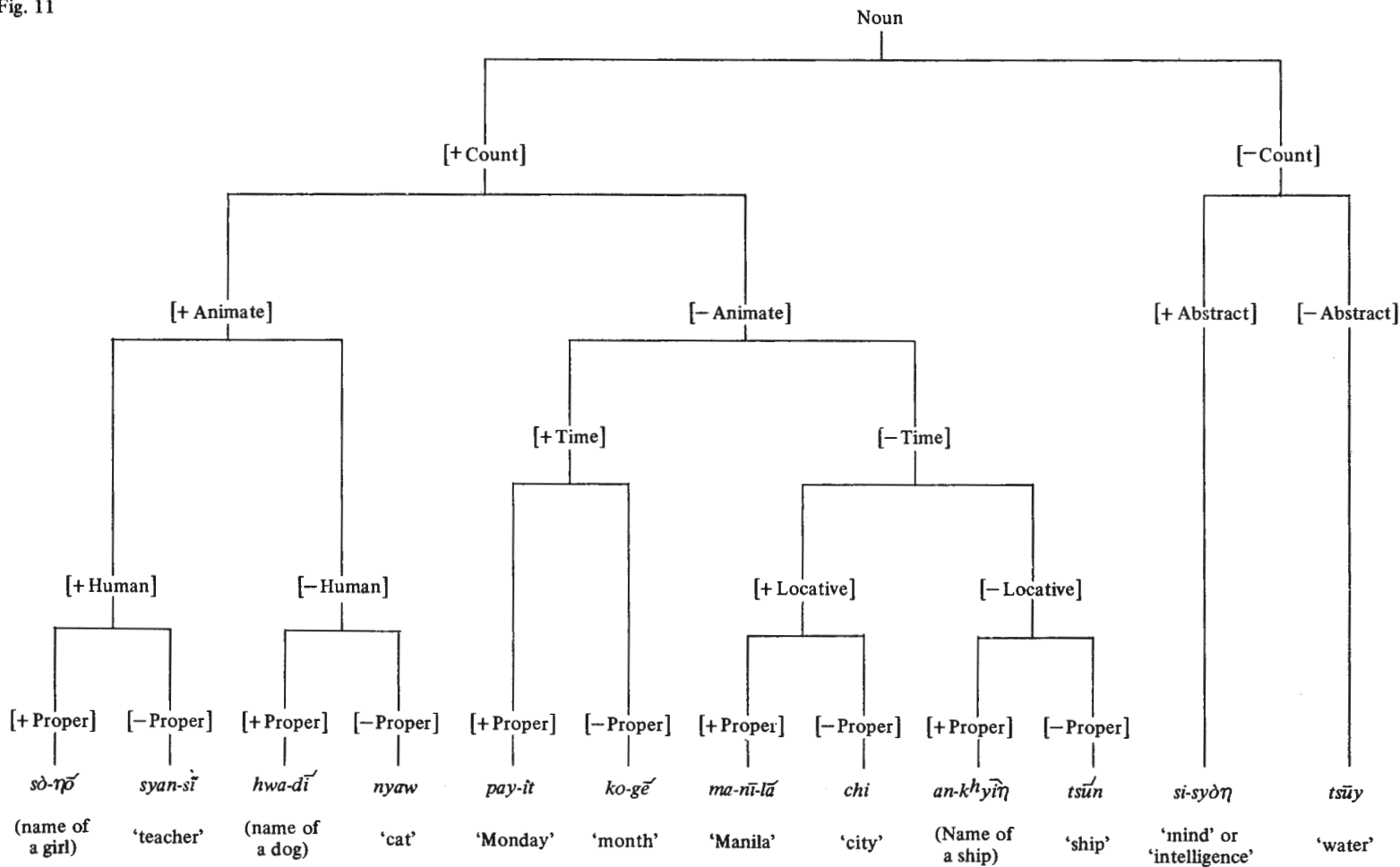
$$P-9 \quad \text{VP} \longrightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} (\text{Aux}) \left\{ \begin{array}{l} V_i \\ V_t \end{array} \right\} (\text{NP}) \quad \text{NP} \right\} (\text{Adv}) \\ V_c \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{NP} \\ \text{LocP} \\ \text{AdjP} \end{array} \right\} \end{array} \right\}$$

The base of a verb phrase can be an intransitive verb (V_i), a transitive verb (V_t), or a copulative verb (V_c).

