Justin Watkins

Wa (Paraok)

Introduction

Location and number of speakers

The speakers of Wa are located in a geographical area referred to by Gérard Diffloth (1980) as the Waic corridor, situated between the Salween and Mekong rivers, an area which straddles the south-western Chinese province of Yúnnán, the Shan States of north-eastern Burma and Northern Thailand. The Wa are thought to be among the autochthonous inhabitants of the area they occupy. Luó (1995) writes that a group likely to have been the ancestors of the Wa was in Yúnnán as early as the Qín dynasty (3rd century BC). In any case, it seems likely that the speakers of Northern Mon-Khmer languages were settled in the present-day Wa-speaking area earlier than other groups which now make up the majority of the population of the area, primarily speakers of Tibeto-Burman and Tai-Kadai languages.

Speaker numbers and dialects

The language described here, also known as Paraok, is the dialect of Wa spoken in Aishuai (Yànshuāi 岩帅), which is the one most widely understood and viewed as standard. Speaker numbers in such a geographically remote, topographically diverse and politically disparate area can at best only be estimates, but a working figure from the latest edition of the SIL Ethnologue (Lewis 2009) puts the total number of speakers of Wa, including Paraok and other varieties, at just under 1.2 million, with two thirds in China and one third in Burma.

The sub-categorization of dialects within Waic languages is confusing – as is indeed typical for the area when describing languages with a high degree of dialect diversity. SIL’s major groupings (Lewis 2009), and their alternative names, are Vo (Awa, Wa, K’awa, Kawa, Wa Pwi, Wakut), Paraok (Wa, Praok, Baraog, Baraoke) and Western Lawa (Wa, Wa proper, Pava, Luwa, Lua, L’wa, Lavua, Laviüa, Mountain Lawa). The suggested total speaker numbers for these three groups are Vo 618,000, Paraok 528,400 and Western Lawa 82,000. This yields the
most inclusive count of 1,228,400 speakers. The SIL database includes a further 27,000 speakers of Blang (Bulang, Pulang, Pula, Plang, Kawa, K’ala, Kontoi) and 7000 of Eastern Lawa (Wiang Papao Lua), bringing to about 1.25 million the estimated total population speaking any of the Wa languages included in Diffloth (1980). This figure may certainly involve a degree of speculation and/or overlap.

Outside the main Wa-speaking area, migrations in recent decades have seen Wa villages established in northern Thailand. The oldest settlements, up to fifty years old, are closely integrated into Thai society, though the majority have been established within the last two generations. Further afield, there is a detectable Wa presence in Yangon/Rangoon, Taunggyi and Mandalay in Burma. Small numbers of Wa reside in Kunming and across Yunnan province in China.

**Wa within Mon-Khmer**

Generally, Wa languages are placed in the Palaungic or Palaung-Wa branch of Northern Mon-Khmer. Gérard Diffloth (1980, 1989) sifts through the fragmentary and often contradictory information published on the Wa languages and develops further the classification of the Wa languages proposed by Michel Ferlus (1974). Diffloth (1980) uses the term Waic to refer to one section of the Palaungic branch of Mon-Khmer for which he posits a common reconstructable source, Proto Waic.

Broadly speaking, Diffloth (1980) identifies three distinct groups of Waic languages, namely Bulang (formerly ‘Samtau’), Wa and Lawa, as mentioned above. The areas inhabited by the speakers of the three groups of Waic languages are geographically distinct. Lawa speakers are located for the most part in Northern Thailand, while speaker of Wa (including Paraok) inhabit areas further north in the ‘Waic corridor’ in the Shan States and into Yunnan. The offshoots of Bulang are spoken mostly in smaller areas to the north and north east of Keng Tung and into Yunnan.

**Ethno-linguistic comments**

The status of Wa as a viable language is threatened by the encroachment of Chinese, and to a lesser extent also Burmese. The Wa lexicon, in particular, is subject to a high rate of attrition from borrowed Chinese vocabulary. Wa speakers live interspersed with speakers of many other languages. In the experience of the author, speakers of other languages rarely learn Wa, sometimes even in mixed marriages, while Wa speakers are typically multilingual. Of the small sample of some two dozen Wa speakers recorded for a field study (Watkins
2002) in the late 1990s, all were able to speak Chinese or Burmese to some degree if they had lived in China or Burma, or in several cases both. Those who had settled in Thailand also spoke at least some Thai. About half of the group spoke Lahu and about half of those who lived or had lived in the Shan State spoke Shan. A quarter spoke five or more languages.

1 Phonology

1.1 Register

In Wa, as in other Mon-Khmer languages, each vowel can occur in either of two registers, ‘clear’ and ‘breathy’, analogous to the ‘head’ and ‘chest’ registers of Khmer or Mon. The register contrast in Wa, as in Mon-Khmer generally, has a complex of phonetic correlates, including fundamental frequency, vowel quality, phonation type and vowel duration: the particular blend of these in any individual speaker’s production of the register complex may vary, but in general breathy register in Wa is associated with slightly lower fundamental frequency and slightly breathy phonation. The register contrast, described in detail in Watkins (2002, chapter 6), co-occurs with final laryngeal consonants, as illustrated by the set of six words in (1) below, but is neutralized in syllables with a laryngeal initial [ʔ h] or where there is an aspiration gesture in the initial consonant.1

(1) tɛ tɛh tɛʔ tɛ̤ tɛ̤h tɛ̤ʔ
   ‘peach’ ‘less’ ‘land’ ‘peach’ ‘turn’ ‘wager’

1.1.1 Consonants

The inventory of consonants in the Wa phoneme inventory is shown in (2) below. There is a four-way voicing contrast in initial stop consonants (voiced/ unvoiced and aspirated/ unaspirated). Initial consonant clusters are restricted to bilabial and velar stops followed by [l] or [r]. Final consonants are restricted to unreleased voiceless stops [p t c k], nasals [m n ŋ] and glottals [ʔ h]. Final –

1 Wa language data are presented here in broad IPA transcription following the conventions set out in this section. Watkins (2002: 28 ff) gives an account of the phonetic detail of Wa pronunciation; Watkins (2002: 188–200) gives a comparative account of the various orthographies in existence for Wa, none of which are used in this chapter.
*ih* is the reflex of *s* in proto-Waic, just as written Khmer –s is pronounced [h], and survives as final –s in certain Waic dialects (Diffloth 1980). Note especially the large number of breathy-aspirated voiced segments in Wa.

(2) Bilabial Labiodental Alveolar Post-alveolar Palatal Velar Glottal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plosive/affricate</th>
<th>p b</th>
<th>t d</th>
<th>c j</th>
<th>k g</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P̂ h B̂ h</td>
<td>t h</td>
<td>d h</td>
<td>c h</td>
<td>j h</td>
<td>k h G h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>m m̂</td>
<td>n n̂</td>
<td>n̂ n̂</td>
<td>n̂ n̂</td>
<td>n̂ n̂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td>v v̂/f</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>h</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximant</td>
<td>r r̂</td>
<td>y/z</td>
<td>ŷ/ẑ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral approximant</td>
<td>l l̂</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Words illustrating the contrast between these consonants are shown in the table (3) below.

(3) p pɔ ‘side of body’ m mæi ‘and’ y yəoŋ ‘village’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>p h p hao ‘now’</th>
<th>m h m̂ hæi ‘to mark’ yh yha ‘to give birth’ (of animals)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b b a ̕n ‘thigh’</td>
<td>n h n hæm ‘blood’ r h r h a ‘tooth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b h b h a ̕n ‘wind’</td>
<td>n h n h æm ‘blood’ r h r h a ‘tooth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t t a ‘to wait’</td>
<td>n h n h ot ‘to push over’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t̂ h t h a ̕ʔ ‘vegetable’</td>
<td>n h n h ot ‘to push over’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d d aɪ ‘flower’</td>
<td>n h n h ‘fire’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d h d h aɪ ‘long’</td>
<td>n h n h o ǂ ‘grain’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c c a ̕ ‘reason’</td>
<td>n h n h o ǂ ‘grain’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c h c h u ‘sack’</td>
<td>s h s o ǂ ‘dog’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j j aʊ ‘to jump’</td>
<td>h h aʊ ‘hair’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j h j h ̂ u ʔ ‘mouth’</td>
<td>? h ʔ ‘I’ (1sg pronoun)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

k k a ‘ten’
k h k h a ‘from’
g g ən ‘mountain’
g h g h o k ‘collar’

Words illustrating the contrast between these consonants are shown in the table (3) below.
1.1.2 Vowels and diphthongs

The Wa vowel system makes use of the nine vowel contrasts and a range of diphthongs, including high back unrounded vowels [ɤ ɯ] typical of Mainland Southeast Asian languages. There is no duration contrast. Watkins (2002) gives phonological and historical arguments for an analysis which recognizes five phonologically unitary diphthongs in Wa, shown on the vowel quadrilateral in (4) and the table (5) below, though the number of diphthongs in other analyses varies. In any case, the surface phonetic detail of diphthongs is particularly subject to variation between speakers and dialects (Watkins 2002: 34).

