THE GRAMMAR OF SIMPLE CLAUSES IN MIZO

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1. INTRODUCTION[1]

Mizo, formerly known as Lushai, is the language of the Indian State of Mizoram in North-East India. It is also spoken in adjacent states such as Manipur and Tripura, and by smaller numbers in Burma and Bangladesh. It is a Tibeto-Burman language, in the Central subgroup of the Kukish or Kuki-Chin branch.

While the phonology of Lushai has been extensively studied, the morphology and syntax are less well described. Studies by Henderson (1948), Burling (1957), Bright (1957), Weidert (1975) and Chhangte (1985, 1986) have dealt with some aspects of phonology, but more work, especially on the current sociolinguistic situation, remains to be done.

The transcription used here and the analysis that it is based on are described in detail in Chhangte (1986). Basically it follows the traditional Mizo orthography but adds final glottal stop and tones. There are four tones: mid/low (unmarked), high (1), rising (2) and falling (3). There are phonetic differences in the realisations of these tones depending on syllable type and vowel length.

The dialect described is my own, the standard Southern Duhlian dialect of the Lunglei area.

2. PHRASE STRUCTURE AND MORPHOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

Mizo grammar has received much less attention than phonology. For one, the area is basically inaccessible to foreigners so that fieldwork is virtually impossible. Also, very few, if any, Mizos are trained sufficiently in theoretical linguistics so that non-Mizos attempting to study the language

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South-East Asian syntax, 93-174. *Pacific Linguistics*, A-77, 1989.

have very scant resources. Moreover, since most of the literature about Mizos has been written by foreigners, the available information is not completely reliable either. I will comment on some of these errors and explain why they are unacceptable. I will also clarify some issues in instances where they have not been explained adequately.

In this grammar I will clarify some of the issues relating to Mizo syntax. I will spend a considerable amount of time explaining the mixed ergative system. Before I do that, however, I will briefly survey what has been written about Mizo syntax and comment on its relevance to this paper.

2.1.1 Overview of the literature

The work of the missionaries, Lorrain and Savidge (1898), provides the most thorough and accurate representation of Mizo grammar. All other attempts at describing the language have borrowed heavily from Lorrain and Savidge. The volume is fairly exhaustive and gives several useful examples. In spite of its scholastic excellence, the work suffers from a strong Indo-European bias and other technical shortcomings of that era. For instance, they list several examples of 'tense', even though the Mizo examples they give are identical! The other problems are absence of tone markings and inaccurate phonological data. The latter was corrected in a later revision of the dictionary by Lorrain (1940). However, in spite of such flaws, the work of Lorrain and Savidge is a masterpiece of linguistic fieldwork. The technical flaws reflect the shortcomings of the linguistics of that era and not of the linguists themselves.

In addition to Lorrain and Savidge, there were several word lists prepared by British officers such as Lewin (1874) and Shakespear (1921). Most of these are not very accurate as the writers had idiosyncratic ways of transcribing data.

A detailed and extensive volume was written by a Bengali surgeon, Brojo Nath Shaha (1884). This work is well-organised and adequately illustrated. Unfortunately, most of the examples are either grammatically unacceptable or their glosses are wrong and for that reason I do not recommend it as a data source. The writer either did not get native speakers as informants or his interpreter was linguistically incompetent. It is also likely that the writer was influenced by his own language as the examples he gives are what a Mizo would consider 'Vai Mizo', that is, a version of Mizo used by Bengalis or Assamese.

Grierson (1904) used most of the above sources in his survey. The section on Tibeto-Burman (TB) languages not only compares the related languages but also gives data. Many of the languages mentioned in the survey, such as Ralte, are now extinct. The texts, though inadequately glossed, were useful in comparing certain grammatical features. For instance, I was interested in the ergative marker and the oblique marker, both of which are present in Mizo. It turns out that the grammatical structure of Hmar is the most similar to that of Mizo, even though it is a more distant relative than some of the other languages. Perhaps this has to do with the close contact these two groups have had.

More recently, Lehman has written several articles on Mizo grammar, many of them in relation to Burmese or Haka (Laai) Chin. Most of my analysis is based on his articles and comments

through personal correspondence. Various articles in the *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* series dealing with morphologies of TB languages have also been extremely helpful.

Pedagogical grammars are not very helpful in terms of analysis. They are usually based on the grammar written by Lorrain and Savidge, which, as I have mentioned already, is based on Latin grammar. Nevertheless, they are useful as a source for data, and I have benefitted from the textbooks written by Khiangte (1964) and Remkunga (1977).

2.1.2 Overview of purpose and methodology

The major aim of this paper is to describe the basic syntactic structure of modern Mizo using current linguistic theories. My approach will be typological and I will refer to linguistic universals and not restrict myself to the TB language group. My main aim is to describe the language as the Mizos themselves see it. Some of my assumptions are based on comments people made to me in Mizoram. Furthermore, this being a synchronic study, comparitive discussions will be kept to a minimum. I will, however, refer occasionally to Thadou, a member of the northern branch of the Kuki-Chin languages, as I have a fairly good description of its syntax and phonology. Unfortunately, Krishan's (1980) grammar of Thadou, though published recently, was actually written in the early 1970s and does not refer to any current linguistic theory.

This description of Mizo grammar will be comprehensive and it will also try to relate some of the grammatical features to the phonological system.. This will be mainly in the area of defining word boundaries. For the moment, I have decided to mark only two grammatical boundaries: morpheme boundaries are indicated by - and word boundaries are marked with a space. My decisions are based on the guidelines given by Hyman (1978) and Zwicky (1985). These boundaries correspond to phonological boundaries as follows: the phonological word corresponds to the grammatical phrase; internal word boundaries in phonology correspond to grammatical word boundaries; morpheme boundaries are the same, though they are much more significant in the grammar than in the phonology. I have not marked the grammatical phrase boundary as it is marked morphologically by the final case markers.

The following sections are an attempt to bring together the works mentioned above, using more recent linguistic tools. I have used terms, such as N', in the manner of Radford (1981) and the categorisations are based roughly on Givón's (1984) typological approach to syntax. Even though this paper will not get into the theoretical details, I will make theoretical assumptions based on current linguistic theories. In particular, the notion of ergativity will be a major consideration of the following sections. In this area I am indebted to Lehman's (1985) and DeLancey's (1981a) discussions of ergativity in TB languages.

2.2 Noun phrase structure

The noun phrase structure of Mizo is fairly complex. The most characteristic feature of the NPs is that they can be demarcated on the left by a *demonstrative pronoun* and on the right by a *case marker* (CM). The obligatory case markers for the NP are preceded by the determiner: plurality markers and locational markers are suffixed on the demonstrative pronoun.

Since every NP must possess a case marker (although the absolutive case is encoded with zero) it is thus not subcategorised for the N'. Moreover, since no constituent may follow the case marker, I assume that a node N" separates the determiner noun from its case marker.

There are several reasons for this NP structure. First of all, there is no subcategorisation between the case marker and the rest of the NP. Furthermore, the case marker (CM) is obligatory and always comes last, even when there is a full determiner (with case markings). There is also evidence from relative clauses that demonstrates that the CM is on the rest of the NP. Take for instance:

(1) *nu-laa1 thing2 phur3 in*
maiden wood carryII ERG
The wood that the maiden carried ...

In the above example, the CM is over the relativised construction, which is an incorporated object. The above example in its main clause form is:

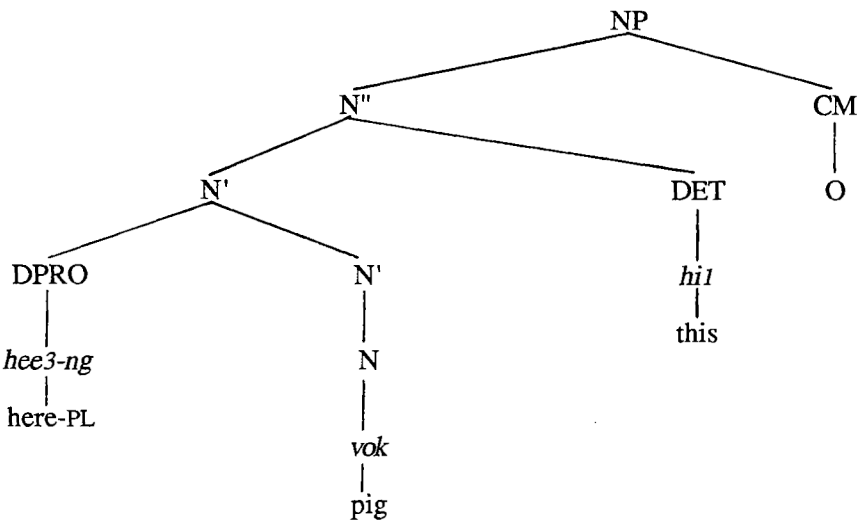
(2) *ŋu-laa1 in thing2 ø a phur1*
maiden ERG wood ABS 3NOM carry
The maiden carried firewood.

Evidence from phonology also favours the analysis that the CM is a separate word. Take for instance the GLIDE HARDENING RULE[2] which operates over phonological word boundaries only. The case marker is affected by this rule so that we get:

(3) *//thou + in// → /thou vin/*
fly ERG

Thus, the basic unmodified NP would have a structure

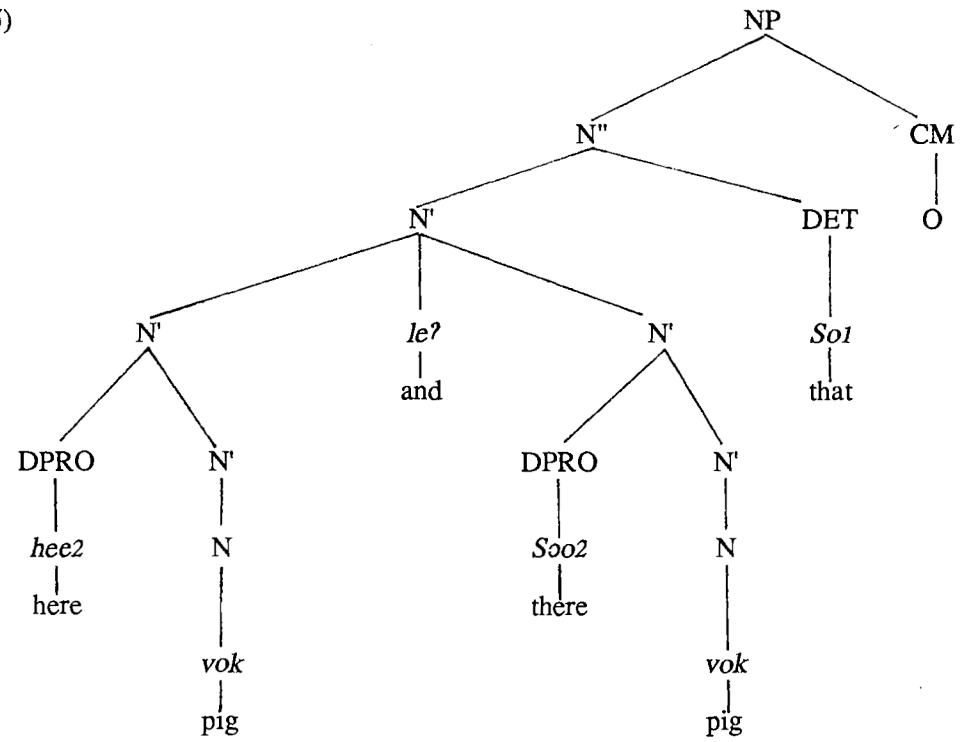
(4)



'these pigs'

It is claimed that the demonstrative pronoun and the determiner demarcate the extremities of the NP because they occur before the first and after the last in compound NPs, i.e.