3.1. The Intransitive Verb (V_i)

Intransitive verb here means any verb that is not followed by NP's but may be followed by an adverb.

Fig. 11



Sentence 8 below illustrates the first VP rewrite, such that VP —) (Aux) V_i

Fig. 12

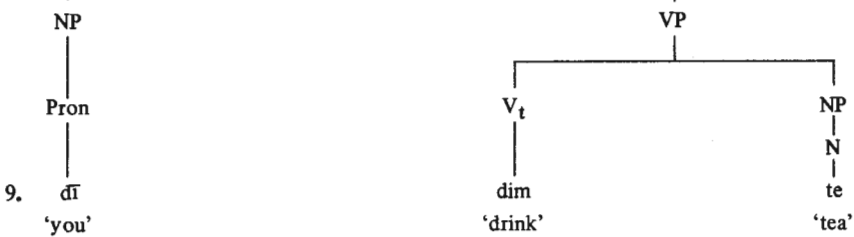


3.2. The Transitive Verb (V_t)

Transitive verbs are verbs that may be followed by one or two NP's and an optional adverb.

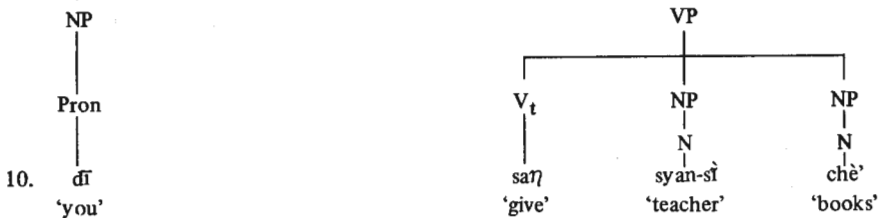
Sentence 9 below illustrates the second verb phrase rewrite, such that VP —) (Aux) V_t NP

Fig. 13



Sentence 10 below illustrates another second verb phrase rewrite, such that VP —) (Aux) V_t NP NP

Fig. 14



3.3. The Copulative Verb (V_c)

The copulative verb serves to link the complements, namely: the noun phrase in VP position, the locative phrase and the adjective phrase - to the topic NP.⁴

3.3.1. The Noun Phrase after the Copulative Verb (NP)

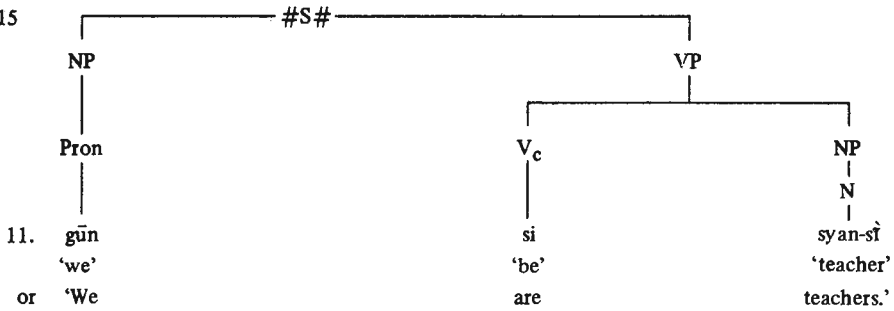
Sentence 11 below illustrates the third VP rewrite, such that VP —) V_c NP

⁴The Amoy copulative verb *sī* does not function the same way as the English copulative verb, though it may occur in sentences like the following.

i	sī	ti-lē	dim	te
'he'	'be'		'drink'	'tea'

or 'he is drinking tea.'