The Chinese descriptions which largely inform the transcription used in this chapter transcribe final approximants [j] and [w] as glides i and u. Furthermore, final palatals /ŋ k/ merge with final palatals /ɲ c/ when preceded by /i/, consistent with the off-glides before palatals observed generally in Mon-Khmer languages.

(4)

(5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i</th>
<th>pi</th>
<th>‘flute’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>ke</td>
<td>‘gourd’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ε</td>
<td>kε</td>
<td>‘sweet’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>ka</td>
<td>‘afterwards’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɔ</td>
<td>po</td>
<td>‘side (of body)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>po</td>
<td>‘mortar’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>pu</td>
<td>‘to fly’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɤ</td>
<td>ry</td>
<td>‘to pull’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɯ</td>
<td>su</td>
<td>‘to pour’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ia | ?iak | ‘small’ |
| ai | taiʔ | ‘hand’ |
| au | hauk | ‘hair’ |
| ao | haok | ‘to go up’ |
| ua | kuat | ‘cold’ |
1.2 Syllable structure

Chinese analysts (Zhōu & Yán 1984; Wáng & Chén 1981) describe the segmental tier of the Wa syllable as a two-element object with an initial and a final, following the fǎnqiè syllable template of the Tāng dynasty Chinese rhyme dictionaries (Norman 1988: 24). According to the Chinese accounts, a Wa syllable must comprise an initial, a final and a register specification. The initial consists of one or two consonants; the final of at least one and up to three vowels plus an optional final consonant. This structure is expressed by Chinese analysts Wáng & Chén (1981: 40) as follows (ignoring register); optional elements are in parentheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>initial</th>
<th>final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C₁ (C₂)</td>
<td>(V₁) V₂ (V₃) (C₃)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this very overpredictive framework, only C₁ and V₂ are unrestricted. C₂ is exclusively /r/ or /l/, V₁ and V₃ can often be analysed as consonant glides /y/ or /w/, which restricts the schema considerably, and the final consonant C₃ may be a plain stop, nasal or one of /ʔ/ or /h/, resulting in a syllable structure which is squarely consistent with the Mainland Southeast Asian stereotype as described by Henderson (1965) and Enfield (2005: 182).

1.2.1 Wa sesquisyllabicity and historical morphology

Henderson’s (1952: 150–151) description of the phonological structure of Khmer is a good illustration of morphological affixation typically observed in the Mon-Khmer languages of Mainland Southeast Asia. Examples are given in (6). Henderson describes monosyllables in Khmer as ‘extensile’, capable of yielding ‘extended monosyllable’, or may have a ‘minor syllable’ with a tightly constrained structure added to it, yielding a ‘minor disyllable’ or ‘sesquisyllable’ in the terminology of Matisoff. The minor disyllable, a fourth structural type, has an initial syllable with restricted variation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(6) simple monosyllable</th>
<th>extended monosyllable</th>
<th>minor disyllable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ញែ ‘wait’</td>
<td>ញ្កញែ ‘watch one another’</td>
<td>ញែ ‘to pledge’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ឆ ‘wait’</td>
<td>ញ្កញែ ‘watch one another’</td>
<td>ញែ ‘to pledge’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ខែន ‘be born’</td>
<td>ខែន ‘be born’</td>
<td>ញែ ‘give’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>គែ ‘sleep’</td>
<td>គែ ‘sleep’</td>
<td>ញ្កឱ ‘birth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>មែ ‘sleep’</td>
<td>មែ ‘sleep’</td>
<td>ញែ ‘go to bed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ដែ ‘sleep’</td>
<td>ដែ ‘sleep’</td>
<td>ញ្កឱ ‘birth’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Mon-Khmer extended monosyllable, called a sesquisyllable by Matisoff (1973), shows what remains of a morphologically rich disyllabic stage of Proto Mon-Khmer (Diffloth 1980), and points to the possibilities morphological complexity observed to a greater or lesser degree in the Mon-Khmer languages of Mainland Southeast Asia, including the Northern Mon-Khmer branch to which Wa belongs (see Shorto 1963 on Palaung and Riang-Lang; Svantesson 1983a on Kammu).

Within Northern Mon-Khmer, presyllables survive in varying stages of decay; in Wa the morphological system of prefixation has all but disappeared, leaving only a few prefixes with a broad, ill-defined range of functions. By far the most common presyllable in the Wa lexicon is s-. According to Shorto (1963: 55), “In Praok [Wa], s- probably results from the generalization in almost all prefixial contexts of a prefix which originally corresponded to those with an initial s- in [Palaung and Riang-Lang].” Shorto proposes that Wa s- may be a vestige of a prefix *siC-, where C represents a stop. The second consonant of this prefix, or the single consonant of the other historical prefixes b- and g- which he describes, is preserved only when the initial consonant of the host syllable is r- or l-, permitting the formation of a morphologically complex consonant cluster. The prefixes b- and g- cannot form any other clusters; if they are prefixed to a morpheme with any other initial consonant, the stops are deleted, leaving behind only their voicing. Illustrative examples of these vestiges of Wa affixational morphology are given in (7) below, data from Wáng & Chén (1984).

(7) Wa affixational morphology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefixation and Cluster Formation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lah &gt; glah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘burn’ &gt; ‘hearth’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voicing of Initial Stop:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefixation and Voicing of Stop:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pʉ &gt; bʉ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘thick’ &gt; ‘thickness’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefixation and Voicing of Stop:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kɨap &gt; s.giap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘thick’ &gt; ‘thickness’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whatever their provenance, these morphological processes are not productive in the modern language. Additionally, s- may occur in some words as an optional and morphologically redundant prefix, as in (8).
In Wa the sesquisyllabic structure is not entirely restricted to the s- pre syllable. In addition, the sesquisyllabic structure is sometimes observed when the first element of a bisyllabic (often partly reduplicative) sequence is reduced, as in (9). Reduction of this kind tends towards a consonant + indeterminate vowel, or maximally to the s.- pre syllable, pronounced with or without an epenthetic vowel.

(9) Reduction of bisyllables to sesquisyllables. (Data from Wáng and Chén (1981)
  su so ‘muddled up’ > [su.so] ~ [sə.so] ~ [s'.so] ~ [s.so]
  ci kua ‘smallpox’ > [ʨi.kwa] ~ [ɕi.kwa] ~ [s'.kwa] ~ [s.kwa]
  jə r̩ah ‘frog’ > [ʥə.r̩ah] ~ [ʥi.r̩ah] ~ [s'.r̩ah] ~ [s.r̩ah]

The difference in phonological structure between sesquisyllables and monosyllables with initial consonant clusters or initial ?', shown in (10) and (11), is evident from the fact that the two can occur together in single morpheme, albeit with morphologically complex etymology.

(10) s.- pre syllables in conjunction with initial consonant clusters
  s.blap s.prih s.gluc s.ghrah
  ‘strike, kick’ ‘chapped’ ‘urge, hasten’ ‘rinse’

(11) s.- pre syllables contrasted with initial s-
  sʔanŋ sanŋ
  ‘bone’ ‘want’
  sʔu su
  ‘warm’ ‘intentionally’
  sʔut sut
  ‘swollen’ ‘pick up’
  sʔoʔ soʔ
  ‘rubber’ ‘dog’

2 Morphology

As is the case in many Southeast Asian languages, defining the word in Wa is not always a straightforward matter, so for the purposes of this section ‘word’ is
interpreted as any cluster of morphemes which might usefully be considered to be a single lexeme. In the last section it was shown that Wa affixational morphology is entirely lexicalized and unanalyzable, such that the morphemes making up words are typically monosyllabic (or at most sesquisyllabic). The languages from which Wa has borrowed vocabulary—principally the varieties of Chinese and Tai languages found in areas adjacent to the Wa-speaking areas—also strongly favour monosyllables, though loans from other languages, for instance Indo-European ones, are not.

2.1 Morphological derivation by compounding

The Wa lexicon makes extensive use of compounding. The following examples (12)–(24) illustrate the way in which nouns and verbs can combine to complex polymorphic noun phrases.