(5)

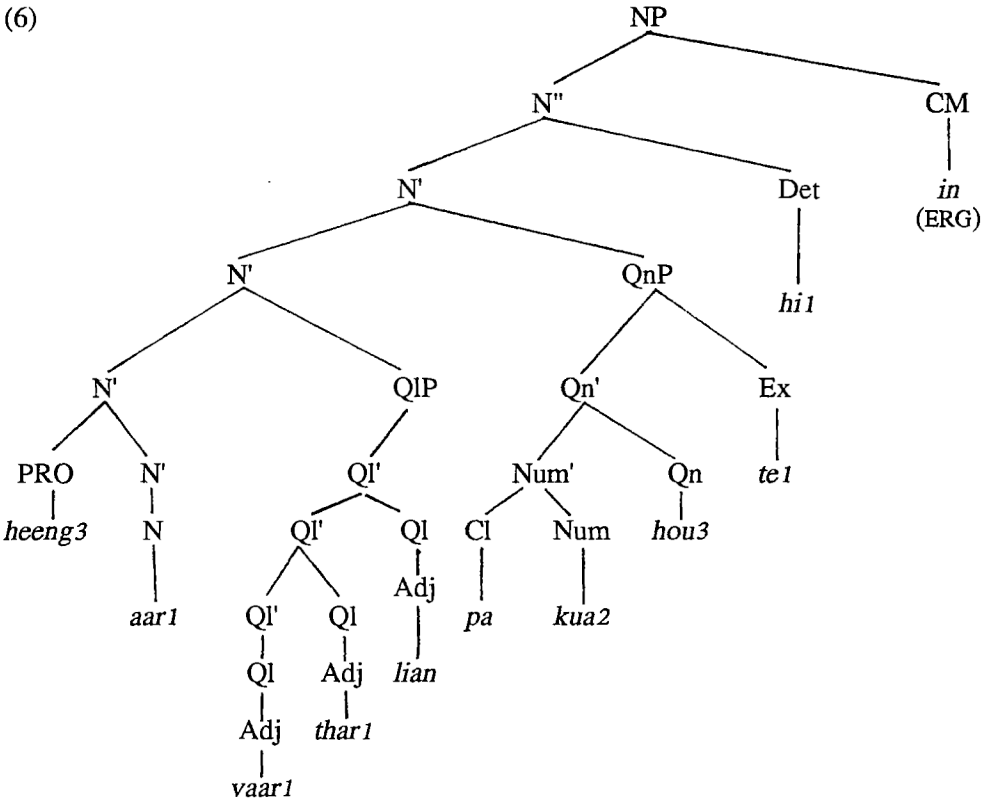


'this pig here and that pig there'

Structures such as (5) are further support for the analysis placing the demonstrative pronoun *hee2* and the determiner *soi* at different levels and not as constituents of the NP. The demonstrative pronouns *hee2* etc. are much more noun-like in that they are incompatible with proper names; sometimes they occur alone; other times they are replaced by possessive pronouns or wh-question words. Occasionally they will co-occur with a proper name, as in *hee Lal 1-i 1* meaning 'this here Lali', when the speaker wishes to emphasise that it is *this Lali* and not *any other Lali*. This type of usage is probably a form of reduplication since both proper name and demonstrative pronoun are not necessary and yet the presence of both gives an emphatic effect.

The basic structure of the NP can be elaborated by modifiers of quality and quantity. These occur in that order after the head noun and before the determiner. Though modifiers typically precede in SOV languages, as in Japanese, cf. Greenberg (1963), postpositional modifiers are not uncommon either, cf. Comrie (1981). Thus, the maximally modified NP would have a structure:

(6)



'this (group of) nine, new, big, white hens'

Some examples of NPs are:

(7) a. Both demonstrative pronoun and determiner

hee3- ng aar1 vaar1 pa-lii1 hi1 (ka1 du?)
DPRO-PL hen white unit-four DET (1NOM want)
(I want) these four white hens.

b. Possessed noun

i aar1 vaar1 pa-lii1 hi1 (ka1 du?)
2P hen white unit-four DET (1NOM want)
(I want) your four white hens over here.

c. Full pronoun

nang-ma-a1 aar1 vaar1 pa-lii1 (ka1 du?)
2PRO-EMP-REL hen white unit-four (1NOM want)
(I want) your (not X's) four white hens.

d. No demonstrative pronoun or determiner

aar1 vaar1 pa-lii1 (ka1 du?)
hen white unit-four (1NOM want)
(I want) four white hens.

e. No head noun

hei3 hi1 (ka1 du?)
DPRO DET (1NOM want)
(I want) this one.

All of these will be explained in subsequent sections.

2.3 Noun phrase constituents

The major constituents can be further subdivided as follows:

2.3.1 Demonstrative pronoun and determiner

The demonstrative pronoun and the determiner usually agree for the deictic degree, e.g. proximal demonstrative goes with the proximal determiner, etc. There are six pronoun-determiner pairs that occur, cf. 136. The plural suffix *-ng* and the locative marker *a(?)* follow the demonstrative pronoun and case markers *-an* and *-an1* follow the determiner. In the surface structure, number, location and case markers all suffix to the elements on their immediate left and thereby lose their ability to stand alone as syntactic units.

There are also certain phonological changes which are peculiar to demonstrative pronouns and determiners. Of the two, the demonstrative pronoun undergoes tone changes depending on its syntactic environment.

In addition to the tone changes, the demonstrative pronoun *hei3* undergoes segmental changes. If it is followed by a full noun it becomes *hee* which is shortened to *he* if followed by a locative marker. With regard to the tone changes, the demonstrative pronoun acquires a falling tone if it is followed by the determiner only.

(8) Singular, normal form

hei3 hi1
DPRO DET
this one here

But if the following word is a noun the demonstrative pronoun changes to a rising tone.

(9) a. Singular form followed by noun with low tone

hee2 vok hi1
DPRO pig DET
this pig here

b. Singular form followed by noun with rising tone

hee2 ui2-tee hi1
DPRO dog-small DET
this puppy here

Furthermore, because of the LONG CONTOUR TONE SANDHI RULE,[3] the demonstrative pronoun becomes a low tone if the following word is either high tone or falling tone.

(10) a. Singular form followed by noun with high tone

hee aar1 hi1
DPRO hen DET
this hen here

b. Singular form followed by noun with falling tone

hee boong3 hi1
DPRO cow DET
this cow here

Finally, if it is followed by a locative marker, it becomes a high tone.

(11) Singular form followed by locative marker

he1 ta1 vok hi1
DPRO LOC pig DET
this pig here

Thus, the demonstrative pronoun can have any of the four Mizo tones depending on its environment. (This environment is not phonologically conditioned.) The plural form does not undergo any tone change but retains a falling tone.

(12) Plural form

hee3-ng vok (te1) hi1
DPRO-PL pig (EX) DET
these pigs here (and such)

In all of these instances, the syllable shape of the following word does not affect the tone changes.

The determiners do not display such a wide variety of segmental or tone changes. The only segmental change involves *so1* which, when followed by the ergative (or oblique) marker becomes *soon3* instead of *soan3*. The reason for this change may be that because Mizo does not allow the vowel sequence *//oa//*, it changes it to */oo/*.

2.3.1.1 Plural marker

The demonstrative pronoun carries the suffix *-ng* for the plural and ø for the singular.

(13) *hee3-ng aar1 hi1*
DPRO-PL hen DET
these hens here

2.3.1.2 Location markers

The demonstrative pronoun can also take a suffix for location. See also section 2.6.2.4 for other locative forms.

(14) *he1 ta1 aar1 hi1*
DPRO LOC-REL hen DET
this hen here

2.3.1.3 Case markers

The ergative suffix *-an* or the oblique suffix *-an1* are suffixed to the determiner.

(15) a. *hee aar1 hi-an3 mi1 cuk*
DPRO hen DET-ERG 1ABS peck
This hen here pecked me.

b. *hee aar1 hi-an1 ka1 tlheng3*
this hen DET-OBLQ 1NOM exchange
I exchanged it with this hen.

Determiners such as *hi1*, if it belongs to an NP that is the subject of the clause that contains it, requires the ergative suffix *-an*. This ergative suffix is often obscured by the ergative case marker *in* because in non-emphatic contexts the two collapse and undergo predictable tone sandhi, for example:

(16) *//hi1 + an# in//→ /hian3/*

In emphatic contexts, however, this rule may be inhibited leaving both ergative suffix and ergative case marker intact, as in:

(17) *//hi1 + an# in//→ /hian3 in/*

The same is true for the oblique marker *in1*.

Plurals, location markers, gender suffixes and nominalisers are separated from noun stems by formative boundaries whereas case markers are separated by internal word boundaries.

2.3.2 Nouns

Nouns occur in all syllable types and in all four tones. Generally, they have only one basic form unlike verb-stems which show two suppletive manifestations depending on their syntactic environment. They undergo changes of tone because of their internal structure; some have affixes, some are compounds.

The sub-classes of nouns include:

2.3.2.1 Non-derived nouns

There are very few non-derived, morphologically simple nouns. Common everyday objects and domestic animals tend to fall into this category, as in:

(18) a.	*vok*	pig
b.	*ruul1*	snake
c.	*thing2*	tree
d.	*tlaang1*	mountain
e.	*cem1*	knife
f.	*ip*	bag
g.	*sam2*	hair
h.	*mit*	eye

2.3.2.2 Derived nouns

Derived, polysyllabic, morphologically complex nouns are the most common type of nouns. They form one phonological word where the second morpheme is some sort of modifier of the first morpheme. In a few cases, the meaning of the individual morphemes is opaque. The following words illustrate a number of these combinations:

(19) a.	*saa3*	+	*mak*	=	*sa-mak*
	animal		strange		rhinocerous
b.	*faa3*	+	*paa*	=	*fa-paa*
	offspring		male	=	son
c.	*mii3*	+	*paa*	=	*mi-paa*
	person		male	=	man/boy
d.	*seer*	+	*thuur2*	=	*seer-thuur2*
	citrus		sour		lemon
e.	*bee3*	+	*tee2*	=	*be-tee2*
	beans		small		type of bean

Names of birds and animals are usually prefixed by *vaa3* 'bird' and *saa3* 'animal' respectively. However, in most cases the second morpheme is not a free form. For instance:

(20) a. *saa3* + *vom1* = *sa-vom1* bear
b. *vaa3* + *rak* = *va-rak* duck

Thus, the word is 'non-Fregean', that is, it cannot be divided into meaningful parts.

(21) a. *cing1-nhia2* wolf
b. *cai-ciim1* mouse
c. *fang3-mhiir* ant
d. *be-raam* sheep

2.3.2.3 Nominalised nouns

Abstract nouns are derived by nominalising adjectives or verbs (see also section 2.6.1.5). For example:

(22) a. *mooi* + *na1* = *moi-na1*
beautiful II beauty
b. *rhiat3* + *na1* = *rhiat3-na1*
to hear II knowledge

2.3.2.4 Proper nouns

Given names usually contain two to four syllables. The full form is rarely used, as nicknames or diminutive forms of the given name are preferred. It is also not uncommon for terms of endearment to be affixed to names.

Proper names of people are not taken from any specific lexical domain. For example, the names of women and men may be identical except for the gender suffix. The male gender suffix is *-a1* and the female gender suffix is *-i1*. Both gender suffixes have high tone except in citation form where the male gender suffix takes low tone. See also section 2.6.1.1.

(23) a. Full name

Lal1-rin3-om3-a
-MSUF

Variants

Rin3-a, *Rin3-tee3-a,* *Maa1-rin3-a*
-MSUF -sm-MSUF EMT- -MSUF

b. Full name

Zou1-than-paar1-i1
-FSUF

Variants

Zou1-i1, *Than-i1,* *Paar1-i1,*
-FSUF -FSUF -FSUF

Zou1-te1-i1, *Paar1-tel-i1,*
-sm-FSUF -sm-FSUF

Than-pui1-i1, *Zoul-than-i1*
-big-FSUF -FSUF

Aa1-than-i1
EMT- -FSUF

Titles and kinship terms precede the name:

(24) a. *Pu1 Rem-a* Mr Rema
b. *Pi1 Kuung3-i1* Ms Kungi
c. *ka uu1* my elder (sibling/cousin)
d. *pa tee3-a* youngest paternal uncle

Adults who are on more intimate terms generally use teknonyms, as in:

(25) a. *Vaal1-a1 paa3* father of Vala
b. *Vaal1-a1 nuu3* mother of Vala

where Vala is the firstborn. Parents also address each other this way.