Fig. 15



3.3.2. The Locative Phrase after the Copulative Verb (LocP)

The locative phrase indicates the physical location of the topic NP. It consists of either a deictic; an NP; or a noun construct composed of two NP's. The Locative marker *ti-* introduces these constituents in the locative phrase. The following rule generates such locative phrases.

$$P-10 \quad \text{LocP} \longrightarrow \text{ti-} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{deictic} \\ \text{NP (NP)} \end{array} \right.$$

* Deictics, which indicate the nearness or farness of the topic NP from the speaker, are generated by the following rule.

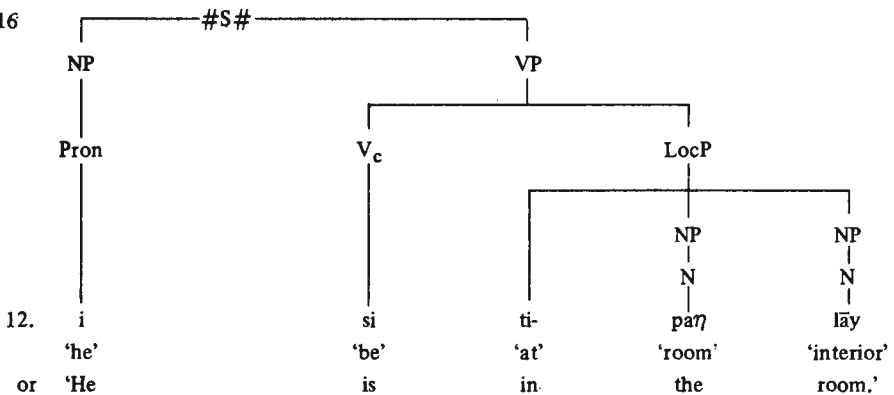
$$P-11 \quad \text{deictic} \longrightarrow [\pm \text{near Sp}]$$

Deictics in Amoy are the following.

- A. [+near Sp] : *tsit-tā* or *tsyā* 'here'
- B. [-near Sp] : *hit-tā* or *hyā* 'there'

Sentence 12 below is an example of the fourth VP rewrite, such that VP \longrightarrow V_c LocP

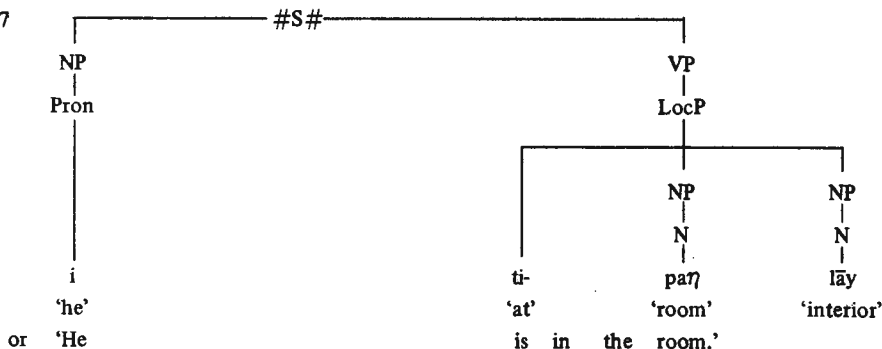
Fig. 16



In surface structure, the copulative verb *si* that is followed by a LocP may be deleted (to be accounted for by rule T-2). Another surface structure for sentence 12, therefore, is represented by Fig. 17.

Such locative phrases can also function as adverbs of place (cf. section 4.2.3. of the adverb.)