(12) \(N_1N_2\) : synonyms (noun\(_1\) = noun\(_2\))

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{krạɯŋ} & \quad \text{kʰrai} \\
\text{clothes} & \quad \text{clothes} \\
& \text{‘clothing, things, goods, possessions’}
\end{align*}
\]

(13) \(N_1N_2N_3N_4\) : synonyms (noun\(_1\) = noun\(_2\)), made up of (noun\(_3\) and noun\(_4\))

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{krạɯŋ} & \quad \text{kʰrai} & \quad \text{dai} & \quad \text{tɕah} \\
\text{clothes} & \quad \text{clothes} & \quad \text{skirt} & \quad \text{shirt} \\
& \text{‘clothing, clothes’}
\end{align*}
\]

(14) \(N_1N_2\) : noun\(_1\) associated with noun\(_2\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{krạɯŋ} & \quad \text{nạɲ} & \quad \text{pạoʔ} & \quad \text{ɲịɛʔ} & \quad \text{kạɲ} & \quad \text{ɲịɛʔ} & \quad \text{ɲịɛʔ} & \quad \text{ʑʰia} \\
\text{equipment} & \quad \text{war} & \quad \text{relatives} & \quad \text{house} & \quad \text{work} & \quad \text{house} & \quad \text{house} & \quad \text{bee} \\
& \text{‘weapons’} & \quad \text{‘family member’} & \quad \text{‘housework’} & \quad \text{‘beehive’} \\
\text{ɲịɛʔ} & \quad ?aɲ \\
\text{house} & \quad \text{shit} \\
& \text{‘toilet’}
\end{align*}
\]

(15) NV – noun which is verb (where verb is a stative/adjectival verb)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{dɯ̤} & \quad \text{mʰɔm} & \quad \text{dɯ̤} & \quad \text{lṳt} \\
\text{place} & \quad \text{good} & \quad \text{place} & \quad \text{wrong} \\
& \text{‘advantage’} & \quad \text{‘error, mistake’}
\end{align*}
\]
(16) NV – noun which verbs

\[
duŋ \quad s.dguh \quad teŋk \quad pih \quad teŋk \quad pu
\]
place finish machine suck machine fly
‘ending’ ‘vacuum cleaner’ ‘aeroplane’

(17) (NV\(_1\))(V\(_2\)A) – (noun which verb\(_1\)s) which (verb\(_2\)s adjectivally)

\[
teŋk \quad pu \quad haok \quad dʑун
\]
machine fly climb vertical
‘helicopter’

(18) N\(_1\)(VN\(_2\)) – noun\(_1\) which verbs noun\(_2\)

\[
teŋk \quad zuŋ \quad kratųŋ \quad teŋk \quad tiəm \quad laŋ \quad teŋk \quad teŋ \quad krąunųŋ
\]
machine press clothes machine write text machine sew clothes
‘iron’ ‘typewriter, computer’ ‘sewing machine’

(19) NV – noun where one verbs

\[
ŋieʔ \quad ʔit \quad duŋ \quad tum \quad ŋieʔ \quad ʔan
\]
house sleep place rest house defecate
‘bedroom’ ‘destination’ ‘toilet’

(20) N\(_1\)(VN\(_2\)) – noun\(_1\) where one verbs noun\(_2\)

\[
ŋieʔ \quad ʔah \quad laŋ
\]
house read text
‘school’

(21) N\(_1\)(VN\(_2\)) – noun\(_1\) where noun\(_2\) verbs

\[
duŋ \quad pəunŋ \quad ʔɔ li
\]
place rest bus
‘bus station’

(22) (N\(_1\),VN\(_1\))(N\(_2\),V\(_2\)) – (noun\(_1\) which one verb\(_1\)s) and (noun\(_2\) which one verb\(_2\)s)

\[
krąunųŋ \quad təup \quad ʔup \quad ʔɔm
\]
clothes wear rice eat
‘food and clothing’

(23) (N\(_1\),V\(_1\))(N\(_1\),V\(_2\)) – (noun\(_1\) for verb\(_1\)ing) and synonym (noun\(_1\) for verb\(_2\)ing)

\[
krąunųŋ \quad təup \quad krąunųŋ \quad ʔɔm
\]
clothes wear clothes wear
‘clothing’
A few nouns may serve as the head noun in compounds both with their original lexical meaning but also in a semantically bleached form. The higher the degree of semantic bleaching, the greater the productivity of the noun in morphological derivations. For instance, kraʔ ‘road’ may retain the meanings ‘road’ or ‘way/method’ as in (25):

(25) kraʔ hɔ teʰɤ kraʔ ?ot
    road train way live
    ‘railway’ ‘way of life’

or operate as a largely functional morpheme as in (26):

(26) kraʔ tɕiʔ blon lʰaoŋ kraʔ gauʔ rʰɔm kraʔ s.bʰɔm
    road can much high road happy road starve
    ‘technology’ ‘happiness’ ‘famine, starvation’

The relativizer pa is one of very few morphemes used in morphological derivations which is purely functional, or rather a grammatical morpheme whose source is obscure, yielding nouns such as (27) and (28) meaning ‘that which is verbed’ or ‘that which verbs’ (where the verb may be stative/adjectival):

(27) pa pɒn
    REL receive
    ‘income, earnings’ < ‘that which is received’

(28) pa rquh pa sɯ
    REL upright REL straight
    ‘righteousness’ < ‘that which is upright and straight’

A number of ethnic nationalities and clans, as in (29), are described using such formulations:

(29) pa ?auʔ? pa rəok pa rʰaʔ
    REL ?auʔ? REL rəok REL rʰaʔ
    Plang Paraok, Wa Pa Rhax (a Wa clan name)
2.2 Psycho-collocations

The only frequently encountered psycho-collocation in the sense of Matisoff (1986) in the Wa lexicon is \( r^{h}m \) ‘heart’, which appears in over 200 phrases in the Wa Dictionary database (Watkins 2013). This is consistent with Wa’s geographical Mainland Southeast Asian linguistic neighbours which also use a ‘heart/mind’ morpheme to convey emotions, namely Chinese 心 xīn, Tai/Shan ʦau̯ ကစာ and Burmese စိတ် seiʔ ၬ (see Vittrant 2013). Overwhelmingly, such collocations in Wa take the form VERB + \( r^{h}m \) ‘heart VERBS’ – examples are given in (30).

(30) ʔat \( r^{h}m \) heart is salty ‘angry’
ʔaoh \( r^{h}m \) heart is hot ‘upset, irritated’
praiʔ \( r^{h}m \) heart is spicy ‘angry’
tat \( r^{h}m \) heart cuts ‘decide’
tjn \( r^{h}m \) heart is big ‘bold’
tyk \( r^{h}m \) heart is asthmatic ‘sad’
kaoh \( r^{h}m \) heart stands up ‘indignant, excited’
haʔ \( r^{h}m \) heart climbs ‘interested, envy’
l⁠²aonj \( r^{h}m \) heart is tall ‘arrogant’
n⁠²uuk \( r^{h}m \) heart is asthmatic ‘glum, depressed’
n⁠²iən \( r^{h}m \) heart is hard, stiff ‘stubborn’
k⁠²rian \( r^{h}m \) heart is engaged ‘obliged, embarrassed’ (cf. Burmese ?a³-na²-de²)
k⁠²rianj \( r^{h}m \) heart is seasoned, dried out ‘cordial, polite’
k⁠²rup \( r^{h}m \) heart is tired ‘gloomy, disheartened’
l⁠¹c \( r^{h}m \) heart enters ‘interested’ (cf. Burmese seiʔ win²-za¹-de²)
lyt \( r^{h}m \) heart is wrong ‘cause offence’
dɔt \( r^{h}m \) heart breaks ‘die’
b⁠¹aŋ \( r^{h}m \) heart is wide open ‘generous’
dak \( r^{h}m \) heart retreats ‘disgusted’
sau \( r^{h}m \) uses heart ‘engrossed’
t ɔ \( r^{h}m \) heart is shallow ‘intolerant’

These collocations VERB + \( r^{h}m \) can be extended using the expressive doublet \( r^{h}m \ r⁠¹i \ ‘heart’ to give VERB + \( r^{h}m \ r⁠¹i \) or to form an ABAC expressive reduplicative form [VERB \( r^{h}m \ VERB r⁠¹i \], as in (31); see also section 3.3.2 below.
2.3 Elaborate expressions

2.3.1 Rhyming proverbs and sayings

Wang et al. (1992) is a major source of several thousand Wa proverbs and sayings. Proverbs and sayings in Wa typically pivot about a central rhyme, usually a near-exact one, which straddles the divide between two syntactic domains. The material either side of the divide may vary greatly in quantity and syntactical complexity. Often the syntax of the two halves of the whole phrase is symmetrical in structure. Elaborate sayings and proverbs of this kind frequently contain high-register Tai loans. The subject matter may be either pedestrian or lofty, sometimes with historical or legendary allusions. Some examples (32)–(34) follow, in which the third and fourth syllables rhyme or nearly rhyme.

(32) pa̤n daɯʔ ƞac, lac daɯʔ grỳan.
rest place fragrant, enter place hunting hide
‘Rest in a fragrant place, enter a hunter’s hide.’ – Describes the joys of hunting.

(33) su ƞoh zuut, prút ƞoh grai
splash 3sg extinguished, smother 3sg gone
‘Sprinkle it out, extinguish it till it’s gone.’ – A prayer to ward off fire.

(34) klɛh tiʔ voŋ, luŋ tiʔ bɔ̤k.
play one period, act diligently one time
‘Be romantic for a while, make a true effort once.’ (said between a courting man and woman.)

2.3.2 Expressive doublets and derived reduplicative forms

Wa makes use of expressive doublets as in (35), where an ordinary noun X is paired with an expressive synonym X*, which may be obscure or poetic and typically occurs nowhere else in the lexicon.
X=X* doublets such as these can be used in combination with another pair of words to make four-syllable expressions, as in (36):

(36) X X*
    prɛʔ prɯm laïugu > prɛʔ prɯm laïugu
    food/grain trade ‘grain produced to sell’

They can also be used as the base for part-reduplicated four-syllable nominal or verbal forms (37).