Mythological characters sometimes have different names. Female characters take the suffix *nuu3* probably to indicate that they are full grown females, as in:

(26) a. *cing1-pir1-i1-nuu3* Chingpirinu
b. *mhui-cuk-cu-ru-duun3-i1-nuu3* hmuichukchuruduninu
c. *phuung3-pui-nuu3* Phungpuinu[4]

Male characters are suffixed either by *paa3* or *puu1,* as in:

(27) a. *baak-vom1-tel1-puu1* Bakvawmtepu
b. *sa-zal-te1-paa3* Sazaltepa

Names of places generally describe the terrain or some event associated with the place. Here are some examples:

(28) a. *Ai1-zool1* Aizawl
b. *Lung2-lei* Lunglei
c. *Hna?-thial* Hnahthial
d. *Lung-raang1* Lungrang
e. *Thil1-tlaang1* Thiltlang
f. *Seer-chiip3* Serchhip

In the past, most places, except for Aizawl and Lunglei, were small villages. In recent years, some of these villages have become towns. Places with a sizeable population often subdivide into smaller sections called *veeng1.*

2.3.2.5 Pronouns

Pronouns come in two forms: free forms and clitic forms. The free forms are found only in the noun phrase, whereas the clitic forms can be found in both noun phrase and verb phrase. The free forms are optional in sentences whereas the clitic forms are obligatory, cf. section 2.6.2.1 for a further discussion of pronoun clitics in the VP.

(29) a. Free forms:

Person	Singular	Plural
1	*kei3*	*kei-nii3*
2	*nang2*	*nang-nii3*
3	*a1 nii3*	*an-nii3*

b. Clitic forms:

Person	Singular	Plural
1	*ka1/ka*	*ka2-n*
2	*i1/i*	*i2-n*
3	*a1/a*	*a2-n*

The free forms are used mainly for emphasis. Thus we have:

(30) a. *kei2 ka kal1 ang2*
1PRO 1NOM go MOD
I will go (whether or not others go).

b. *kei-nii3 pa-lii1 ka-n kal1 ang2*
1PRO-PL unit-four 1NOM-PL go MOD
We four (not anyone else) will go.

c. *an-nii3 le? nang-nii3 i-n kal1 ang2*
3PRO-PL and 2PRO-PL 2NOM-PL go MOD
You and they (not anyone else) will go.

The clitic forms are used in the NP to denote possession, as in:

(31) a. *ka aar1 a1 nii*
1P hen 3NOM is
It is my hen.

b. *i aar1 a1 nii*
2P hen 3NOM is
It is your hen.

The pronoun clitics can also precede comparatives and quantifiers:

(32) a. a1-trhaa ber1 ks1 du?
it-good most 1NOM want
I want the best one.

b. *a-vaai2 in1 ka ei1*
it-all OBLQ 1NOM ate
I ate all of it

In the above examples, the third person nominative marker is used to indicate part of a greater whole, cf. 118.

2.3.3 Possession

Possession is indicated by word order: the possessor precedes the possessed item. It also appears that genitival- of constructions in Mizo are marked with what I call the relativiser, *-a1*. In most instances it coalesces with the preceding segment so that only the high tone remains. This same relativiser shows up in relative clause constructions.

(33) a. *Thang1-kuur1-a1 ui2*
-MSUF-REL dog
Thangkura's dog

b. *ka ui2*
1P dog
my dog

c. *Thang1-kuur1-a1 puu1*
-MSUF-REL master
Thangkura's master

d. *Thang1-kuur1-a1 puu1 ui2*
-MSUF-REL master dog
Thangkura's master's dog

If the possessed item is not specified, the word *taa3,* meaning 'owned; possessed' is used in place of the noun.

(34) a. *Thang1-kuur1-a1 taa3*
-MSUF-REL own
Thangkura's own

b. *ka taa3*
1P own
my own

The word *taa3* has often been mistaken for the possessor word. However, it is not a modifier and should not be treated as such; *taa3* is simply a word meaning something like 'I own this' and the relationship is indicated by word order, cf. above.

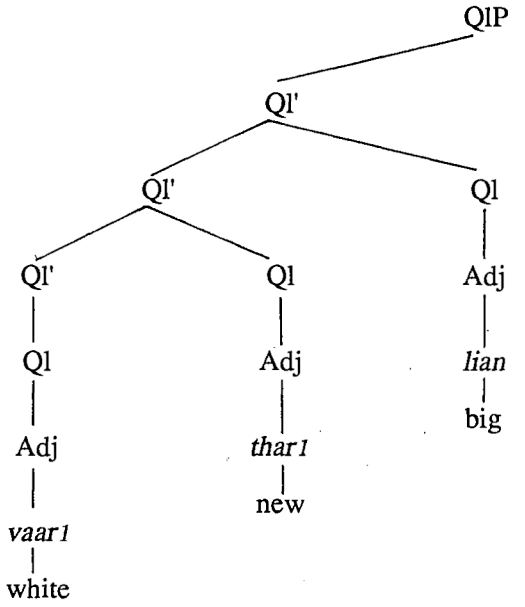
2.3.4 Qualification

Adjectives in Mizo are syntactically verbs. They are usually preceded by the subject pronoun clitics, as in:

(35) *a1* *thaa*
3NOM good
It is good.

In the NP, however, they follow the noun they qualify. The qualifiers are adjectives of colour, quality and size. These three can come in any order though the order just mentioned is the preferred one. The adjective-type words have this construction:

(36)



'white, new, big

Because the qualifiers can occur in various orders I assume that Ql' are recursively embedded. The following illustrate the possible combinations:

37) a. Colour, quality:

puan-sen1-baal
cloth-red-dirty
dirty red cloth

b. Colour, size:

in -sen1-lian
house-red-big
big red house

c. Quality, size:

in -lhui1-lian
house-old-big
big old house

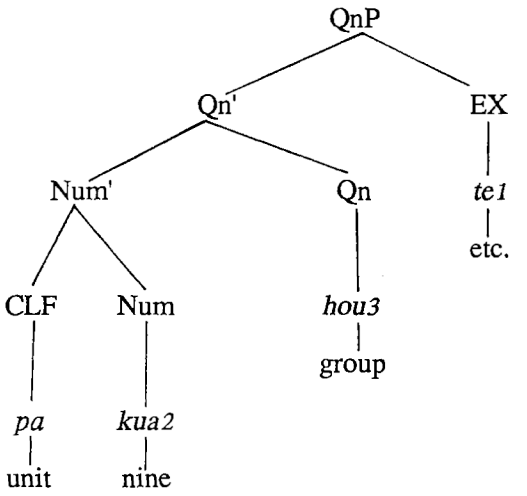
d. colour, quality, size:

aar1-vaar1-thar1-lian
hen-white-new-big
big new white hen

2.3.5 Quantification

Quantification is perhaps the least important constituent of the NP since plurality can be indicated elsewhere. When it does occur, quantification is preceded by all the other constituents within the NP, except for the determiner and the case marker. Unlike qualifiers, quantifiers show a much more rigid word order:

(38)



'group of nine and such'

The quantifiers in the NP agree in number with the subject pronoun clitics in the VP. The logic of quantification in Mizo is more involved and it will be discussed separately in section 3.1.2. See also Lehman (1979b).

2.3.5.1 Numeral quantifiers

Unlike most other south-east Asian languages, Mizo does not have a semantically based system of noun classifiers, cf. Lehman (1979a). The numbering system, however, does display a system of classifiers where the unit classifier is *pa-*, (as suggested by Lehman in personal communications). The classifiers for tens, hundreds, thousands, etc. are *soom, zaa, saang2,* respectively. The numbering system is decimal, as shown below:

(39) a.	*pa-khat*	one	f.	*pa-ruk*	six
b.	*pa-nhi?*	two	g.	*pa-sa-ri?*	seven
c.	*pa-thum1*	three	h.	*pa-riat3*	eight
d.	*pa-lii1*	four	i.	*pa-kua2*	nine
e.	*pa-ngaa 1*	five	j.	*soom*	ten

k.	*zaa*	one hundred
l.	*saang2*	one thousand
m.	*siing2*	ten thousand
n.	*nuai3*	one hundred thousand
o.	*mak-ta-duai3*	one million
p.	*vai1-beel1-chia3*	ten million (lit. broken tobacco pipes)
q.	*vai1-beel1-che-tak*	one hundred million
r.	*tluuk3 le? din3 oon2*	one trillion

The following examples illustrate the numbering system. Multipliers follow the multiplicant:

(40) a. *som-nhi?*
ten-two
twenty

b. *za-nhi?*
HRD-two
two hundred

c. *siing2-nhi?*
ten TH-two
twenty thousand

Lower numbers follow higher numbers, as in:

(41) a. *soom (le?) pa-nhi?*
ten (and) unit-two
twelve

b. *za-nhi? som-nhi?*
HRD-two ten-two
two hundred and twenty

c. *za-nhi? som-nhi? le? pa-nhi?*
HRD-two ten-two and unit-two
two hundred and twenty two

Combination of numerals with nouns: non-animates generally do not take classifiers, that is, they become the classifiers themselves.

(42) a.	*nu pa-khat*	one woman
b.	*boong3 pa-sa-ri?*	seven cows
c.	*ni1-thum1*	three days
d.	*in-thum1*	three houses

If the value of the noun (its weight, volume or price) is measured, then the noun becomes the classifier, as in:

(43) *thing2-pui-nou1-khat*
tea -cup -one
one cup of tea

Compare this with:

(44) *nou1 pa-khat*
one cup

Ordinal numbers: These are formed by suffixing *-na1* to the cardinal number. Furthermore, numerals with high tone or rising tone become low tone. Since there is no obvious phonetic motivation for this change in tone, I assume the numerals have a Stem II form[5] which surfaces only in this particular construction. This explains why the low tone and the rising tone, the only possible tones for Stem II forms, do not change. Moreover, the suffix *-na1* always affixes to Stem II forms. Some examples of cardinal and ordinal numbers in NPs are:

(45) a. *aar1 pa-lii1 ka1 du?*
hen four 1NOM want
I want four hens.

b. *aar1 pa-lii-na1 ka1 du?*
hen unit-four-NLZ 1nom want
I want the fourth hen.

c. *aar1 pa-kua2 ka1 du?*
hen unit-nine 1NOM want
I want nine hens.

d. *aar1 pa-kua-na1 ka1 du?*
hen unit-nine-NLZ 1NOM want
I want the ninth hen.

e. *aar1 pa-riat3 ka1 du?*
hen unit-eight 1NOM want
I want eight hens.

f. *aar1 pa-riat3-na1 ka1 du?*
hen unit-eight-NLZ 1NOM want
I want the eighth hen.

Alternate numbers are indicated by the word *dan* meaning 'every other', follwed by the locative marker *a?*. There is no tone change in this case.

(46) *ni1-thum1 dan a? kal1 ro?*
day-three every LOC go IMP
Go every three days.

2.3.5.2 General quantifiers

General quantifiers are either particles or clitics and can occur both in the NP and VP. The more common NP quantifiers are: *zong zong3* 'each and every', *trhen1 khat* 'some (of the whole)', *vaai2* 'all/everything', *zaa* 'all/every', *tam2 tak* 'several, many', *tleem2 tee2* 'very few' and *tin3* 'each' (refer to section 2.6.3.3 for VP quantifiers). See also section 2.6.1.2 for plural markers.

These are examples of NP quantifiers:

(47) a. *aar1* ***zong zong3***
hen all
all the hens

b. *aar1* ***tam2*** *tak*
hen many INT
many hens

c. *aar1* ***tleem1*** *te2*
hen few little
few hens

d. *aar1* ***hou3***
hen group
group of hens

e. *a2-n* ***vaai2*** *in1* *a-n* *kal1*
3P-PL all OBLQ 3NOM-PL went
they all went

f. *mii3* ***zong zong3*** *a-n* *kal1*
people all 3NOM-PL went
all the people went

g. *mi* ***tin3*** *a-n* *kal1*
person each 3NOM-PL go
each person went

h. *an-nii3* ***hou3*** *a-n* *kal1*
3PRO-PL group 3NOM-PL go
they went (together)

i. *an* ***hou3*** ***te1*** *a-n* *kal1*
3P PL group EX 3NOM-PL go
their party went

2.3.5.3 Plurality

Number is indicated either by morphology or by cardinal numbers. There is another optional plural particle, *te1*. When it occurs without the other number markers, *te1* has a slightly different meaning. In this instance, *te1* does not signify 'several of the specified item' but rather, 'the specified item plus others associated with it'. Compare the following examples:

(48) a. *ka1 nuu3 te1 ka1 paa3 te1*
1P mother EX 1P father EX
my mother, father, etc.

b. *ka luu1 te1 ka1 cal te1*
1P head EX 1P forehead EX
my head, forehead, etc.