Fig. 17



3.3.3. The Adjective Phrase after the Copulative Verb (AdjP)

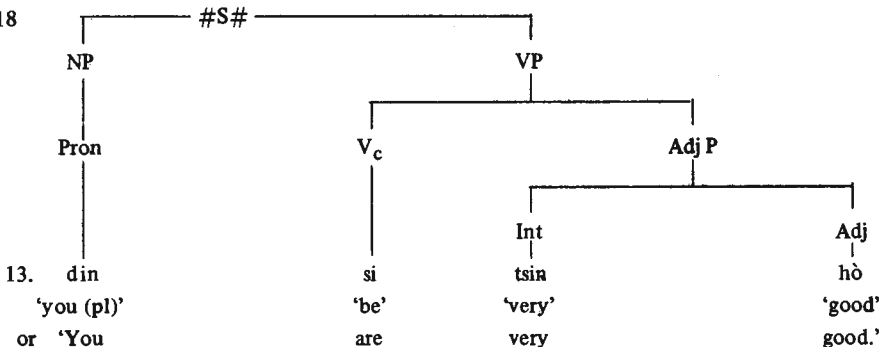
Adjective phrases are generated by the following rule.

P-12 AdjP → (Int) Adj

Adjective phrases are composed of an adjective and an optional intensifier, either *tsin* or *yā*.

Sentence 13 below illustrates the fifth VP rewrite, such that VP → V_c AdjP

Fig. 18

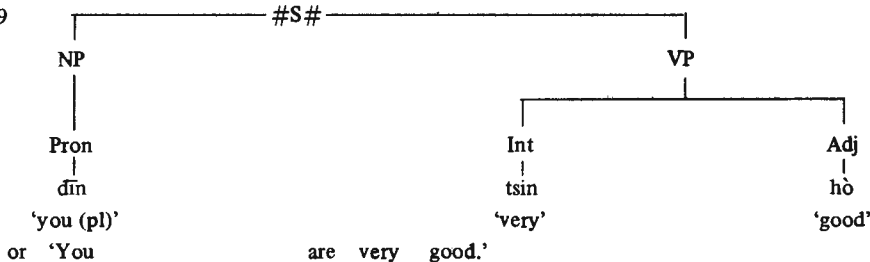


As in the LocP complement, the copulative verb *si* followed by the AdjP may be deleted. The following optional transformation rule accounts for such deletion.

$$T-2_{op} \left[V_c \left\{ \begin{matrix} \text{LocP} \\ \text{AdjP} \end{matrix} \right\} \right]_{VP} \Rightarrow \left[\begin{matrix} \text{LocP} \\ \text{AdjP} \end{matrix} \right]_{VP}$$

Hence, another surface structure for sentence 13 would be the following.

Fig. 19



3.4. The Auxiliary (Aux)

The auxiliary constituent is either aspect (Asp) or modal (Mod), as generated by the following rule.

21. i 'he' $\left\{ \begin{array}{ll} \text{tyò'} & \text{'must'} \\ \text{bè'} & \text{'want'} \\ \text{ày} & \text{'like'} \\ \text{e (hyàw)} & \text{'can'} \\ \text{tʰaŋ} & \text{'may'} \end{array} \right\} \quad \text{lāy} \quad \text{'come'}$

4. The Adverb (Adv)

The adverb is an optional constituent of the Amoy sentence as well as of the Amoy verb phrase. As far as the researcher's analysis reveals, the criterion for such separation is its permutative ability. The sentence adverb is immediately dominated by the Sentence (#S#) and may sometimes be permuted with the other sentence constituents. The verb phrase adverb is immediately dominated by the verb phrase (VP) and may be permuted only with other verb phrase constituents.

Adverbs are of two general types, as generated by the following rule.

- P-15 Adv \longrightarrow $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Adv}_1 \\ \text{Adv}_2 \end{array} \right\}$