(37) NOUN X NOUN.REDUP X*
    ηʔ prɛʔ ηʔ prɯm > ηʔ prɛʔ ηʔ prɯm
    leftovers food leftovers food* ‘leftovers’

    VERB X VERB.REDUP X*
    yũh prɛʔ yũh prɯm > yũh prɛʔ yũh prɯm
    make food make food* ‘cook food’

    loh rʰom loh rʰi > loh rʰom loh rʰi
    change heart change heart* ‘start afresh’

    soŋ rʰom soŋ rʰi > soŋ rʰom soŋ rʰi
    bitter heart bitter heart* ‘enraged’

Both the ABBC rhyme pattern and the expressive forms derived from doublets can be are used to form extended expressive forms of everyday words. For instance, the three bimorphemic compounds in (38) all mean ‘neighbour’:

(38) s.juŋ plɔk = pgoʔ nʰom = pgoʔ plɔk
    close by neighbourhood friend plot of land friend neighbourhood ‘neighbour’ ‘neighbour’ ‘neighbour’

Additionally, these can form an ABAC-type reduplicated phrase (39):

(39) pgoʔ plɔk pgoʔ nʰom
    friend neighbourhood friend plot of land ‘neighbour’
and also an ABBC-type elaborate partly reduplicated form (40):

(40) s.\textit{j\text{\textcircled{\textae}n}} \quad p\textit{\text{\textcircled{\textae}k}} \quad s.\textit{d\text{\textcircled{\textae}h\text{\textcircled{\textae}k}} \quad \textit{\text{\textcircled{\textae}}}\textit{\textcircled{\textae}}} \\
\text{close by neighbourhood pile up house} \\
\text{‘nextdoor neighbour’}

Alliterative partial reduplication is also used in Wa to form aesthetic ideophones. In (41), the initial consonant is used to form a pre-syllable with the vowel [u] in the register of the source syllable.

(41) \textit{k\text{\textcircled{\textae}n}} \quad > \quad \textit{k\text{\textcircled{\textae}n} \quad k\text{\textcircled{\textae}n} \quad \textit{d\text{\textcircled{\textae}}} \\
\text{‘twist’} \quad \text{‘twist repeatedly’} \quad \text{‘trample’} \quad \text{‘trample repeatedly’}

This kind of pattern may simply be used to generate a number of alternative expressive forms in (42):

(42) \textit{pu pra}\textit{\text{\textcircled{\textae}}} \quad \textit{pru pra}\textit{\text{\textcircled{\textae}}} \quad \textit{pu}\textit{\text{\textcircled{\textae}} \quad pru} \textit{\text{\textcircled{\textae}} \\
\text{‘scatter, disperse’}

We find also emphatic forms with euphonic chiming syllables – where the chime may precede or follow the simple unadorned source lexeme, as in (43):

(43) \textit{k\text{\textcircled{\textae}n}} \quad > \quad \textit{k\text{\textcircled{\textae}n} \quad k\text{\textcircled{\textae}} \text{\textcircled{\textae}}} \\
\text{‘drill’} \quad \text{‘interrogate, question’}

\textit{b\text{\textcircled{\textae}}} \quad > \quad \textit{s.b\text{\textcircled{\textae}} \quad s.b\text{\textcircled{\textae}}} \quad \textit{s.b\text{\textcircled{\textae}} \quad s.b\text{\textcircled{\textae}}} \\
\text{‘sticky’} \quad \text{‘miserly’}

\textit{s.k\text{\textcircled{\textae}}} \quad > \quad \textit{s.k\text{\textcircled{\textae}}} \quad \textit{s.k\text{\textcircled{\textae}}} \\
\text{‘cold’} \quad \text{‘freezing cold’}


2.4 Loanwords

The Wa lexicon incorporates a large amount of loan vocabulary from a number of languages. The Wa speaking area lies on the boundary between the Chinese-speaking world and Mainland Southeast Asia. Predictably, words from the \textit{lingue franche} of the area have found their way into the Wa lexicon, in particular Yunnanese Chinese and Tai/Shan languages spoken in Yunnan, China, and in Shan State, Burma. Only a small part of the Wa speaking people have come un-
der the influence of Buddhism, and so the language has absorbed little vocabulary from Sanskrit or Pali.

Chinese loans are very large in number (at least 10% of the lexicon as documented in Watkins 2013), particularly in the domains of politics, science, agriculture, education and technology. Tai/Shan loans in Wa are fewer in number, and include the names of some plants, crops, crafts and materials, and larger numerals (which are themselves Tai/Shan borrowings from Chinese). Tai/Shan is also the source of some high-register ceremonial and formal language found in proverbs and sayings.

Loans from English, typically via Burmese, are found in varieties of Wa spoken on the Burmese side of the border, and include vocabulary to do with technology which was introduced to the Wa at the time of early colonial contact with the British. Loans from English include those in (44):

(44) Wa pati < Burmese ပတီ pa1ti2 < English ‘party’
    Wa sәi kɛ < Burmese ဆိုင်ကယ် shaiN2-kɛ2 < English ‘[motor]cycle’

Certain words are likely to be borrowed from Chinese on the Chinese side of the border and from Burmese (or English via Burmese) on the Burmese side of the border, but there are also Chinese-Burmese hybrids which show the diversity of influences on Wa from both sides, as in n (45).

(45) mɔʔ tʰɔʔ chɤ Burmese ေမာ်ေတ်် mɔ2tɔ2 (< English ‘motor’)
    ‘car’ + Chinese 车 chē ‘vehicle’
    cү yi pʰi ɲg Chinese 主意 zhǔyì ‘idea’
    ‘knowledge’ + Burmese ပညာ pyiN2-ɲa2 (< Pali paññā) ‘knowledge’

Many loanwords appear preceded by a Wa superordinary, as seen in (46) the following examples.

(46) classroom ɲɛʔ tfәʔ суʔ < Wa ɲɛʔ ‘house’ + 教室 jiàoshì ‘classroom’
    mango pliʔ mak муŋ < Wa pliʔ ‘fruit’ + Tai maak2 муŋ3 ‘mango’
    Western suit krauŋ si tfуaŋ < Wa krauŋ ‘clothes’
        + Chinese 西装 xīzhuāng ‘Western suit’
    diesel oil ʙү̀ di-se < Wa ʙү̀ ‘oil’ + Burmese ဒီဇယ် di2-zɛ2
        (< English ‘diesel’)
3 Grammar and Syntax

3.1 Nominal domain

This section describes some of the main features of noun phrases in Wa.

3.1.1 Noun phrases

The schema in (47) and the examples which follow it illustrate the structure of the Wa noun phrase. In general, the noun appears at the leftmost edge.

(47) NOUN relative clause numeral + CLF possessive quantifier / plural demonstrative

(48) jɔːk tìʔ mu
      quail one CLF
   ‘a quail’

(49) pʊi dàn tìʔ tìʔ kauʔ
      person very big hand one CLF
   ‘a very generous person’

(50) p̥oʔ.grɔ̃m loi kauʔ ?an
      friend three CLF that
   ‘Those three friends’

(51) Naŋ Kुai pa graŋ yʊh.nan
      Nang Kuai REL beautiful like.that

   cʮʔ khɔ tìʔ yʊh p̥oʔ.bɛ̄ kɔn pɛʔ
      can suit CONJ make companion child sheep
   ‘Nang Kuai, who is that beautiful, can be the lamb’s companion.’

The basic set of Wa pronouns is set out in (52) below. This type of pronoun system is found also in Palaung and other Northern Mon-Khmer languages, though in a Mainland Southeast Asian context it is unusual for a basic pronoun system to obligatorily contrast dual with plural number, and inclusivity with exclusivity in the 2nd person dual and plural.
(52) Wa pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>dual</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
<td>ʔɤʔ</td>
<td>ʔaʔ</td>
<td>yeʔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>1DU.INCL</td>
<td>1DU.EXCL</td>
<td>1PL.INCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person</td>
<td>maiʔ</td>
<td>paʔ</td>
<td>peʔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2SG</td>
<td>2DU</td>
<td>2PL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person</td>
<td>nɔh</td>
<td>keʔ</td>
<td>kiʔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG</td>
<td>3DU</td>
<td>3PL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no obligatory marking of person or number, but a noun phrase may be marked as dual or plural using one of the 3rd person dual or plural pronouns as a noun-phrase suffix as in (53) and (54).

(53) ʔuc ggoʔ r̥om ʔɤʔ kah [Ø] pa kɐ̆ruŋ ?an kiʔ
very nauseous 1SG PREP [Ø] REL filthy that PL
‘I feel revolted by those filthy [things].’

(54) mɛʔ mon ?an keʔ
wife husband that DUAL
‘that husband and wife couple.’

Empty-headed relative clauses such as pa kɐ̆ruŋ ‘dirty [thing]’ in (53) are very common indeed in Wa. They are explored further in section 4.3.3 below.