The above examples clearly show that the particle *te1* does not indicate plurality even though it indicates a collection of subjects. Its true contribution, however, more resembles English etc. which indicates that the overt forms are merely examples of a longer list. Therefore, it is understandable that *te1* occurs in plural NPs, as the listed forms may only be indicative of a larger set, e.g.

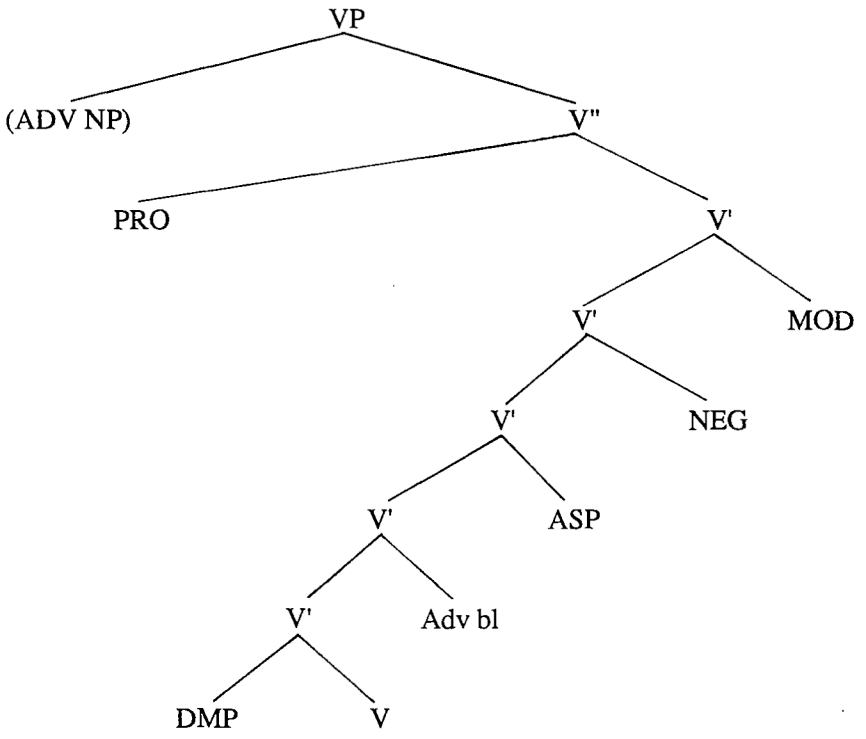
(49) *hee3-ng te1 hi1*
DPRO-PL EX DET
these (and such)

2.4 Verb phrase structure

The verb phrase structure is the most complex part of Mizo grammar. Part of the complexity comes from the numerous particles that accompany the main verb. In many instances, it is very difficult to decide if the particle is an innovation in the language or if it is derived from some other source. Take for example the subject pronoun clitic. It appears in many of the related languages (such as Laai Chin, Hmar, Thadou) but its phonological form and usage varies widely from language to language. Even in languages that are more distant relatives of Mizo, verb morphology continues to be a rather complex and controversial issue. Furthermore, it is difficult to find sufficient data for comparison as one has to rely mostly on isolated examples cited in the literature. It would be much easier to analyse and compare the syntactic structure of related languages if one had access to a standard text in the various languages. Grierson's survey is helpful in this area as he uses the same text throughout, even when the data is not sufficiently marked for tone. Thus, it is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with the verb morphology in exhaustive detail.

The constituents to be discussed in this section are displayed in the chart below:

(50)



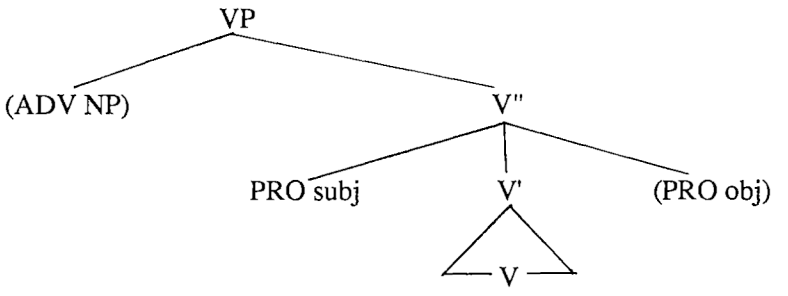
First of all, this analysis is supported by the sub-categorisation restrictions on Mizo. Adverbs and direct object NPs are optional constituents of the VP just as in many other languages. The clitic pronoun, however, is required in every sentence (except for relative clauses, imperatives and subjectless wh-questions, cf. 3.4.1). Therefore, I assign it to a special level of the VP called V". The remaining particles for mode, negation, aspect, etc. are optional again. So these can be dominated by a recursive V' constituent. A second and very persuasive argument that the pronoun clitics require their own V-bar constituent (here V") is seen in the behaviour of the second person accusative pronoun clitic *ce1* 'you', *ce1 u1* 'you (p1)', cf. example 51 below.

(51) a. *mi-sual2 in a man1 ce1*
man-evil ERG 3NOM catch 2ACC
A criminal has caught you.

b. *mi-sual2 in a man1 doon1 ce1*
man-evil ERG 3NOM catch ASP 2ACC
A criminal is going to catch you.

At present I know of no tests to decide which of the two clitics is higher in the structure. Therefore, I assume for this preliminary account of Mizo a structure:

(52)



2.5 Verb phrase constituents

The following are the major constituents of the verb phrase. Morphology will be dealt with in greater detail in section 2.6.

2.5.1 Adverbs

Adverbs generally precede the main verb. Manner adverbs can follow the main verb under certain circumstances. The adverbs are manner adverbs, adverbs of time and adverbs of place. The last two adverbs are very similar. Adverbs that precede the verb require some sort of modifier, such as the oblique marker or the locative marker. There is no such restriction on post-verbal adverbs.

2.5.1.1 Manner adverbs

Manner adverbs can either precede or follow the verb, depending on the relationship between the verb and the adverb. Manner adverbs of speed can come before or after the verb, as in:

(53) a. ***rang2*** *tak* *in1* *a* *thou2*
fast very OBLQ 3NOM arise
(S)he got up very quickly.

b. *a* *thou2* ***rang2***
3NOM arise fast
(S)he gets up quickly.

Unexpected events also fall into the above category:

(54) a. *a1-**tlhoon*** *in1* *a* *kal1*
it-in vain OBLQ 3NOM go
(S)he went in vain.

b. *a* *kal1* ***tlhoon***
3NOM go in vain
(S)he went in vain.

If the manner adverb is not directly related to the verb, it precedes the verb. These adverbs that precede verbs are really cognitive adjectives that must be turned into adverbs with modifier particles and oblique marker, such as: *tak in1* 'very', *deu?3 in1* 'somewhat', *em3 em3 in1* 'very much' and *lu1-tuk in1* 'excessively'.

(55) a. *lhim1 tak in1 a2-n om2*
happy very OBLQ 3NOM-PL exist
They lived happily.

b. *thin-rim3 deu?1 in1 a1 chuak3*
angry very OBLQ 3NOM exit
(S)he went out angrily.

c. *mhan3-mho? em3 em3 in1 a1 chuak3*
hurry very much OBLQ 3NOM left
(S)he left in a great hurry.

d. *lhau2 lu1-tuk in1 a2-n om2*
fear excessive OBLQ 3NOM-PL exist
They lived in great fear.

From the above examples we can see that verbs of action are related to speed and to probability. On the other hand, attitudes and feelings of the subject have less in common with the verb and are, consequently, restricted in their usage.

2.5.1.2 Time adverbs

Locative markers follow time adverbs, as in:

(56) a. *ni-min1 a? a thii1*
yesterday LOC 3NOM die
(S)he died yesterday.

b. *tuuk3-in1 a? a1 chuak3*
morning LOC 3NOM leave
(s)he left this morning.

c. *ni1-kum a? a thii1*
last year LOC 3NOM die
(S)he died last year.

2.5.1.3 Place adverbs

Place adverbs also take the locative marker, as in:

(57) a. *kho1-pui1 a? a peem1*
town-big LOC 3NOM move to
(S)he moved to the city.

b. *Ai1-zool1 a? zuu1 a zuar1*
Aizawl LOC beer 3NOM sell
(S)he sells beer in Aizawl.

2.5.1.4 Adverbial particles

Adverbial particles have often been called 'double adverbs', for various reasons. First of all, they function as adverbs in that they modify the verb. Secondly, they are usually reduplicated.

However, there are phonological and grammatical reasons to distinguish these from the true adverbs mentioned above. Unlike the true adverbs, adverbial particles are iconic and convey a significant amount of information. Some of these include: speaker attitude, size and shape of subject/object, speed of action and aspect. For this reason, they are indispensable in narrative discourse where they are often used to dramatise and highlight significant events. Yet, in spite of their versatility, they do not have lexical meaning in and of themselves. For this reason it is better to consider them as particles rather than independent words.

The vowels in adverbial particles are iconic. Front vowels are used for smaller sizes (children,women, small animals, etc.). A back vowel is used to represent larger sizes (men, large animals, etc.). It is also used for insults or for comic effect. The low vowel *a* is used for in between sizes (older children, small adults, etc.). This phenomenon is also found in other south-east Asian languages, cf.Gregerson (1984).

Most adverbial particles are reduplicated (hence the term 'double adverbs'). In instances where the two forms are not the same, the first will have a front vowel and the second will have a back vowel, cf. 60a, b. These adverbs can modify active verbs, as in:

(58) a. *a tlaan2* ***per per3***
3NOM ran small, fast
(S)he (small) ran smoothly and rapidly.

b. *a tlaan2* ***par par3***
3NOM ran med, fast
(S)he (med) ran smoothly and rapidly.

c. *a tlaan2* ***pur pur3***
3NOM ran big, fast
(S)he (big) ran smoothly and rapidly.

They can also modify non-active verb, as in:

(59) a. *a nui1* ***sen sen3***
3NOM smile small, pleasant
(S)he (small) smiled pleasantly.

b. *a nui1* ***san san3***
3NOM smile med, pleasant
(S)he (med) smiled pleasantly.

c. *a nui1* ***sun sun3***
3NOM smile big, pleasant
(S)he (big) smiled pleasantly.

d. *a nui1* ***trhuu 1***
3NOM smile big, teeth showing
(S)he (big) smiled broadly (with teeth showing).

e. *a nui1* ***ker2 ker2***
3NOM laugh small, happy
(S)he (small) laughed merrily.

f. *a nui1* ***kur2 kur2***
3NOM laugh big, happy
She (big) laughed heartily.

Note in the above examples that the difference between 'to smile' and 'to laugh' is not in the verb but in the accompanying adverbial particles.

Adverbial particles can modify even the most stative verbs.

(60) a. *a luu1 a1 thur3* ***bim bem***
3P head 3NOM tousled small
His/her (small) hair is tousled

b. *a luu1 a1 thur3* ***bem bum***
3P head 3NOM tousled big
His/her (big) hair is tousled.

Thadou has a slightly different way of using the adverbial particles. Where Mizo uses front vowels to represent smaller sizes, Thadou uses them for showing pleasure. Similarly, the vowels used in Mizo for representing larger sizes are used to represent displeasure in Thadou, cf. Krishan (1980: 53-55).

2.5.1.5 Adverbs of degree/intensity

These adverbs show the degree or intensity of the verb. They usually follow active verbs, as shown below. (See also section 2.5.1.1).

(61) a. *a haau1* ***rhep 1***
3NOM scold INT
(S)he gave him a piece of her/his mind.

b. *a viin2* ***tuar2***
3NOM yell forceful
(S)he spoke sharply and forcefully.

c. *a* *au1* ***vak1***
3NOM yell loudly
(S)he shouted loudly.

d. *a1* *trap* ***ciam1***
3NOM cry much
(S)he cried loud and long.

e. *a* *ce1* ***muang1***
3NOM move slowly
(S)he moves slowly.

2.5.2 Pronoun clitics

The pronoun clitic in the VP is obligatory in all clause types except in: relative clauses, imperatives and in wh-questions without a subject. Only the deictic motion particles and the reciprocal/reflexive marker can come between it and the verb. See also section 2.3.2.5 for full form pronouns and pronoun clitics in NPs. The influence of cases to produce the different types of pronoun clitics, i.e., the nominative and accusative forms, will be discussed in section 2.5.4.2.

These, then, are some examples of pronoun clitics.