4.1. Adverb₁ (Adv₁)

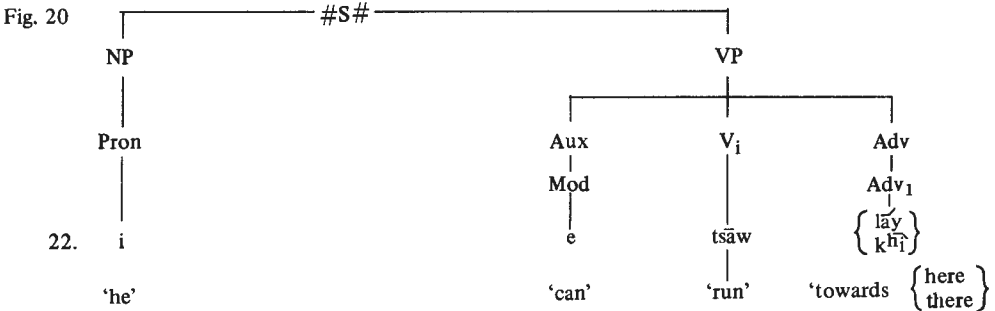
The first type of adverbs consists of clitics divided into three groups, namely: clitics₁ (Cli₁), clitics₂ (Cli₂), clitics₃ (Cli₃); and the clitics *lāy* and *kʰi*. The following rule generates the first class of adverbs.

- P-16 Adv₁ \longrightarrow $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{Cli}_1 \\ \text{Cli}_3 \end{array} \right) \begin{array}{l} \text{lāy} \\ \text{kʰi} \end{array} \\ \text{Cli}_2 \end{array} \right\}$

4.1.1. The Clitics *lāy* and *kʰi*

These two clitics belong to a class of their own on account of their combinability with clitics₁. They are homophonous to the intransitive verbs, *lāy* 'come' and *kʰi* 'go'.⁵

Example:



⁵Hockett explains that in Chinese Mandarin, such particles are not really prepositions, thus –
“Chinese has directive particles. . . but none like English prepositions. Where English uses a preposition, Chinese uses a verb.” (1958:192)

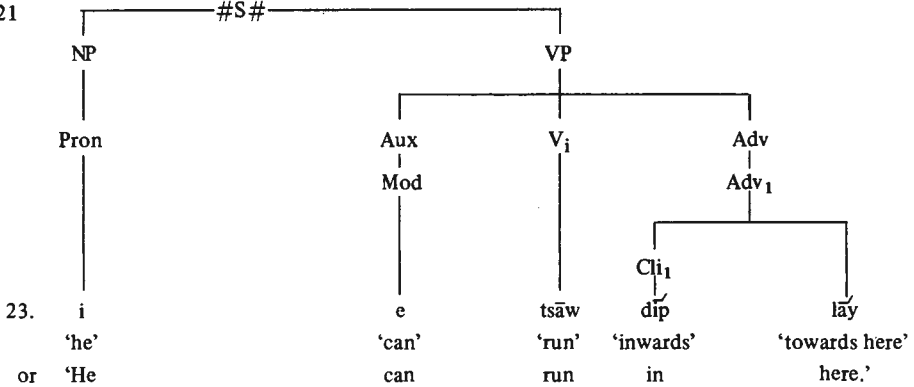
In Amoy, the same thing holds true, so that most clitics are actually verbal particles that function as adverbs. It is therefore safe to conclude that in the absence of any other verb in the verb phrase, such clitic forms function as verbs.

4.1.2. Clitics₁ (Cli₁)

These are directional clitics that combine with *lāy* or *kʰī*, and as clitics, they never occur without either *lāy* or *kʰī*.⁶ They are also forms homophonous to intransitive verbs of similar meanings. Sentence 23 below illustrates the rewrite of Adv₁, such that -

$$\text{Adv}_1 \longrightarrow \text{Cli}_1 \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \overline{lāy} \\ \overline{kʰī} \end{array} \right\}$$