Like other Mainland Southeast Asian languages, Wa does not use articles to mark definiteness or indefiniteness. However, degrees of definiteness or indefiniteness can be expressed using the demonstratives or quantifiers such as those listed in (55), following the noun which they qualify.

(55) t̥t̥ tiʔ / buh tiʔ some, any
(t̥t̥)blah some, a few
mɔt̥ tiʔ a certain
ʔin / ?an this / that

3.1.2 Classifiers

The position of classifiers in the noun phrase has been described above. There are few true classifiers in Wa, the notable exceptions being the classifiers kauʔ for people and mu, a general classifier. Besides these two, weights and quantities and a wide variety of countable nouns are used as measure words. A classi-
fier or measure word occurs obligatorily with numbers, but need not be present with demonstratives.

### 3.2 Verbal domain

This section describes the main features of verbs and verb phrases in Wa.

#### 3.2.1 Tense-mode-aspect particles

Like the vast majority of Mainland Southeast Asian languages, verbs in Wa lack inflection of any kind. The tense-mode-aspect system makes use of the pre-verbal morphemes such as in (56), and illustrated in the examples which follow.

(56) *hɔc* perfective marker  
*ʔaŋ* negative marker  
*saʔ* experiential, remote past marker (‘ever’)  
*lai* aspect marker (‘after all’; ‘not any more’ in negative sentences)  
*ɲaŋ* aspect marker (‘not yet’ in negative sentence)

(57)  
3SG PERF dumb REFL, NEG anymore can yell  
‘He was dumbfounded and couldn’t call out (anymore).’

(58)  
rice not.yet cooked, again boil one while  
‘The rice still isn’t cooked, so boil it a while longer.’

(59)  
formerly family 2.PL.EXCL NEG ever enough eat,  
‘In the past our family didn’t have enough to eat, but nowadays we can’t finish it all.’

Other time adverbs are commonly used additionally to express the temporal relations of actions and events, such as those listed in (60) and (61).
(60) $k^a$ai? afterwards, later
  $khan$ then
  $n^a$ao? recently
  $d[i]?$ previously
  $k\ddot{o}$ still

(61) $k^a$ai? after $h\ddot{a}c$ $s\ddot{a}m$ ?e?, $?u$p $k\ddot{o}$ haoh $t\ddot{o}m.n\ddot{e}$
    afterwards, later PERF eat 2.PL.INCL rice still much somewhat
    ‘After we had eaten there was still a lot of rice left.’

3.2.2 Grammaticalization of verbs

The most common grammaticalized verbs in Wa are those which are commonly
found in the language of the Mainland Southeast Asian area. As auxiliary verbs,
they appear following the main verb in serial verb constructions, with the coordi-
nating connection conjunction $t\ddot{i}?\ddot{a}$ between the two.

3.2.2.a $c\ddot{i}\ddot{e}$ ‘to own’ > possessive (POSS)

When the possessor is a pronoun, $c\ddot{i}\ddot{e}$ is not obligatory; it could be omitted from
(62):

(62) $sa\ddot{n}$ $ta?$ $c\ddot{h}\ddot{r}$ $c\ddot{i}\ddot{e}$ $ma\ddot{i}?\ddot{i}$ $h\ddot{u}$
    want ride car POSS 2.SG go
    ‘I want to go in your car.’

The head noun which is possessed can be elided. Prepositional phrases headed
by possessive $c\ddot{i}\ddot{e}$ appear frequently as complement of the copula $m\ddot{\ddot{a}}h$, as in (63)
and (64).

(63) $s.be\ddot{g}i?$ $pr\ddot{e}$ $m\ddot{\ddot{a}}h$ $c\ddot{i}\ddot{e}$ $?i$ $n\ddot{a}p$
    dress silk COP POSS I Nap
    ‘The silk dress is I Nap’s.’

(64) $?a\ddot{n}$ $m\ddot{\ddot{a}}h$ $c\ddot{i}\ddot{e}$ $ma\ddot{i}?\ddot{i}$, $kah$ $m\ddot{\ddot{a}}h$ $c\ddot{i}\ddot{e}$ $n\ddot{\ddot{a}}h$
    NEG COP POSS 2.SG, then COP POSS 3.SG
    ‘If it’s not yours, then it must be his.’
3.2.2.b *pən* ‘to receive’ > ‘can’, physical potentiality

Grammaticalized as a preverbal auxiliary, *pən* indicates physical capability (65), (66), rather than learned or chosen ability, which is expressed with the verb *ciʔ* ‘able, possible’.

(65) *kɛh ʔan pən pai du̥ih kɔt,*
    if  NEG can heal return alive,

    *kiʔ ciʔ muk kaŋ ʔaʔ*
    3.PL may chop head 2.DU.INCL
    ‘If we can’t bring her back to life, they may cut off our heads.’

(66) *ʔan pən jut kah kih tiʔ brə*
    NEG can lack PREP salt one meal
    ‘I can’t do without salt for a single meal’

However, like the grammaticalized forms of this verb in other Southeast Asian languages, the meaning can be hard to pin down, since in some contexts the meaning can veer towards ‘gets to’ or ‘has the opportunity to’, as in (67).

(67) *kon yiʔ pən lḁc dauʔ len kah mɔh pak.ŋai yiʔ*
    child 1PL.EXCL can join in army so is honour 1PL.EXCL
    ‘It is an honour for us that our son can serve in the army.’
    Or: ‘… that our son has the opportunity to…’

3.2.2.c *yəʔ* ‘to see’ > try

Following the main verb, *yəʔ* ‘see’ expresses actions undertaken speculatively or tentatively as in (68). In (69) *yəʔ* ‘see’ appears at the end of the sentence as a resultative complement.

(68) *maiʔ eʰan yəʔ ko ?in*
    2SG sing see song this
    ‘Try singing this song’

(69) *ʔeʔ sum s.mɛŋ nʰoʔ kʰraʔ nʊm ?in yəʔ*
    1PL.INCL plant seed rice new year this see
    ‘We tried planting a new kind of rice this year.’
Unusually for Mainland Southeast Asian languages, the Wa verb *ya̤oʔ* ‘to see’ also grammaticalizes as an auxiliary verb preceding the main verb to express potentiality, usually in negative contexts, as in (70) and (71).

(70)  
\[k\r \k a\k h \ q\a \ y\g o? \ t\i\? \ ?\i h \ p\r \? \]  
thin from NEG see CONJ eat food  
‘Thin from not being able to eat.’

(71)  
\[y\g\m \ ?\i\a k \ ?\y? \ d\i?, \ q\a \ y\g o? \ t\i? \ g\a w \ l\a i\]  
thin from 1SG formerly, NEG see CONJ study writing  
‘When I was young, I didn’t have the chance to go to school’

### 3.2.2.d *tɔʔ* ‘to give’ > causative / preposition

*tɔʔ* ‘give’ has causative and permissive senses as an auxiliary verb, as in (72) and (73). An interesting comparison can be made with the contrasting uses of auxiliary *pe* ‘give’ in Burmese, which may have both permissive and causative meanings, usually when preceding and following the main verb, respectively (see Okano 2005).

(72)  
\[t\o \ n\a h \ h u \ k\h a n\]  
give 3SG go then  
‘May he go!', ‘Tell him to go!’

(73)  
\[m\a i? \ l\a i \ b\l k \ t\i? \ t\o \ n\a h \ g\a c\]  
2SG why only CONJ give 3SG watch  
‘Why did you only let him see it?’

tɔʔ is used in a benefactive sense in (74).

(74)  
\[m\a i? \ h\o c \ t\o \ y\i? \ ?\i h \ p\r \? \ t\i n\]  
2SG come give 2.PL.EX eat food here  
‘You bring food here for us to eat.’
3.2.2.e ʔot ‘live’ > progressive (PROG)

While ʔot seemingly does not occur with stative verbs with a continuous/durative meaning; it is frequently found with non-stative verbs to convey progressive aspect, as in (75) and (76).

(75) nɛ  kin  jɔm saw?  nɔh,  ʔot
very  serious  illness  3SG  PROG

ti?  s.kah  kah.gʰaok.kah.dųŋ
CONJ  talk  ramblingly
‘His illness is especially serious and he is rambling all over the place.’

(76) ʔai p̡o  ʔot  ti?  tót  sup
Ai Pao  PROG  CONJ  smoke  tobacco
‘Ai Pao is smoking tobacco.’

3.2.2.f ʔɯn ‘to put, to set’ > completed/ resultative aspect

(77) kiʔ  liak  tiʔ  ʔɯn  kra̱ɯŋ.
3PL  buy  conj  RESULT  clothes
‘They’ve bought their clothes (and are all ready)’

(78) vaŋ  ʔeʔ  tiʔ  ʔɯn  khoʔ?  ʔin  kiʔ  sön  ʔaŋ  phrɔc
preserve  2.PL.EX  conj  RESULT  tree  this  PL  so.that  NEG  chop
‘We preserve these trees in the forest so they are not cut down.’