(62) a. *ka kal1* I go
b. *i kal1* you go
c. *a kal1* (s)he goes
d. *ka-n kal1* we go
e. *i-n* kal 1 you (pl) go
f. *a-n kal1* they go

2.5.3 Deictic motion particles

One of the characteristics of TB languages is the deictic motion verbs (DeLancey 1985c). In Mizo, these are not verbs but preverbal particles which I call *deictic motion particles* (DMP). The DMPs cliticise before main verb stems and cause the verbal complex to receive an interpretation of the subject's carrying out the action in a certain manner involving locomotion. In all instances it is the individual expressed by the pronoun, which immediately precedes the DMP, that moves.

The DMPs are limited to five lexical items: *va1* 'away from the speaker'; *rom* 'towards addressee' in questions when the questioner is the subject and 'towards speaker' in all other cases; *lou2* 'toward speaker'; *ham2* 'up and away from speaker'; and *zuk* 'down and away from speaker'. These will also agree semantically with the demonstrative pronoun and determiner on NPs, i.e.

(63) a. *khi1-ta?* *khi-an1* *han* *kal1* *ro?*
up there DET-OBLQ up there go IMP
Go up there!

b. *he1-lam1 a? hi-an1 ron son3 ro?*
this-side LOC DET-OBLQ hither move IMP
Move it hither.

c. *ka1 ron da? doon1 em2 nii*
1NOM thither put ASP Q be
Should I (bring it and) put it there?

The DMPs *va1* and *lou2* can be used only with verbs of emotion. If they are used with stative verbs, then the sense of the whole becomes a change of state to an excessive degree, as in:

(64) a. *a va1 thaau1 vee*
3NOM how fat EXCL
It's too fat!

b. *a lou2 tha khop mai2*
3NOM here good DEG very
(S)he was in good health (surprisingly).

This special restriction can cause some drastic changes in meaning. Thus, even though *lou2* and *ron* both mean 'towards speaker' when used with directional verbs, *lou2* has a completely different meaning when used with a non-directional verb. In this instance, it means something like 'meanwhile' or 'contrary to expectations'. The following are some examples of deictic motion particles. Note how they give a sense of motion to non-versatile verbs. See also DeLancey (1985c).

(65) a. *ka **va1** pee ang2*
1NOM thither give MOD
I will go thither and give (it to someone).

b. *ka1 **ron** tii ang2*
1NOM come there do MOD
I will come there and do (it).

c. *ka1 **han** kou ang2*
1NOM up there call MOD
I will go up there and call (someone).

d. *ka1 **zuk** biaa ang2*
1NOM down there speak MOD
I will go down there and speak (to someone).

e. *a **lou** tlheng1 ang2*
3NOM to here arrive MOD
(S)he will arrive here.

2.5.4 Verbs

Mizo has two verbal paradigms: one I call *Stem I:* the other *Stem II.* The Stem I verbs and Stem II verbs differ in their phonological shapes. However, it has not been possible to postulate a

phonological rule (see Hillard 1974) relating these suppletive forms to the Stem I forms even though there is some regularity. Usually, the two forms differ both in tone and in the final segment. The Stem II form has mostly low tone or sometimes falling tone; the final segment is either a stop or a glottalised vowel. Stem II verbs are extremely important in Mizo grammar, as explained in section 2.5.4.3. In my description of verbs, I will be using terms as used by Givón (1984).

The Stem I verbs can be further subdivided into two main classes: *active* and *stative* verbs. The best test for distinguishing between the two types is the durative aspect marker *meek1*. This marker can be applied only to incomplete actions so that one gets:

(66) *a zaai1 meek1*
3NOM sing PROG
(S)he is singing.

but not:

(67) **a thi1 meek1*
3NOM die PROG
(S)he is dying.

Adjectives and the verb 'to be' usually fall into the stative category. Another condition for *meek1* is that the action should be observable, so that one can say:

(68) *a trhu1 meek1*
3NOM sit PROG
(S)he is sitting.

only if one actually sees the person getting into a sitting positon. Once the person has sat down, the above can no longer be said. Thus, there are times when a stative verb can become an active verb.

These two types of verbs combine to form *change-of-state verbs*. For example

(69) *le?-khaa3 a1 pot-som3*
paper 3NOM tear-pieces
(S)he tore up the paper.

Active verbs become causatives when used with stative adjectives, as shown:

(70) a. *mi1 ti-buai2*
1ABS make-confuse
(S)he confused me.

b. *a soi2-buai2*
3NOM say-confuse
(S)he got it (story/instructions) mixed up.

c. *a siam1-trhaa*
3NOM make-good
(S)he repaired it

d. *a1* *da?-trhaa*
3NOM put-good
(S)he put it away in a safe place.

In the above examples, there is a change of state either from good to bad or from bad to worse. The change of state is brought about by an active verb acting on a stative verb so that the active verb is in effect a causative. See also section 2.5.4.4.

2.5.4.1 Intransitive verbs

Intransitives are those that have at least one nominatively case-marked NP and a nominative clitic pronoun. They can be either *active* or *stative*.

Some examples of active verbs are:

(71) a. *Zou1-i1* *a1* *khu?*
-FSUF 3NOM coughs
Zovi is coughing.

b. *Dou1-a* *a* *zuang1*
-MSUF 3NOM jumps
Dova is jumping.

c. *Nau1-seen1* *a1* *trap*
infant 3NOM cry
A baby is crying.

Stative verbs can take the following forms:

(72) a. *Zou1-i1* *in1* *a?* *a* *om2*
-FSUF house LOC 3NOM exist
Zovi is in the house.

b. *ka1* *nuu3* *a1* *nii*
1P mother 3NOM is
She is my mother.

c. *Rin3-a* *zir1-tiir1-tuu3* *a1* *nii*
-MSUF SUF teacher 3NOM is
Rina is a teacher.

Intransitives can have locative or temporal complements, as in:

(73) a. *Rou-a* *thing1* *a?* *a* *loon1*
-MSUF tree LOC 3NOM climb
Rova climbed a tree.

b. *ziing1* *a?* *a-n* *chuak3*
morning LOC 3NOM-PL left
They left in the morning.

Sentences with reflexives and reciprocals count as intransitive with regard to their case marking, as in:

(74) a. *a1 in -vit*
3NOM REF-stab
(S)he stabbed herself/himself

b. *a2-n in -haau1*
3NOM-PL RCP-scold
The are quarelling

Reflexive and reciproval constructions are intransitive in Mizo because one can have:

(75) *Zou1-a a1 in-vit*
-MSUF 3NOM REF-stab
Zova stabbed himself.

but not

(76) **Zou1-a in a1 in-vit*
-MSUF ERG 3NOM REF-vit
Zova stabbed himself.

That is, reflexives or reciprocals cannot take the ergative case marking, even though the verb is a transitive verb. However, since both markers have the same phonological shape, it is possible that the reflexive or reciprocal detransitivises a normally transitive verb.

Meteorological verbs are also intransitive:

(77) a. *rua? a suur1*
rain 3NOM rains
It is raining.

b. *kool1 a phee2*
sky 3NOM flash
There is lightning.

Another type of intransitive construction involves emotive verbs (inner emotions or physical states).

(78) a. *ka1 luak3 a1 chuak3*
1P vomit 3NOM come out
I'm nauseated.

b. *ka1 thin a1 raim3*
1P heart 3NOM works hard
I'm angry.

2.5.4.2 Transitive verbs

Transitive sentences have the most complex morphology. The NPs display an ergative-absolutive system and the verb has a largely nominative-accusative encoding system. That is, the subjects of both the intransitive verb and the transitive verb are encoded alike in the VP. In the NP, the ergative case marker is *in*, and the absolutive case marker is ø.

(79) *nau1-pang1* ***in*** *aar1* ***ø*** *a1* *uum3*
child ERG chicken ABS 3NOM chase
A child is chasing a chicken.

Thus, the terms 'subject' and 'object' in Mizo refer to what is encoded by the case markers. For instance, 'subject' in Mizo does not always involve an active agent, cf.

(80) a. *bang1* *in* *kil-lii1* *ø* *a1* *nei*
wall ERG corner-four ABS 3NOM has
A wall has four corners

b. *nin-lhei3* *in* *to1-peeng1* *ø* *a1* *nei*
mischief ERG consequence ABS 3NOM has
Mischief has it's (undesirable) consequence.

c. *pi1-tar1* *in* *Thang1-kuur1-a* *ø* *a* *rhiaa2*
woman-old ERG -MSUF ABS 3NOM knows
The old woman knows Thangkura.

Therefore, I will define a transitive 'subject' in Mizo as one that is marked with the ergative marker in the NP. The transitive 'object' and the intransitive 'subject' are marked with the absolutive marker in the NP. From here on, the terms 'subject' and 'object' will be used in this specialised sense.

If there is more than one subject, the ergative marker comes at the end of the NP.

(81) *nau1-pang2* *le?* *ui1* *in* *aar1* *ø* *a-n* *uum3*
child and dog ERG chicken ABS 3NOM-PL chase
A child and a dog are chasing a chicken.

Instruments are marked with the oblique marker *in 1*, as in:

(82) *nau1-pang1* *in* *tiang* ***in 1*** *ui* *ø* *a1* *vuaa*
child ERG stick OBLQ dog ABS 3NOM hit
A child is hitting a dog with a stick.

When it comes to the object (direct or indirect), there is a further complication. If the object is first person, the object is marked before the verb, instead of a second or third person subject marker, as in:

(83) *lal1* *in* ***mi*** *haau1*
chief ERG 1ACC scold
The chief scolded me.

The first person accusative marker is phonologically unstable: it does not always follow the PRONOUN CLITIC TONE SANDHI RULE[6] (cf. 84a, b) and also alternates with the plural form (cf. 84c). So, one can get any of the following synonymous sentences:

(84) a. ***mi1*** *pe?* *ro?*
1ACC give IMP
Give it to me.

b. ***mi*** *pe* *ro?*
1ACC give IMP
Give it to me.

c. ***min2*** *pe* *ro?*
1ACC-(PL) give IMP
Give it to me (us).

Nowadays, many people use the last example, 84c, for either singular or plural.

If the object is second person, it is marked both nominative and accusative (the only time there is an accusative marking) so that we get:

(85) *lal1* *in* *a* *haau1* *ce1*
chief ERG 3NOM scold 2ACC
The chief scolded you.

If the object is third person, there is no marking, as in:

(86) *lal1* *in* *a* *haau1* *ø*
chief ERG 3NOM scold 3ACC
The chief scolded him/her.

The pronoun clitic system can be summarised thus:

(87)

	NOM	ACC
1	*ka-*	*mina-*
2	*i-*	*-ce1*
3	*a-*	*-ø*

The accusative clitics are used for direct objects, and also for indirect objects; see section 3.2.8.

Transitive verbs are generally active verbs. They usually reflect some kind of change that is registered by the patient/object. Thus, if the object is created, we get:

(88) a. *in* *ø* *a1* *saa*
house ABS 3NOM build
(S)he is building a house.

b. *sum* *ø* *a1* *sui?*
mortar ABS 3NOM carve
(S)he is carving a mortar.

c. *lhaa ø a1 phua?*
song ABS 3NOM compose
(S)he composed a song.

d. *beel1 ø a1 vuaa*
pot ABS 3NOM hit
(S)he is making a (clay) pot.

The verbs can also refer to totally destroyed objects, as in:

(89) *in 2 ø a-n trhiat 3*
house ABS 3NOM-PL undo
They tore down the house.

Most transitive verbs, however, encode some sort of change in the object/patient's state. The change can be a physical change in the object, as in:

(90) a. *cem1 ø a1 taat3-rhiaam1*
knife ABS 3NOM whet-sharp
(S)he sharpened the knife.

b. *le?-khaa3 ø a1 pot-soom3*
paper ABS 3NOM pull-pieces
(S)he tore the paper to pieces.

c. *nou1 ø a1 vo-ke?*
cup ABS 3NOM hit-break
(S)he hit and broke the cup.

Other transitive verbs refer to the change in the object's location, as in:

(91) a. *beel1 ø a suan2*
pot ABS 3NOM move from fire
(S)he took the pot off the fire.

b. *aar1-in2 ø a-n son3*
chicken-house ABS 3NOM-PL move
They moved the chicken house.