Fig. 21

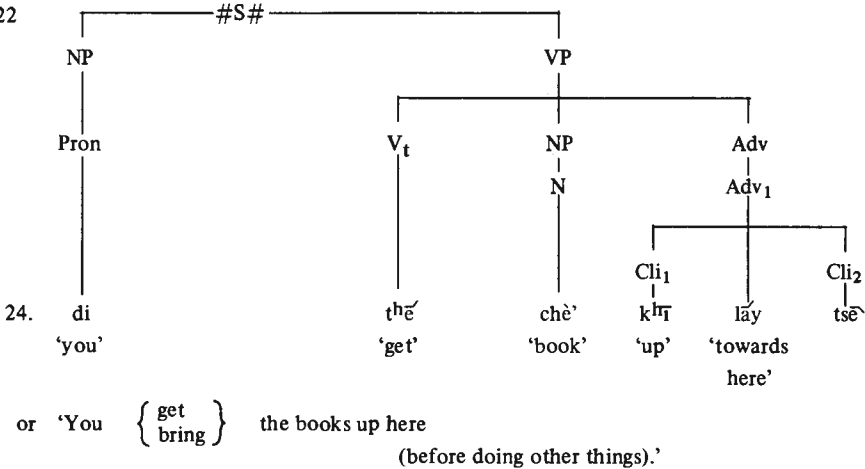


4.1.3. Clitics₂ (Cli₂)

Clitics₂ are those that may occur alone in the adverb constituent. They may also occur with Cli₁, with *lāy* and *kʰī*, or both. Sentence 24 below illustrates the use of such a clitic, where -

$$\text{Adv}_1 \longrightarrow \text{Cli}_1 \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \overline{lāy} \\ \overline{kʰī} \end{array} \right\} \text{Cli}_2$$

Fig. 22



⁶Ko and Tan treat such combinations in Taiwanese as double enclitics:

"These combinations are very fundamental, since each one of these complete combinations will be used frequently in Taiwanese as a suffix to many root verbs. These double enclitics will be attached to many stem verbs as double enclitics." (1960:418)

4.2.1. Adverbs of Time₁ (TimAdv₁)

These indicate the time of the action in the VP. They answer the question when the action was completed, is being completed, or will be completed.

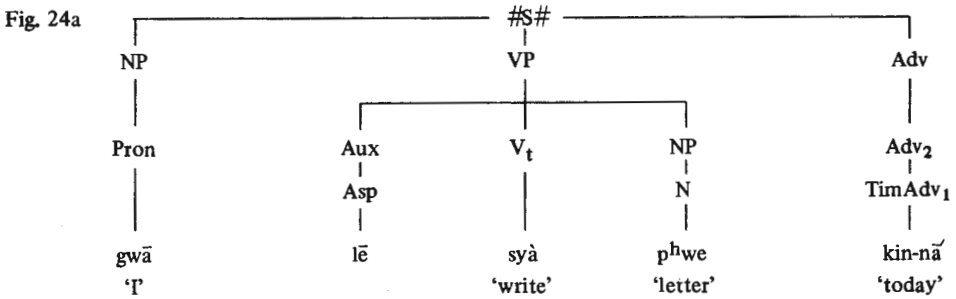
In sentence position within surface structure, adverbs of time₁ always occur either before or after the topic NP, as accounted for by the following rule.

$$T-4_{ob} \quad NP \quad VP \quad TimAdv_1 \quad \Longrightarrow \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} TimAdv_1 \quad NP \quad VP \\ NP \quad TimAdv_1 \quad VP \end{array} \right.$$

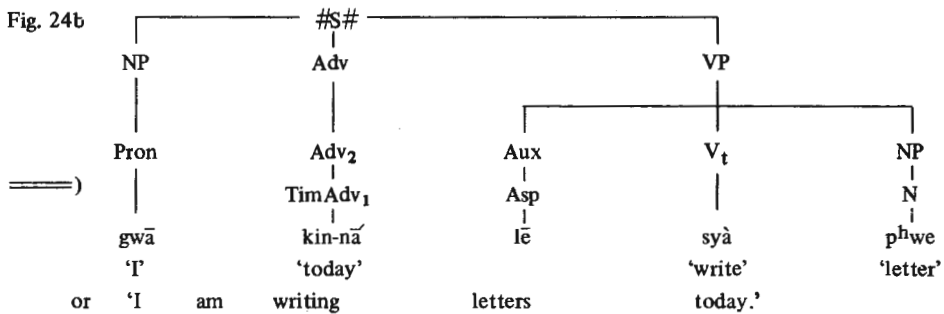
Example:

26. gwā kin-nā̃ lē syà p^hwe
 'I' 'today' 'Write' 'letter'
 or 'I am writing letters today.'