3.2.2.g kah ‘undo’

The high-frequency verb kah is of particular interest. As a transitive verb, it has meanings ‘untie’, ‘solve’, ‘cure’:

(79) y̱h buan son,  kah  maoʔ  m̡i
do  favour,  untie  rope  cow
‘Please untie the rope tethering the cow.’
(80) s.dah ʔin kah sauiʔ ʔaoh
medicine this cure illness hear
‘This kind of medicine relieves heatstroke.’

(81) pa kah duŋ bluih gym loʔ mai lāi kā la
REL solve meaning phrase short and speech foreign
‘Explanation of the meaning of short phrases and foreign words.’

Grammaticalized, kah functions as a very high-frequency semantically versatile preposition which can express location ((82)(83)), instrumentality/causation ((84)(85)(86)) and location ((87),(88)), etc.:

Location:
(82) ʔot nɔh kah kawŋ liām
live 3SG kah Menglian
‘He lives in Menglian.’

(83) yṳm lɛn kah nāŋ
die soldier in/from battle
‘The soldier died in battle/from fighting.’

Causation/instrumentality:
(84) taŋk nɔh kah jhɔm sauiʔ tiʔ
tired 3SG kah characteristic illness REFL
‘He is tired because of his illness.’

(85) sɔm kah tʰu
eat_rice kah chopstick
‘eat using chopsticks’

(86) ʔrʔ mat yuh taiʔ tiʔ kah gɔn
1SG cut do hand REFL kah knife
‘I cut my hand with a knife.’

Direction:
(87) ʔa thə ʔin mɔŋ pa haok kah daauʔ mɔŋ tələ
train this is REL depart kah place Mandalay
‘This train is the one which leaves for Mandalay.’
(88) ?e? hu piaŋ kra? kah plak laih
   2.PL.INCL go on road kah area market
   ‘We went along the road towards market.’

When information from an adverbial kah-headed prepositional phrase is fronted for topicalization or focus, kah may be stranded. The information thus fronted may be a noun phrase ((89)(90)), a (nominalized) verb phrase ((91),(92)), or a complete subordinate clause ‘because his father scolded him’ (93). The adverbial force of kah may sometimes be effectively translated with ‘thereby’.

(89) [rɔm s.gaoŋ ?an]i koi ka? tŋ kŋ kah []i
   [water clear that]i have fish big head kah []i
   ‘That clear water has big-headed fish in it.’

(90) [ɲɛʔ prim] ?aŋ p)iʔ ?ot kah []i
   [house old] NEG people live kah []i
   ‘People don’t live in the old house.’

(91) [hoc maiʔ]i ?yʔ kêt gauʔ rhom kah []i
   [come 2SG] 1SG vert happy heart kah []i
   ‘I’m very pleased that you came.’

(92) [hoc koi ngt]i tît.tiʔ kɔʔ ?aŋ lʰat kah []i
   [PERF have gun]i anything then NEG fear kah []i
   ‘Once you have a gun, there is nothing to fear.’

(93) jgo [ʔah kuŋ nɔh gah nɔh]i kum yiam kah []i
   reason [talk father 3SGj to 3SGj] so weep kah []i
   ‘Because his father told him off, he cried (about it).’

3.2.3 Serial verb constructions (SVC)

Nuclear serial verb constructions in Wa are typical of Mainland Southeast Asian languages. Modals can combine freely in contiguous series with a main verb, as in (94) and (95).

(94) ?aŋ p)iʔ ciʔ sut mu koc piaŋ teʔ
   NEG person can pick.up CLF light on earth
   ‘No one can pick up the sunlight on the ground.’
(95) ?y? taŋ yuh s.rụ
1SG must do self
‘I must do [it] myself.’

Several modals can occur together, as in (96).

(96) s.mɛ̤ gat ciʔ saŋ pən dəc təi mhəm s.glɯm?
seed how can will get grow flower good bunch
‘How could seeds like these be cultivated into fine flowers?’

3.2.4 Coordinating conjunction tiʔ

While ‘asymmetrical’ serial verb constructions of this type are common in Wa, ‘symmetrical’ SVCs are not found. If the additional verb is not a modal or a verb which has undergone grammaticalization to at least a partial extent, or optionally if it is, the coordinating conjunction tiʔ (glossed here as CONJ) is used to co-ordinate two verbs (one of which may be a modal) or verb phrases, which may be either two aspects of a single action or consecutive, discrete actions, or somewhere between the two. In this respect it is strikingly similar to the Burmese conjunction pyì, grammaticalized from the verb pyì ‘finish’. In Burmese constructions VERB₁ pyì VERB₂, the two verbs may refer to two distinct actions, or two aspects of a single activity (see Romeo 2008: ch. 7; Vittrant, this volume, table 13, p. 99).

tiʔ is homonymous with a reflexive pronoun tiʔ and interrogative tiʔ ‘what’, but nonetheless it is not clear what the source lexeme for conjunctive tiʔ might be; there is certainly no obvious verbal candidate. The following sentences (97)–(100) illustrate the function of tiʔ, in which the verbs conjoined form part of a single event with the same subject and shared tense, aspect, modality and polarity.

(97) nɔh ciʔ tiʔ plɛ̤ loʔ maŋ khaŋ loʔ vaʔ
3SG can CONJ translate speech Burma from speech Wa
‘He can translate from Wa into Burmese.’

(98) paih tiʔ pheʔ pliʔ
peel CONJ eat fruit
‘Peel and eat fruit [two activities co-occurring].’
(Or also ‘Peel fruit and [then] eat it.’)
3.3 Clausal/sentential organization

It seems that word-order in Wa is VSO, although SVO is also common. It is difficult to know which of the two orders may be considered ‘basic’. It may be on the one hand that VSO word-order is basic, but that the verb-initial order is disrupted due to the influence of SVO Chinese, and perhaps also of SOV Burmese. On the other hand, it may be that SVO is the basic word-order, but VSO is frequently preferred for reasons of emphasis or focus. In the absence of compelling evidence to sway the argument one way or the other, it remains the case that VSO word order is very common in Wa, and this is a feature worthy of note since it distinguishes Wa from the norm in Mainland Southeast Asian languages. Xiao Zegong (1981) observes that the difference between the two orders is a matter of focus and emphasis.

Looking in closer detail, it seems that rather than having a preference for VSO order per se, Wa likes the subject to be the second element, following the verb in (101), both the verb and the modal ((102) and (103)), or the negative ?aŋ (104). In addition to the appearance of this word order, topicalized material may be fronted, as in (105).

(99) lва̄i pa мhaŋ maiʔ tiʔ vэi ?aŋ koi
book REL ask 2SG CONJ borrow not have
‘The book you asked to borrow isn’t there.’

(100) gун tiʔ yʉh kапn
endure CONJ do work
‘work persistently.’

(101) hoc b⁴auŋ ти̣ɲ k⁴aŋ plак l⁴aŋ
come wind big from side north
‘a strong wind came from the north’

(102) ciʔ g⁴раoh ?eʔ g⁴раoh kən.doi vaʔ ŋэ
can dance 1SG dance orphan Wa only
‘I can only dance the Wa orphan dance’

(103) saŋ gąc ?eʔ ɳai maiʔ yaoʔ
want look.at 1SG face 2SG see
‘I want to have a look at your face.’
3.3.1 Ellipsis of arguments

In slight contrast to many languages in the Mainland Southeast Asian area, definite arguments in Wa tend to be pronominalized and retained, rather than being ellided altogether, even if they are recoverable from the context. Similarly, as illustrated in section 4.2.2.g above, the kah of kah-headed prepositional phrases is often retained, even in contexts where information is recoverable from the context.

3.3.2 Topicalization

The organization of sentences in Wa very frequently follows the ‘topic-prominent’ tendency which is normal for Mainland Southeast Asian languages. The data in sentences (89)–(92) above are relevant examples of sentences where topicalized material has been fronted. Wa does not mark topics overtly with grammatical markers.

3.3.3 Pa-headed nominalized clauses

Wa makes very frequent use of focus-cleft constructions using relativizer pa, analagous to the Chinese 是...的 shì...de construction (Zimmerman et al. 2008). In such constructions, the material in focus is nominalized with the relativizer pa, as in (106) and may additionally be fronted, as in (107).

(106) [ŋhoʔ gaoʔ]i mɔ̤h pa ?ui ?eʔ jµ tiʔ kah [Ø], hri.
[rice rice]i is REL feed we life REFL by [Ø], EXCL
‘Rice is the thing that we sustain our life with!’

(107) [ŋhoʔ gaoʔ]i mɔ̤h pa ?ui ?eʔ jµ tiʔ kah [Ø], hri.
[rice rice]i is REL feed we life REFL by [Ø], EXCL
‘Rice is the thing that we sustain our life with!’
What people despise most of all is liars.’

3.3.4 Question formation

The formation of questions in Wa follows the pattern observed by Clark (1985) to be typical of Mainland Southeast Asian languages. Yes-no questions can be formed using one of the sentence-final particles listed in (123), some of which are neutral interrogatives while others have certain attitudinal or pragmatic implications. Wh-questions are formed using an unremarkable set of wh-question words in situ with no sentence-final particle. In addition, questions may be formed using an tag-question particle, such as in (125).