Some transitive verbs encode change with an implied instrument, as in:

(92) a. *saa3 ø a2-n can2*
meat ABS 3NOM-PL cut
They are cutting the meat (with a knife).

b. *pang-paar1 ø a-n tlhiak3*
flower ABS 3NOM-PL break-off
They broke off the flower (with their hands).

c. *tual1 ø a2-n saam2*
field ABS 3NOM-PL clear
They are weeding the fields.

Some changes can be considered to be surface change, as in:

(93) a. *puan ø a1 suu*
clothes ABS 3NOM wash
(S)he is washing clothes.

b. *beel1 ø a1 noot3*
pot ABS 3NOM scrub
(S)he is scrubbing pots.

c. *aar1 ø a1 pua?*
chicken ABS 3NOM pluck feathers
(S)he is dressing the chicken.

Other changes can be internal, as in:

(94) a. *be-kang1 ø a-n um1*
soy beans ABS 3NOM-PL ferment
They are fermenting soy beans.

b. *saa3 ø a2-n reep2*
meat ABS 3NOM-PL dry
They smoked the meat.

Thus, the above examples demonstrate that a minimal transitive clause requires an object and a pronoun clitic.

There are a few transitive verbs that seem more stative than active, that is, they cannot usually take the progressive marker *meek1* (probably because these events occur over a longer period), as in:

(95) a. *pi1-tar1 in vok ø a1 vul?*
woman-old ERG pigs ABS 3NOM raise
The old woman raises pigs.

b. *saap3 in fa-rha? ø a2-n coom2*
British ERG orphan ABS 3NOM-PL feed
The British are taking care of orphans.

Verbs of cognition such as *rhia2* 'to know', *tii* 'to think/consider' and *thiam2* 'to know (a skill)' are also stative in this sense, as in:

(96) a. *pi1-tar1 in Zou1-a ø a rhiaa2*
woman-old ERG -MSUF ABS 3NOM knows
The old woman knows Zova.

b. *pi1-tar1 in Zou1-a ø trhaa a1 tii*
woman-old ERG -MSUF ABS good 3NOM thinks
The old woman thinks Zova is nice.

c. *pi1-tar1 in puan2-ta? ø a thiam2*
woman-old ERG cloth-weave ABS 3NOM knows
The old woman knows how to weave.

2.5.4.3 Stem II verbs

The phonological aspects of Stem II verbs have received considerable attention. With regard to their historical origin and their relationship to Stem I verbs, Löffler (1973), Hillard (1974) and Lehman (1982) have dealt with the pertinent data in related Chin languages. The issue is far from resolved but I will not comment any further except to emphasise that the phonological relationship between Stem I and Stem II is no longer productive. Various evidence points to this. First of all, some of the major differences between the 'North' and 'South' dialects involve differences in Stem II forms. Secondly, children do not master both forms until age five or later.

In this paper, the distinction between Stem I and Stem II is a purely phonological one. I do not consider them to be separate verb classes. For instance, there are some cases where the Stem II form of an intransitive verb is the Stem I of a transitive verb.

(97) a. *nau1-seen1 a **muu1***
infant 3NOM sleepI
An infant is sleeping.

b. *nau1-seen ø ka1 **mut***
infant ABS 1NOM sleepII
I put an infant to sleep.

There are also instances where the Stem I form is a verb and the Stem II form is a noun.[7]

It is also possible that the relationship is iconic as Stem II forms are predominantly used for background or known information (as in embedded clauses). Stem II forms are also less active and more restricted in their choice of environments. Thus, in word formation morphology, the derived form uses the Stem II verb if the derived form is less animate (or more abstract) than its original form. For instance, one finds:

(98) a. *co-**chuum**-tuu3*
rice-cookI-AGT
a cook

b. *co-**chum3**-na1*
rice-cookII-NLZ
kitchen (place for cooking)/cooking utensil

There thus seems to be a relationship between tone, information and syntactic construction. That is, Stem II forms which are mostly low tone (with a few falling tones) are used for known

information and more passive constructions. Indeed, Lehman (1982) mentions that Stem II is used when the focus changes from the (more salient) agent to the (more passive) patient. This relationship between tone and grammatical constructions has been noted in African languages, cf. Bearth (1980) and Ubels (1983) and it would not be too far-fetched to assume that a similar correlation exists in Mizo.[8]

Here are some examples of Stem II verbs with their Stem I counterparts:

(99)

	Stem I	Stem II	Gloss
a.	*puu1*	*put*	to carry
b.	*rhing1*	*rhin3*	to give birth to
c.	*ral2*	*ral*	to disappear
d.	*hua2*	*huat3*	to hate
e.	*ruak3*	*rua?*	to empty out
f.	*tlheng3*	*tlheng3*	to exchange
g.	*tii*	*ti?*	to do
h.	*rii*	*riik3*	to make noise

Note that the Stem II verbs are glossed 'II' (as in Hillard 1974).

2.5.4.4 Serial verbs and derived verbs

Like many South-east Asian languages, Mizo has a productive system of serial verbs, cf. Matisoff (1974). There are two major types: one I call change-of-state verbs; the others are derived from what I call *derived* verbs. The change-of-state verbs are the most common. Typically these consist of an active verb followed by a stative verb.

(100) a. *nou1 a1 ti-ke?*
cup 3NOM make-break
(S)he broke the cup.

b. *nou1 a1 vo-ke?*
cup 3NOM hit-break
(S)he hit the cup and broke it.

c. *nou1 a1 tlhau?-ke?*
cup 3NOM drop-break
(S)he dropped and broke the cup.

d. *nou1 a1 pai?-ke?*
cup 3NOM throw-break
(S)he threw and broke the cup.

Thus, from the above examples we can see that the first part of the serial verb indicates the manner or means by which the object reached its current state. In other words, there is a change of state from an unbroken cup to a broken cup via the actions indicated by the active verbs.

In some serial verb constructions, the second verb can no longer exist as a main verb stem, even though it still has a distinct meaning of its own. I shall call this type of verb derived verbs for the time being as they are related to the preceding verb. The most common of all is *-lhum* meaning 'to become dead'.

(101) a. *tui1 a? a1 tla-lhum*
water LOC 3NOM fall-dead
(S)he drowned.

b. *lung1 in a1 del?-lhum*
rock ERG 3NOM fall on-dead
A rock crushed him/her to death.

c. *mii3 a-n ook3-lhum*
person 3NOM-PL hang-dead
They hanged someone (to death).

In the following examples, the second part of the derived verb indicates the attitude or intentions or purpose of the subject.

(102) a. *a1 tlu-**lui***
3NOM fall-purpose
(S)he fell on purpose.

b. *a1 tlu-**tral?3***
3NOM fall-in spite of
(S)he (stubbornly) fell on purpose.

c. *a1 tlu-**pal?***
3NOM fall-accidentally
(S)he accidentally fell.

d. *a mu1-**der1***
3NOM sleep-feign
(S)he feigned sleep.

e. *a1 en3-**look3***
3NOM look-ahead
(S)he looked ahead of time/revised.

f. *a1 en3-**rhaam2***
3NOM look-with great difficulty
(S)he looked with great difficulty.

Another type of verb concatenation involves DMPs and motion verbs that form one syntactic unit.

(103) a. *a **lou**-kal1*
3NOM hither-go
(S)he came (hither).

b. *al* ***chuk-tlhaa***
3NOM descend-downwards
(S)he descended.

Note that in each of these examples the DMP's (*lou2* and *tlhaa*) can no longer stand as a lexical main verb. This lexicalisation of motion verbs has been attested to in several TB languages; see DeLancey (1983) and (1985c).

The other type of derived verbs modify only Stem II verbs. These are adjectival verbs expressing degree or manner (something like '-ness' in English).

(104) a. *il aat3* - ***ziaa***
2P foolishII-ness
your foolishness

b. *il aat3* - ***daan***
2P foolishII-manner
the manner of your folly

c. *al aat3* - ***tlhaak***
3P foolishII-ness
it is (very) foolish

The others express benefactive or causative relationships.

(105) a. *kor mil lei-**sak***
dress 1ABS buyII-BEN
(S)he bought a dress for/from me.

b. *kor mil lei-**pui***
dress 1ABS buyII-with
(S)he helped me buy a dress.

c. *kor mil lei-**tiir1***
dress 1ABS buyII-compel
(S)he made me buy a dress.

Still others show movement away from or over the object.

(106) a. *ui kal zuan-**khum3***
dog 1NOM jumpII-over
I jumped over a dog

b. *in kal kal-**san3***
house 1NOM goII-desert
I deserted the house.

2.5.5 Aspect markers

Aspect markers are particles and not lexical words. Their position is immediately following the adverbial particles (which can also mark aspect). Aspect markers relate an event to the time axis. They indicate if an event has happened yet, and if the event is completed or about to be completed. They also indicate how soon one can expect an event to take place and whether or not the event has been a long-awaited one. Several aspect markers have similar meanings with just shades of difference in their interpretation. Traditional grammarians have mistaken them for tense markers, even though their examples clearly show that Mizo does not mark tense (see Lorrain and Savidge (1898)). The following examples illustrate the versatility of aspect markers:

(107) a. *a* *kal1* *to?*
3NOM go PST/COMPL
(S)he already left.

b. *a* *kal1* *taa3*
3NOM go at last
(S)he has left at last.

c. *a* *kal1* *cia?1*
3NOM go just now
(S)he just left.

d. *a* *kal1* *meek1*
3NOM go PROG
(S)he is going.

e. *a* *kal1* *treep3*
3NOM go IMM FUT
(S)he is just about to leave.

f. *a* *kal1* *doon1*
3NOM go ASP
(S)he is going to leave/go.

g. *a* *kal1* *doon1* *to?*
3NOM go ASP PST/COMPL
(S)he is going to leave/go shortly.

h. *a* *kal1* *doon1* *treep3*
3NOM go ASP IMM FUT
(S)he is almost leaving.

2.5.6 Mode marker

The mode marker *ang2* marks a probable event or state. Because it is connected to a future event, it is often mistaken for a future tense marker. The examples below will demonstrate that it is different from the future tense marker for several reasons. For instance, it follows the negation

marker whereas the future tense marker precedes it. The fact that they can both occur within the same phrase indicates that their functions are different.

(108) a. *a* *kal1* *ang2*
3NOM go MOD
(S)he will go.

b. *a* *kal1* *lou* *ang2*
3NOM go NEG MOD
(S)he will not go.

c. *a* *kal1* *doon1* *lou* *ang2*
3NOM go ASP NEG MOD
(S)he will not be going.

Lehman calls both *ang2* and *doon1* 'future irrealis mode markers', (in personal communication). I have decided not to make this distinction until I find a satisfactory explanation for their syntactic difference.

2.5.7 Negation marker

The negation word in Mizo, *lou*, follows what it negates.

(109) a. *a* *kal1* *du?* *lou*
3NOM go desire NEG
(S)he does not want to go.

b. *a* *mu1* *lou*
3NOM sleep NEG
(S)he is not sleeping.

c. *a* *mu1* *doon1* *lou*
3NOM sleep ASP NEG
(S)he is not going to sleep

d. *a* *mu1* *lou* *ang2*
3NOM sleep NEG MOD
(S)he will not sleep.

2.6 Morphology and cliticisation

Tibeto-Burman languages tend to have complex morphology, cf. Bauman (1974), Michailovsky (1974) and DeLancey (1983). Mizo is no exception and I will deal very briefly with some of the verb morphology.

To start with, it will be useful to set up some criteria for distinguishing between particles, clitics and affixes. Zwicky (1985) has given some useful guidelines. For the time being I will distinguish between grammatical words and affixes as the latter are inflectional. Moreover, affixes

have a wide variety of phonological shapes and generally also have a wide variety of tones; cf. plural affixes. I have further subdivided grammatical words into three categories: clitics, particles and words. Of these, only the last can constitute the major word classes while the others are modifiers of some sort. The distinction between clitics and particles is not very clear at this point. In general, clitics are obligatory whereas particles are not. Particles can also be distinguished by their phonological properties. For instance, particles and words have similar phonological shapes but particles usually do not undergo the SYLLABLE STRENGTHENING RULE[9] and are affected by intonation. Moreover, particles have very little lexical content but are highly functional.

The test to differentiate between clitics and affixes is even more difficult to conduct. Phonological rules are helpful in distinguishing between the two. For instance, clitics behave like independent words whereas affixes can change their phonological shape under certain conditions. A good example is the determiners where the tone of the ergative suffix combines with the tone of the determiner to form a different tone. Moreover, affixes are often one phonological unit: the demonstrative pronoun plural marker *-ng*, for instance.