Deep structure:



Surface structure:



4.2.2. Adverbs of Time₂ (TimAdv₂)

These indicate the length of time of the action in the VP. They answer the question of how long the action took place, is taking place, or will take place. Such TimAdv₂ are composed of a noun with [+Time] feature and an obligatory numeral or clitic (Cli₄) or both, as generated by the following rule.

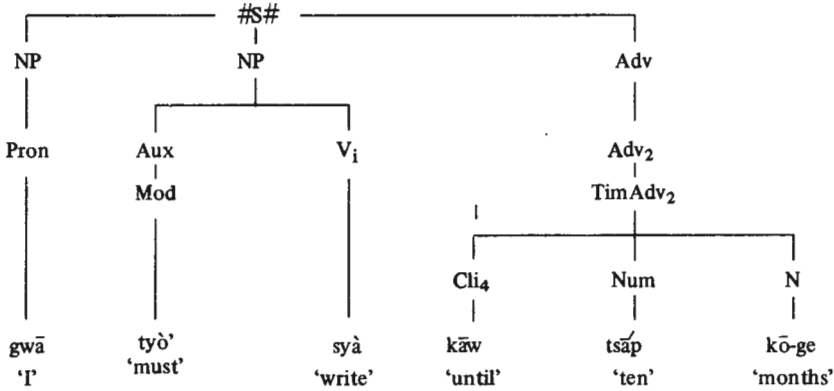
$$P-18 \quad TimAdv_2 \quad \longrightarrow \quad \left\{ (Cli_4) (Num) \right\} \quad \left[\begin{array}{l} N \\ +F \\ +Time \end{array} \right]$$

Example:

29. gwā tyò' syà kāw tsāp kō-ge
 'I' 'must' 'write' 'until' 'ten' 'months'

Deep and surface structures:

Fig. 25



4.2.3. Adverbs of Place (PIAdv)

These consist of locative phrases where —

LocP ———) ti- { deictic }
 NP (NP)

In surface structure, adverbs of place may sometimes occur after the topic NP, thus —

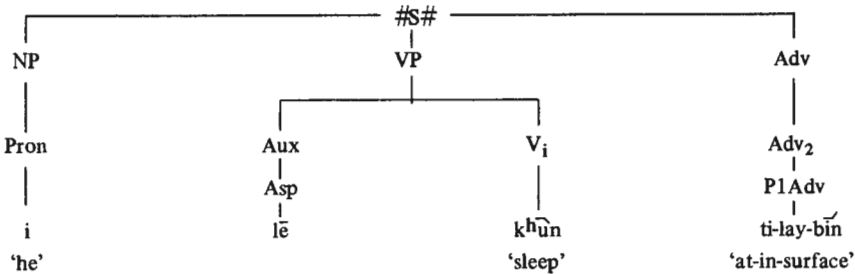
T-5_{op} NP VP PIAdv =====) NP PIAdv VP

Example:

28. i it-lay-bín lē khūn
 'he' 'at-in-surface' 'sleep'
 or 'He { is } sleeping inside.'

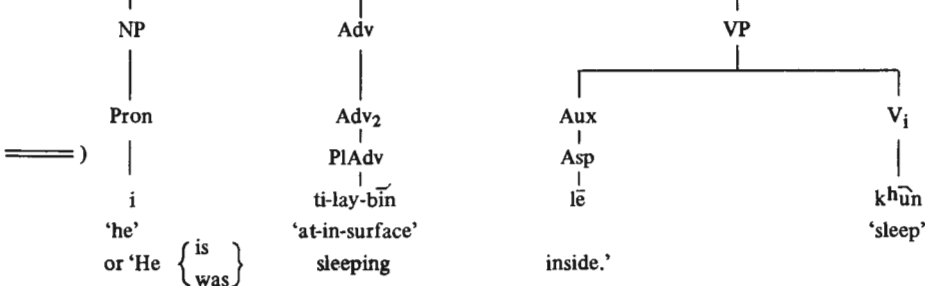
Deep structure:

Fig. 26a



Surface structure:

Fig. 26b



4.2.4. Adverbs of Manner (ManAdv)

These are used to describe the action in the VP and consist of adjective phrases where –

Adjp ———) (Int) Adj

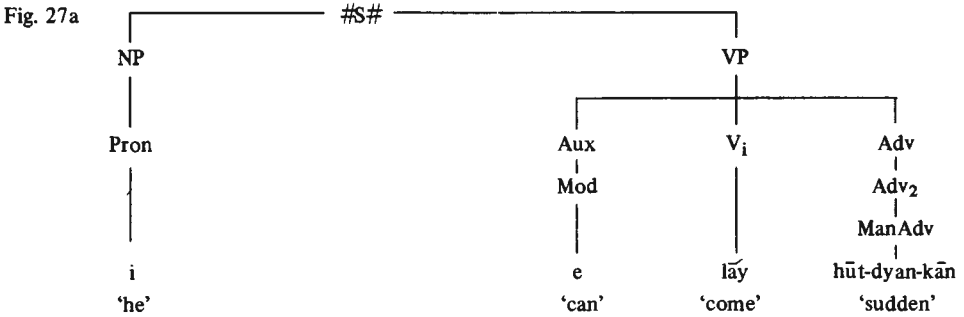
In surface structure, the adverb of manner appears in positions other than that after the VP, as accounted for by the following rule.

$$T-6_{ob} \left[\dots \text{Aux} \dots \text{ManAdv} \right] \text{VP} \implies \left[\dots \text{Aux} \text{ManAdv} \dots \right] \left[\dots \text{ManAdv} \text{Aux} \dots \right] \text{VP}$$

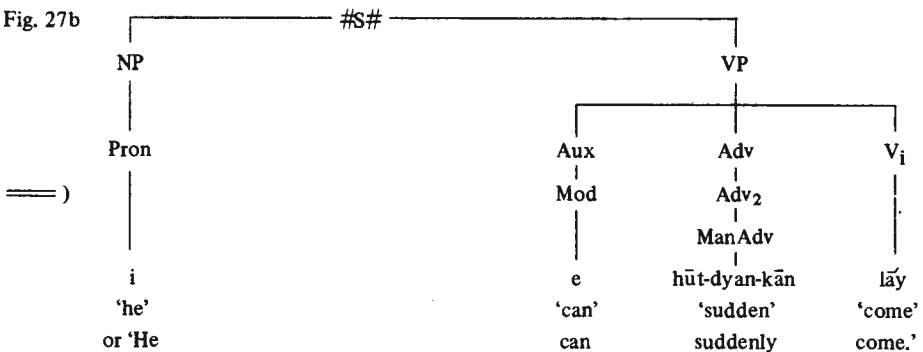
Example:

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------|-------|--------------|--------|
| 29. | i | e | hūt-dyan-kān | lāy |
| | 'he' | 'can' | 'sudden' | 'come' |
| | or 'He | can | suddenly | come.' |

Deep structure:



Surface structure:



4.2.5. Adverbs of Mood (MoAdv)

These indicate speculation, surprise, certainty, or uncertainty. Some examples are the following:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>kh̄yām-chây</i> | 'maybe' |
| <i>bo-pān</i> | 'perhaps' |
| <i>kh̄ā-lān</i> | 'seeming' |
| <i>gwan-lāy</i> | 'so (surprise)' |
| <i>tī-tīŋ</i> or <i>ūn-tāŋ</i> | 'surely or certainly' |
| <i>bo-ū-tīŋ</i> or <i>bo-ūn-tāŋ</i> | 'not surely or not certainly' |

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