4 Semantics and pragmatics

This section shows that Wa is predictably rich in those semantic domains which are expected to be so in Mainland Southeast Asian language.

4.1 Common semantic domains

4.1.1 Food

Wa has four terms for rice, shown in (108), but food is referred to in general terms using the three terms in (109).

(108) kla rice seedling
ηŋoʔ uncooked rice (husks on)
gaoʔ uncooked rice (husks off)
ʔɯp cooked rice

(109) ʔɯp cooked rice
prɛʔ food and drink
puan food (other than grain)
Various basic words for eating are used, depending on what is being eaten, in addition to a good number of words for snacking. The verb *ih* is semantically broad, meaning ‘use’, but it is used generally for eating and drinking (as well as for wearing clothes, collecting, adhering to religion, etc). Some more restricted collocations are found in addition – see the examples in (110).

(110) verb example translation
?ih ?ih prəʔ ‘consume food / drink.’
?ih s.dah ‘take medicine.’
?ih s.beʔ ‘wear clothes.’
?ih kə ‘use a hoe.’
som som ?up ‘eat rice.’
ŋauʔ ŋauʔ plai ‘drink alcohol.’
pəʔ pəʔ pliʔ ‘eat fruit.’
rəʔup rəʔup ‘drink tea, drink soup.’
yɔt yɔt sup ‘smoke tobacco.’
yɔt plai ‘drink alcohol.’

### 4.1.2 Washing

Another domain in the lexicon which is richly represented in Wa is that of washing, as illustrated in (111). The verbs in (111) all mean ‘wash’or ‘clean’, but each is restricted to a specific semantic domain.

(111) verb semantic domain example
kəoc face/hands kəoc ɲai wash face
pəak objects (also teeth) pəak ?ɔ wash cooking pots
hum child hum kon ɲəm bathe a child
s.gərah vegetables, food s.gərah tawʔ rinse vegetables
s.dauʔ clothes s.dauʔ kɾawŋ wash clothes

### 4.1.3 Cutting

Like other Southeast Asian languages, the Wa lexicon caters very generously for the semantic domains of cutting, carrying and drying. (112) is a selection of cutting words from the Wa Dictionary (Watkins 2013), excluding those which seem to be derived from nouns (e.g. *sa* ‘scythe > cut with a scythe’).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>b̄auʔ</em></td>
<td>cut, sever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>g uy</em></td>
<td>cut, chop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ḡam ~ ḡaŋ ~ ḡr̄a</em></td>
<td>chop wildly, hack (meat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ge̤h</em></td>
<td>hack, chop recklessly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ḡl̄ɔ̤k</em></td>
<td>carve, incise, cut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ki̤ah</em></td>
<td>peel, cut off rind (with a knife).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kip</em></td>
<td>cut (with scissors).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kit ~ k̄i</em></td>
<td>cut, chop, hit, whack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>k̄aŋ</em></td>
<td>scratch, cut, abrade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>k̄aŋ ~ k̄i</em></td>
<td>cut, pare, peel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>k̄loï</em></td>
<td>chop, slash, hack, notch, gouge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>k̄luh</em></td>
<td>cut off, chop off, break off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>k̄rɔ̤</em></td>
<td>cut, chop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>l̄e ~ l̄ek</em></td>
<td>split off, cut off, pull away from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>m̄ak ~ m̄yak ~ m̄uk</em></td>
<td>cut, cut off, sever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>j̄iæ</em></td>
<td>slit, slash, cut into strips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ŋe</em></td>
<td>cut into sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>pat</em></td>
<td>cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>p̄ɔ̤i</em></td>
<td>chop, cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>p̄iæ</em></td>
<td>slit, slash, cut into slices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>piæ</em></td>
<td>cut off, dock, cut short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>pɔ̤t</em></td>
<td>cut, scratch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>r̄ip</em></td>
<td>cut (with scissors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>r̄iæ</em></td>
<td>cut, scratch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>r̄iæ</em></td>
<td>saw, cut (planks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>s.gri̤h</em></td>
<td>cut open, break, split</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>s̄iæ</em></td>
<td>cut, slice, chop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>t̄aŋ</em></td>
<td>cut, cut off, break off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>t̄ak</em></td>
<td>cut, shovel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>t̄ah</em></td>
<td>cut wood (with an adze)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>t̄an</em></td>
<td>cut, chop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>t̄um</em></td>
<td>cut (large timber)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tuæ</em></td>
<td>cut off, cut, harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>v̄æ</em></td>
<td>slice horizontally, cut off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>v̄çk ~ v̄ç ~ s. v̄ç</em></td>
<td>slice off, hack away, chop off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.4 Carrying

Similarly, Wa verbs of carrying enable fine distinctions. Of particular interest is (113), a pair of back-carrying verbs $pɯ̤ih$ and $kɔ̤k$, which encode the gender of the carrier.

(113) $pɯ̤ih$ carry with strap on forehead supporting basket on back (women)  
$kɔ̤k$ carry on back (firewood, etc. with ropes (men)

For other carrying verbs, the part of the body involved in the carrying or the method of lifting is specified, shown in (114).

(114) $pʉʔ$ carry (a load or person) on the back  
$yaʔok$ lift or carry between both hands  
$kan kəo$ carry on the shoulders  
$gu$ carry on the shoulder  
$cəh$ drape over the shoulders, carry on or over head  
$kʰʔp$ carry (putting arms round)  
$gəo$ carry on back  
$guʊn$ carry on back (e.g. a child)  
$klɔm ~ s.grɔŋ$ carry (on shoulder, in the hands, between two people)

(115) lists a number of more general verbs of carrying or transportation.

(115) $gian$ carry, bring, transport  
$baʔ$  
$don$  
$veʔ$  
$tuʔi$  
$tʔ$  
$taŋ$ carry (using animals)

4.1.5 Drying

Drying verbs, shown in (116), distinguish between verbs of drying in the sun, by a fire or more generally.
4.1.6 Pushing and manipulating objects

Verbs of pushing, shown in (117), allow for fine distinctions in meaning, according to the detail of the direction and force of the action being performed.

(117) $\text{pac}$

shovel, push aside, scrape away (soil),
scratch (face).

$p\text{am} \sim p\text{um} \sim p\text{um} \sim p\text{am} \sim p\text{am}$
bump about, bang against

t$\text{u}\text{i}h \sim t\text{u}h$
bump into, bang (against, into, on), stub (toe).

t$\text{y}h$
tap, touch, bump lightly

t$\text{i}h \sim t\text{i}h$
bump, bang, hit, strike, knock, beat,
bump, smash, bang (into sth.)

$k\text{u} \sim k\text{u}i\text{h}$
poke, butt, pile up

k$\text{u}t$
cram in, shove in.

k$\text{e}h$
nudge, flick

k$\text{u}a\text{h} \sim k\text{u}\text{ai}h$
poke, butt, pile up

j$\text{h}u\text{n} \sim j\text{h}o\text{t}$
push, press on.

c$\text{o}t$
push, push over

k$\text{e}u\text{n}$
move aside, push to one side

l$\text{u}i\text{h}$
bump, tap

l$\text{i}h$
roll away, push away

j$\text{h}u\text{i}h$
poke, shove

(116) $d^4a \sim da$
dry in the sun

$\text{pi}n$

$\text{to}n$

$\text{ya}n$

$\text{hok}$

$\text{ka}$
dry by the fire, roast

$\text{re}n$

$k\text{ro}h$
dry up, dry out

hit

k$^b\text{ra}n$

k$^b\text{riam}$

g$^b\text{ro}h$

s.?oh
4.1.7 Spatial deixis

Spatial deixis in Wa allows the conventional distinction common in Southeast Asian languages between here, there and far, as in (118). Beyond this three-way distinction, further vowel alternations allow for a further ‘far distant’ distinction, but these forms are probably not basic to the language and seem to be subject to some dialect variation.

(118) tin ‘here’ teh ‘over there’
    tan ‘there’ tiun ‘far away yonder’
    ten ‘yonder’

There is also a set of terms to encode spatial relations in a way which has clearly become well adapted to the geographical context in which Wa is spoken, referring to direction up and down slopes, upstream and downstream and so on, listed in (119).

(119) blaŋ slope leading up, seen from bottom
    jũ slope leading down, seen from top
    laŋ ~ loŋ ~ ŋiŋ upper side, uphill side
    seh ~ sųuh ~ s.sųh ~ s. sųuh lower side, downhill side
    sen further down
    piŋ top, above, on
    grũm below, underneath
    taŋ upstream
    cʔ downstream
Rain descend downhill, gale ascend uphill. ‘Rain goes downhill, a gale goes uphill.’

‘Looking up there's rice beer, looking down, there's food.’ [An expression describing the abundance of a place or a festive occasion.]