2.6.1 Affixes

There are relatively few affixes. These are some of the more important ones:

2.6.1.1 Gender suffix

All proper names must have a gender suffix (see also section 2.3.2.4). The female gender suffix *-i1* and the male gender suffix *-a* are dropped in the vocative case, if the name is longer than two syllables. The vocative case is indicated by a low tone on the final syllable. For female names, the low tone of the vocative combines with the high tone of the affix so that the tone becomes a falling tone. Thus we get TONE CONTOURING[10] as in the case of determiners followed by ergative markers. (Tone contouring does not apply to male names because they are low tone in citation form.) Consider the following examples:

(110)	a.	*Maam1-a*	Mama (boy's nickname)
	b.	*Maam1-aa*	Mama! (vocative)
	c.	*Maam1-i1*	Mami (girl's nickname)
	d.	*Maam1-ii3*	Mami! (vocative)
	e.	*Maam1-boi?-a* -EMT-MSUF	Mambawiha (usually firstborn son)
	f.	*Maam1-boi?-i1* -EMT-FSUF	Mambawihi
	g.	*Maam1-boi?*	Mambawih! (vocative)

2.6.1.2 Plural suffix

Pronouns are the only items marked for number. Each of the different types of pronouns have their own plural form. Thus, *-nii3* is the plural marker for full pronouns, *-n* is the plural marker for subject pronoun clitics and *-ng* is the plural marker for the demonstrative pronouns. (See also section 2.3.1.1 and section 2.3.2.5.) For example:

(111) a. *kei2 ka zaai1*
1PRO 1NOM sing
I sing

b. *kei-nii3 ka-n zaai1*
1PRO-PL 1NOM-PL sing
we sing

c. *ka zaai1*
1NOM sing
I sing

d. *ka-n zaai1*
1NOM-PL sing
we sing

e. *hee nou1 hi1*
DPRO cup DET
this cup

f. *hee3-ng nou1 hi1*
DPRO-PL cup DET
these cups

The plural marker for the demonstrative pronoun is restricted to non-humans. Thus one cannot have:

(112) **hee3-ng mii3 hi1*
DPRO-PL cup DET
these people

Instead, the preferred form is:

(113) *hee mii3 te1 hi1*
DPRO person EX DET
these people and such

2.6.1.3 Relativiser

The relativiser *-a* and the third person nominative clitic *a* probably have the same historical origin, cf. Lehman (1975b). It is used both in relative clause constructions and in genitival constructions. In relative clauses, the relativiser optionally follows the relative clause.

(114) *pu1-tar1 vok lei1 (-a) kha1*
old-man pig buy (-REL) DET
the old man who bought a pig

If the subject of the relative clause is female *-i1* may be used instead.

(115) *pi1-tar1 vok lei (-i1) kha1*
old-woman pig buy (-REL) DET
the old woman who bought the pig

In genitival-of constructions, the relativiser carries a high tone, as in.

(116) *nang1-a1 faa3*
2PRO-REL child
the child of yours

Furthermore, the relativiser will coalesce with the final vowel of the preceding word, and change the tone of the preceding word as well.

(117) *//tuu-a1 ui2//* → */tuu1 ui2/*
WH -REL dog WH-REL dog
whose dog/dog of whom?

There is a homophonous and perhaps related nominalising prefix *a1* which occurs before verbs and bound noun stems that are nominalised. One may perhaps instead compare this with the third person nominative verb clitic *a*.

(118) a. *a1-trhaaa trha3*
of-good good
the best ones (out of the rest)

b. *a1-nuu a1-paa*
it-female it-male
both male and female

c. *a1-lian a-tee2*
it-big it-small
both great and small

There are also instances where *a1-* has become lexicalised, as in the following conjunctions, cf. 3.4.3.

(119) a. *a1-trang1* from
b. *a1-piang1* whoever
c. *a1-vaang* because

The above examples also show that the prefix *a1-* is probably not the third person nominative clitic since it does not undergo tone sandhi.

2.6.1.4 Ergative and oblique suffixes on determiners

The determiners have their own markers which are similar to the regular ergative marker and the oblique marker, see section 2.3.1.3. The markers on the determiners can co-occur with the other marker, without causing any changes in the meaning, though the complete form sounds more emphatic. Thus, the ergative marker and the oblique marker are optional for determiners. Compare the following examples:

(120) a. *hei3 hi-an3 a1 vuaa*
DPRO DET-ERG 3NOM hit
This (one) hit him.

b. *hei3 hi-an3 in a1 vuaa*
DPRO DET-ERG ERG 3NOM hit
This (one) hit him.

c. *hei3 hi-an1 a1 vuaa*
DPRO DET-OBLQ 3NOM hit
(S)he hit it with this.

d. *hei3 hi-an1 in1 a1 vuaa*
DPRO DET-OBLQ OBLQ 3NOM hit
(S)he hit it with this.

2.6.1.5 Nominaliser

Verbs and adjectives are nominalised by the suffix *-na1*. See also section 2.3.2.3 on nominalised nouns. The same suffix is used for ordinal numbers.

(121) a. *a-mheel1 a? mooi-na1 a om2 lou*
3P face LOC pretty-NLZ 3NOM exist NEG
There was no beauty on his face.

b. *ka1 trhut-na1 a? i trhuu1*
1P sitII-NLZ LOC 2NOM sit
You're sitting where I sat/my chair

c. *pa-khat-na1 a1 nii*
unit-one-NLZ 3NOM is
(S)he was first

2.6.1.6 Agentiviser

The agentiviser *-tuu3* is equivalent to the English '-er', as demonstrated in the following examples.

(122) a. *puan trhui1-tuu3*
cloth sew -AGT
tailor

b. *khool1 chu1-tuu3*
machine strike-AGT
typist

c. *be-raam veeng1-tuu3*
sheep guard-AGT
shepherd

It seems that both the nominaliser and the agentiviser are rather recent developments since both are used mainly for things that are foreign to traditional Mizo society. Another similarity between the two is that both are suffixed to a similar class of words. The major difference between the two is that the nominaliser is used on words derived from Stems II verbs, whereas the agentiviser is used on words derived from Stem I verbs.

2.6.1.7 Reflexive/reciprocal prefix

The reflexive and reciprocal prefix are the same. The difference between the two is indicated by the preceding nominative marker where the singular form is used for reflexives and the plural form for reciprocals. Reciprocity (of an action) is indicated by prefixing *in-* to the main verb. For example:

(123) a. *a1 in-meet3*
3NOM REF-shave
He is shaving himself.

b. *a2-n in-sual1*
3NOM-PL RCP-fight
They are fighting (each other).

Reflexives with full NPs are as follows:

(124) a. *kei2-ma? le? kei2-ma? ka1 in-biaa*
1PRO-EMP and 1PRO-EMP 1NOM REF-speak to
I'm talking to myself.

b. *nang2-ma? le? nang2-ma? i1 in-biaa*
2PRO -EMP and 2PRO -EMP 2NOM REF-speak to
You are talking to yourself.

c. *a1-ma? le? a1-ma? a1 in-biaa*
3PRO-EMP and 3PRO-EMP 3NOM REF-speak to
(S)he is talking to herself/himself.

d. *a2-n ma?-nii3 le? a2-n ma?-nii3 a2-n in-bum*
3PRO-PL EMP-PL and 3PRO-PL EMP-PL 3NOM-PL REF-cheat
They are cheating each other/one is cheating the other.

I have chosen to call *in-* a prefix because in many cases, words containing this prefix have become one lexical item. That is, a word such as *in-du?* means 'to be proud' and is no longer associated with its original meaning 'to desire oneself'.

(125) a. *in-sual1*
RCP-fight
to fight

b. *in-dou1*
RCP-war
to be at war

c. *in-cei1*
RCP-decorate
to be dressed up

d. *in-khoom3*
RCP-gather
to meet as a group

e. *in-du?*
RCP-want
to be proud

f. *in-tiat3*
RCP-same size
to be of the same size

When the direct cause of an event cannot be determined for sure, the prefix *in-* is used (sometimes to clear oneself of blame).

(126) a. *kong1-kaa1 a1 in-hong1*
door 3NOM REF-open
The door is open (who knows who opened it).

b. *ka1 la-phiaar a1 in-trhiat3*
1PRO-thread-knit(II) 3NOM REF-undo
My knitting got undone (by itself).

The reflexive usually suggests volitional action by the subject, so that

(127) *cem1 in1 ka1 in-aat3*
knife OBLQ 1NOM REF-cut
I cut myself with a knife.

implies that the subject was careless. That is, the above example could be interpreted to mean 'I wasn't watching what I was doing so I cut myself'. On the other hand, the following sentence implies that the action was accidental;

(128) *cem1 in mi1 aat3*
knife ERG 1ABS cut
A knife cut me.

This example could mean that 'the knife slipped and cut me'. The case markers on 'knife' are different in the above examples. In 127 it is marked with the instrumental or oblique marker but in 128 it is marked with the ergative marker. Similarly, the first person nominative becomes first person accusative, that is, the subject in 127 is the object in 128. Thus, when there is no reflexive, the speaker becomes the object, that is, the patient of an action beyond his/her control. It is also interesting to note that Tibetan has a way of distinguishing between volitional and non-volitional, cf. DeLancey (1985a, b).

2.6.2 Clitics

Because their phonological shapes and properties are so similar, it is often difficult to distinguish between particles and clitics. Historically, they might all have been particles. However, it seems as though clitics have lost their grammatical independence, and in the case of pronoun clitics, even their phonological independence. Clitics are obligatory in certain constructions whereas particles are not.

2.6.2.1 Pronoun clitics

As mentioned earlier, pronoun clitics are tightly bound to whatever they precede. There are only three types in the noun phrase (see section 2.3.2.5) whereas in the verb phrase there are two more besides these: the prefixed first person accusative marker and the suffixed second person accusative marker. The following examples will demonstrate how the different forms are used in a transitive clause.

The subject pronoun clitics in an intransitive clause are as follows:

(129) a. *poon1 a? **ka1** chuak3*
outside LOC 1NOM exit
I went outside.

b. *poon1 a? **i1** chuak3*
outside LOC 2NOM exit
You went outside.

c. *poon1 a? **a1** chuak3*
outside LOC 3NOM leave
(S)he went outside

The pronoun clitics for objects are as follows:

(130) a. *aar1 in* ***mi1*** *cuk*
hen ERG 1ACC peck
A hen pecked me.

b. *aar1 in* ***a1*** *cuk* ***ce1***
hen ERG 3NOM peck 2ACC
A hen pecked you.

c. *aar1 in* ***a1*** *cuk* ***ø***
hen ERG 3NOM peck 3ACC
A hen pecked (her/him/it).

Plural forms of the pronoun clitics are as follows:

(131) a. *aar1-rual in a2-n cuk ø*
hen-flock ERG 3NOM-PL peck 3ACC
A flock of hens pecked it.

b. *aar1 in a1 cuk ce1 u1*
hen ERG 3NOM peck 2ACC PL
A hens pecked you (pl).

c. *aar1 in a2-n cuk ce1 u1*
hen ERG 3NOM-PL peck 2ACC PL
(Several) hens pecked you (pl).

2.6.2.2 Ergative marker

Like many languages of this area, Mizo is a partially ergative language. In a transitive clause, the agent is marked by a case marker on the noun phrase. At the same time, the obligatory pronoun clitics in the verb phrase are organised according to nominative-accusative principles (see the preceding section and section 2.5.4.2).

The ergative case marker is a clitic and not an affix because it follows the whole noun phrase (including conjoined NPs), and is attached to whatever happens to be the last item in the noun phrase. It is optional when there are determiners. See also section 2.3.1.3.

(132) a. *Dou1-an3 mi1 vuaa*
-MSUF ERG 1ACC hit
Dova hit me.

b. *ka1 nuu3 in mi1 vuaa*
1P mother ERG 1ACC beat
My mother beat me.

c. *ka1 nuu3 le? ka1 paa3 in min2 vuaa*
1P mother and 1P father ERG 1ACC beat
My mother and my father beat me.

d. *hee naau1 le? soo naau1 soo3-n in mi1 veel*
this child and that child DET-ERG ERG 1ACC hit
This child and that child hit me.