### 4.2 Pragmatics & discourse

#### 4.2.1 Final particles

As is the case in other Southeast Asian languages, the rich array of utterance-final particles is often the hardest syntactic category in the lexicon to describe adequately. The selection of phrase-final particles listed in (120), taken from Zhou and Yan (1984) and the Wa Dictionary (Watkins 2013), all await fine-grained analysis, but seem to fall into the broad categories shown.

(120) emphasis: \(pɔʔ, \text{plɤi, tʃt, ha, hvɪ, lʰaoʔ, kʰɯ, kʰɤ}\)

supposition/suggestion: \(\text{mai, nɛh, vəi, } ʔɔ \sim ʔɔʔ\)

confirmation: \(lɛ\)

declaration: \(ηɛh\)

(121) \(jʰak \text{ hvɪ}\)

look EMPH

‘Look!’

(122) \(kɛt \text{ sauʔ } \etaɛh\)

very hurt EMPH

‘It really hurts!’

Interrogative particles are listed in (123) and tag-question particles in (125).

(123) interrogative particles: \(pəh\)

lah ~ laih ~ lɛ ~ lɛh ~ lʰɛʔ

\(nɛ\)

\(hɛh\)
(124) san hu maiʔ pəʔh
want go 2.sg q
‘Do you want to go?’

(125) tag question particles hɔʔ, lɛʔ

(126) pəʔ ge maiʔ yuh.nan hɔʔ
NEG.IMP play 2.sg like.that TAG.Q
‘Don’t play around like that.’

4.2.2 Politeness

Like other northern Mon-Khmer languages, but in contrast to many other Southeast Asian languages, Wa pronouns, shown in (52) above, do not obligatorily encode hierarchy, formality or solidarity.

Much like other Southeast Asian languages, people address each other in Wa using forms of address based on birth-order names, kinship terms or relative generation rather than pronouns. Wa does not have an evolved system of honorific or humilific language, but (127) gives examples of respectful terms of address.

(127) gloss used to address
taʔ grandfather older men
yəʔ grandmother older women
ʔac brother-in-law man of same generation
paʔ you (2.DU) married woman with children
giex you (2.PL) mature married woman with children

5 Conclusion/ summary

In conclusion, it can be said that Wa shares a large number of characteristics with other Mainland Southeast Asian languages, in particular Tai-Kadai and Mon-Khmer. There are, on the other hand, a number of typological features that are less typical in a Mainland Southeast Asian context, such as the rich inventory of initial consonants (especially aspirated voiced stops), preferred VSO word order, the placement of auxiliaries (or secondary verbs) in the preverbal position, etc. The influence of Wa’s neighbours, both the culturally dominant Chinese to the north and the Tai/Shan with whom the Wa live in close prox-
imity, is particularly marked. Apart from some lexical borrowing, Burmese has had relatively little influence on Wa.

References


Appendix 1: Summary of linguistic features

Legend
+++ the feature is pervasive or used obligatorily in the language
++ the feature is normal but selectively distributed in the language
+ the feature is merely possible or observable in the language
– the feature is impossible or absent in the language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>+++/++/+-</th>
<th>§ ref. in this chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonetics Lexical tone or register</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>§1.1, p.434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonetics Back unrounded vowels</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>§1.1.2, p.436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonetics Initial velar nasal</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>§1.1.1, p.434–35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonetics Implosive consonants</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonetics Sesquisyllabic structures</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>§1.2.1, p.437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphology Tendency towards monosyllability</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>§1.2.1, p.437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphology Tendency to form compounds</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>§2.1, p.440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphology Tendency towards isolating (rather than affixation)</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>§1.2.1, p.437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphology Psycho-collocations</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>§2.2, p.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphology Elaborate expressions (e.g. four-syllable or other set patterns)</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>§2.3, p.444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphology Reduplication generally</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>§2.3.2, p.444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphology Reduplication of nouns</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphology Reduplication of verbs</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Use of classifiers</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>§3.1.2, p.449</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feature</td>
<td>+++/++/+-</td>
<td>§ ref. in this chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Classifiers used in counting</td>
<td>+++</td>
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<td>Grammar Classifiers used with demonstratives</td>
<td>++</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Adjectival verbs</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>not discussed explicitly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Grammatical number</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>not discussed explicitly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Inflection of verbs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>§3.2.1, p.450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Use of tense/aspect markers</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>§3.2.1, p.450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Use of verb plural markers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Grammaticalization of GET/OBTAIN (potential mod. resultative/perfect aspect)</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>§3.2.2.b, p.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Grammaticalization of PUT, SET (completed/resultative aspect)</td>
<td>+</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Grammaticalization of GIVE (causative, benefactive; preposition)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>§3.2.2.d, p.453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Grammaticalization of FINISH (perfective/complete aspect; conjunction/temporal subordinator)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>§3.2.1, p.450, see also §3.2.4, p.457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Grammaticalization of directional verbs e.g. GO / COME (allative, venitive)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar Grammaticalization of SEE, WATCH (temptative)</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>§3.2.2.c, p.452</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar Grammaticalization of STAY, REMAIN (progressive and continuous, durative aspects)</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>§3.2.2.e, p.454</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar Serial verb constructions</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>§3.2.3, p.456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax Verb precedes object (VO)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>§3.3, p.458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax Auxiliary precedes verb</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>§3.2.2, p.451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax Preposition preceds noun</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>§3.2.2.g, p.454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax Noun precedes adjective</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>§3.1.1, p.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax Noun precedes demonstrative</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>§3.1.1, p.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax Noun precedes genitive</td>
<td>§3.1.1, p.448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax Noun precedes relative clause</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>§3.1.1, p.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax Use of topic-comment structures</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>§3.3, p.458–59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Text interlinearized

The following passage in Wa is taken from Wang and Chen (1993).

\[ dɯ̤ \text{ʔot grɔ́ŋ koi } \]
\[
\text{place live situation exist 'dwellings and living conditions'}
\]

\[ \text{hak.te? ŋe? yauŋ pa.ɾa.uk, jiet ?ot kah pɨəŋ gɔ́ŋ, ŋəc } \]
\[
\text{land house village Wa, really be.at PREP top mountain, fragrant}
\]

\[ gɔ́ŋ dɯ̤ s.dɔ́m \]
\[
\text{mountain place level 'Villages in the Wa lands are located in the mountains, on a level place high up in the mountains.'}
\]

\[ yam jauih pui̯ tiʔ paŋ laih blaih yauŋ \]
\[
\text{time start people CONJ grow street expand village 'When people found a village'}
\]

\[ pui̯ kəŋ pɨh məc yɨh kləŋ s.vɤ̯i \]
\[
\text{people children pray spirit make river before 'first of all the people pray to the river spirit'}
\]

\[ tɔm məc m̩əm, pui̯ tɔm sum ŋe? san yauŋ. \]
\[
\text{advise spirit good, people then build house build village 'if the spirit gives good signs, people then put up their houses and build the village.'}
\]
The spirit’s tree (home) is at the top of the village on the right-hand side.

People individually choose the plot to build their houses on.

In the past, people were allocated a plot according to their clan, each clan in a separate area.

Once people have developed the land, they can make use of it but cannot sell it.

If people then want to erect a house on someone else’s land or garden

they take a block of salt, a packet of tea and some rice wine

and go to ask the head of the household first. They discuss with one another,

and only then may the person build the house there.

In Wa tradition, people never argue over house plots,
If someone has decided where he wishes to locate his house, he will choose the place and discuss it with others. Once he has discussed it with others, people will allow him to do it. If it adjoins someone else’s garden and damages the structure of their garden, and harms their crops or trees, then that person pays back to the owner in compensation only the amount used up.

People don’t argue or feel resentment over it.

The are two types of building style of Wa houses.
‘mɔh nɛʔ ɬaun nɛʔ teʔ.
COP house high and house earth
‘which are “tall houses” and “earth houses”.’

nɛʔ ɬaun ʔot pa.rquk, dɛʔ ṯom nɛʔ ɬaun ʔot siam nan.
house tall live Wa, near similar house tall live Tai like that.
‘The tall houses which the Wa live closely resemble the tall houses inhabited by the Tai.’

plak piʔan mɔh dwu ʔot pʉi,
side up COP place live person
‘The people live upstairs’

plak grɯm cɨ? tiʔ plac lɨk soʔ ʔia sim, mzi krak
side down can CONJ contain pig dog chicken bird, cattle, buffalo,

bɛ kɔʔ,
animals keep
‘while downstairs they can keep pigs, dogs, chickens, birds, cattle, buffalo and livestock.’

jiʔ tiʔ gruʔ khîʔ kɛauʔ kah.
can CONJ pile.up wood tree PREP
‘and they can store firewood.’

sum nɛʔ mɔh siau pʉi khauʔ, ṭoʔ, plon,
build house cop use person wood, bamboo, thatch,
‘To build their houses, people use wood, bamboo, thatch,

mauʔ dɬ.ɾɔ̃n mai maux m[^a]ʔiʔ kiʔ.
rope Tripterygium wilfordii and rope bamboo.strip
‘vine-rove and bamboo binding strips.’