2.6.2.3 Oblique marker

The oblique marker also marks instruments. Furthermore, it has two phonological forms: *in 1* for words and the suffix *-an 1* for determiners and relative clause constructions. The ergative marker and the oblique marker are identical except for their tone (see also section 3.1.1). For example:

(133) a. *tiang in1 mi1 vuaa*
stick OBLQ 1ACC beat
(Someone) beat me with a stick.

b. *tui2 le? chang in1 ka tlai1*
water and bread OBLQ 1NOM be satisfied
I am satisfied with (just) bread and water.

c. *la-sen1 le? la-pool in1 ka1 triaal*
yarn-red and yarn-blue OBLQ 1NOM stripedII
I made the stripes with red and blue yarn.

2.6.2.4 Locative marker

As mentioned earlier (section 2.3.1.2 and 2.5.1.3), the locative marker has two basic forms: *a?* for any noun and *ta?* for determiners.

(134) a. *Ai1-zool1 a? ka peem1 doon1*
Aizawl LOC 1NOM move to ASP
I am going to move to Aizawl.

b. *so1 ta? soo1-n ka kal1 du?*
DPRO LOC DET-OBLQ 1NOM go desire
I want to go there

The above two forms are further modified in non-main clauses (e.g. relative clauses) or in transitive clauses by the addition of the relativiser, *-a 1.*

(135) a. *Ai1-zool a1 ka1 kal nii1 kha-an1*
Aizawl LOC-REL 1NOM goII day DET-OBLQ
On the day that I went to Aizawl ...

b. *So1 ta1 mii3 so1 ka1 en3*
there LOC-REL person DET 1NOM look
I'm looking at that man over there.

2.6.3 Particles

As mentioned earlier, particles are distinguished by their unique phonetic characteristics, and by their grammatical function. Particles are usually low in content but high in function, especially in conveying the attitude of the speaker. Some particles are obligatory, depending on the context, but they are usually optional.

2.6.3.1 Demonstrative pronouns and determiners

As mentioned earlier, the demonstrative pronoun and the determiner agree in deictic degree. Refer to sections 2.3.1, 2.3.1.1, 2.3.1.2, 2.3.1.3, 2.6.1.2 and 2.6.1.4 for demonstrative pronoun and determiner morphologies. See also Benedict (1983). The following are the six possible pairs in Mizo:

(136) Dem pro and det

a.	*hei3 hi1*	this (near speaker)
b.	*khaa3 kha1*	that (near addressee)
c.	*khii3 khi1*	that (up there)
d.	*khuu3 khu1*	that (down there)
e.	*soo3 so1*	that (far)
f.	*cuu3 cu1*	that (out of sight)

It is worth noting here that out of the above determiners, there are two that have a different meaning within the context of a discourse. The two *kha1* 'that' and *cu1* are anaphoric, where *kha1* refers to something that the speaker has heard or seen but that the addressee has maybe only seen or heard of; and *cu1* refers to something the addressee has seen or heard of but the speaker has only heard of. When used in this sense (that is, to refer to something in the past) the determiners *kha1* and *cu1* can follow any of the other demonstrative pronouns, as in:

(137) a. *he1 ta1 mii3 kha1*
here LOC-REL person that
the person who was over here.

b. *so1-laai1 a1 mii3 cu1*
that-about LOC-REL person there
(I wonder about) that person over there.

The anaphoric function of the determiners becomes obvious when one compares the above examples with the examples shown below:

(138) a. *he1 ta1 mii3 hi1*
this LOC-REL person this
this person over here

b. *so1-laai1 a1 mii3 so1*
that-about LOC-REL person that
that person over there

Moreover, the determiner *cu1* is the only determiner that can follow any of the other demonstrative pronoun and determiner pairs. When this happens, *cu1* effectively negates the whole NP, as in:

(139) *hei3 hi1 cu1*
this this that
not this one

2.6.3.2 Emphatic particles

The emphatic particle for demonstrative pronouns is *ma?*. It can be roughly translated to mean something like 'excluding all else', cf. Lehman (1977).

(140) a. *eng3 ma? ka1 mhu lou*
WH EMP 1NOM see NEG
I don't see anything.

b. *a1-nii3 ma? a lou-kal1*
3PRO-PL EMP 3NOM come
Even (s)he came.

2.6.3.3 Quantifying particles

Quantifying particles can occur both in the noun phrase and the verb phrase. The most important ones in the noun phrase were shown in section 2.3.5.2. Those in the verb phrase are modal in character and are postverbal. It is usually not necessary to have quantifying particles in both noun phrase and verb phrase.

The examples below will show the difference between the two types.

(141) a. *ka aar1* ***zong zong3*** *mi1 lei sak*
1P hen all 1ACC buyII BEN
(S)he bought all my hens for/from me.

b. *ka aar1 min2 lei sak* ***vek1***
1P hen 1ACC buyII BEN all
(S)he bought all my hens for/from me.

c. *aar1* ***tam2*** *tak* *.a* *lei2*
hen many INT 3NOM bought
(S)he bought several hens.

d. *aar1* *a* *lei* ***treu?1***
hen 3NOM buy many
(S)he bought several hens.

e. *a2-n* ***vaai2*** *in1* *a-n* *chuak3*
3PRO-PL all OBLQ 3NOM-PL exit
They all left.

f. *a-n* *chuak3* ***vek1***
3NOM-PL exit all
They all left.

Thus, from the above it appears as though the quantifiers in both the noun phrase and the verb phrase have similar meanings. However, there are fewer types of quantifiers in the verb phrase. The postverbal quantifiers also seem to express degree, besides quantity. They are used mostly for uncountable items whereas the quantifiers in the noun phrase are usually countable.

Compare the following examples:

(142) a. ***voi3*** ***tam2*** *tak* *mi1* *vuaa*
times many INT 1ACC beat
(S)he beat me several times.

b. *mi1* *vo* ***rhep1***
1ACC beat severely
(S)he gave me a severe beating.

2.6.3.4 Intensifiers

Intensifiers generally follow a general quantifier or an adjective, as in:

(143) a. *pang-paar1* *tam2* *tak* *ka* *lei2*
flower many INT 1NOM buy
I bought many flowers.

b. *pang-paar1* *mooi1* *tak* *ka1* *mhuu*
flower pretty INT 1NOM see
I saw a very beautiful flower.

c. *pang-paar1* *mooi1* *em3 em3* *ka1* *mhuu*
flower pretty INT 1NOM see
I saw a very, very beautiful flower.

d. *pang-paar1 mooi1 lu1-tuk ka1 mhuu*
flower pretty INT 1NOM see
I saw a gorgeous flower.

Intensifiers, when they modify the verb, are postverbal (like the VP quantifying particles). Thus we can have:

(144) a. *coo3 ka ei1 nhem3 lu1-tuk*
rice 1NOM eat much INT
I ate too much (rice).

b. *a1 trap na1-sa1 lu1-tuk*
3NOM cry very much INT
(S)he cried too much.

c. *coo3 ka ei1 nghek1*
food 1NOM eat INT
I ate a lot/had a huge meal.

2.6.3.5 Non-final and final particles

The non-final particle is *aa1,* and the final particles are *e1* for declaratives and *vee* for exclamations, cf. 64.

(145) a. *coo3 ka ei aa1 ka muu*
food 1NOM eat NFP 1NOM sleep
I ate and then I slept.

b. *coo3 ka ei1 e1*
food 1NOM eat DECL
(I declare) I am eating.

c. *coo3 i-n va ei1 mhaa1 vee*
food 2NOM-PL how eat early EXCL
You are dining so early!

2.7 Conclusion

This section has provided a brief glance at the basic syntactic structure of Mizo. Being an SOV language, the NPs precede the VP with the indirect object preceding the direct object. The internal structure of the phrases is not always consistent with those of typical SOV languages. Thus, quantifiers and qualifiers follow the head. Each phrase is made up of words, clitics, particles and affixes, some of which are more important than others. The general principle of organisation is left-branching with some important exceptions. Each NP has a case marker and each VP a pronoun clitic.

Some of the important features of the language, such as ergativity and questions, will be discussed in the following section.

3. Simple sentences

This section will deal with simple sentences as well as the various forms of questions and imperatives. These examples will be an expanded form of what has already been mentioned in the preceding section. Grammatical roles and agreements will also be discussed in this section. Thus, this section will give the reader a view of what Mizo sentences really look like and how they relate to the larger context of speech acts and syntactic constraints. As in the previous section, most of the terminology used in describing the various sentences is from Givón (1984).

3.1 Grammatical roles and relations

The grammatical roles and relations are clearly marked both in the noun phrase and the verb phrase. It is interesting to note that the noun phrase displays an ergative system while the verb phrase displays a nominative-accusative system.

3.1.1 Ergativity

As a comparison of transitive and intransitive clauses show the direct object in the transitive requires the same case marking as that in the intransitive, e.g.

(1) a. *boong3 ø a thii1*
cow ABS 3NOM die
A cow has died.

b. *boong3 in nhim3 ø a1 pet*
cow ERG grass ABS 3NOM graze
A cow is grazing (eating grass).

The ergative case marker comes at the end of the subject NP in the transitive clause, as shown:

(2) a. *boong3 le? keel in nhim3 ø a2-n pet*
cow and goat ERG grass ABS 3NOM-PL graze
A cow and goat are grazing.

b. *ka1 boong3 zong-zong1 in nhim3 ø a2-n pet*
1P cow all ERG grass ABS 3NOM-PL graze
All my cows are grazing.

As mentioned before (section 2.6.2.2 and 2.6.2.3), the ergative marker and the instrument/ oblique marker are phonologically similar, as is widely the case in ergative languages, the only difference between them being their tone. Often this subtle difference in tone causes dramatic changes of interpretation, that is, the agent in one becomes the patient in the other. When there are two full NPs with case markers, it is easier to see the role of the pronoun clitic.

(3) a. *lal1 in*
ø ø hriau1 in1 a1-chun
ERG ABS needle OBLQ 3NOM-pierced
The chief/someone pierced someone/something with a needle.

b. *lal1 ø*
ø hriau1 in a1-chun
ABS needle ERG 3NOM-pierced
The needle pierced the chief/someone.

The following are some examples to show the importance of this tone difference.

(4) a. *rhiau1 in1 a1 chun*
needle OBLQ 3NOM pierced
(S)he pierced (it) with a needle.

b. *rhiau1 in ø a1 chun*
needle ERG ABS 3NOM pierced
A needle pierced him/her.

c. *tui1 in1 a1 lei?-hu?*
water OBLQ 3NOM pour-wet
(S)he poured/wet it with water.

d. *tui1 in ø a1 lei?-hu?*
water ERG ABS 3NOM pour-wet
(S)he got soaked (by water).

e. *a1 kee in1 a daal1*
3P leg OBLQ 3NOM block
(S)he blocked it with her/his leg.

f. *a1 kee in ø a daal2*
3P leg ERG ABS 3NOM block
Her/his leg blocked (it).

3.1.2 Subject clitic agreement with NP

The subject markers generally agree in number with the subject. There are, however, some exceptions as shown below.

Non-human mass nouns are generally singular, as in:

(5) a. *ka puan2-phou a1 tlaa*
1P cloth -to sunII 3NOM fall
My laundry has fallen (to the ground).

b. *i2-n huan a1 pang-paar1 a mooi1*
2P-PL garden LOC-REL flower 3NOM pretty
The flowers in your garden are beautiful.

c. *i-n ran1-vul? a1 trhaa*
2P-PL animals-raise 3NOM good
Your (domestic) animals are in good health.

Animate subjects with the quantifier *tin* meaning 'each and all', or *a1 piang1* meaning 'whoever/whichever', require plural agreement with the subject clitic. Thus:

(6) a. *nulaa1 tin in thing2 ø a-n phur1*
maiden each ERG wood ABS 3NOM-PL carry
Each maiden is carrying firewood.

b. *nulaa1 a1-piang1 in thing2 ø a-n phur1*
maiden whoever ERG wood ABS 3NOM-PL carry
Whoever was a maiden carried firewood.

c. *a1 thei a1-piang1 a-n kal1*
3NOM can whoever 3NOM-PL go
Whoever could go went.

d. *ui2 tin in aar1 a-n uum3*
dog each ERG hen 3NOM-PL chase
Each dog chased a chicken.

Non-humans, however, require singular agreement with the subject clitic. Compare example 6 above with those below:

(7) a. *pang-paar1 tin a1 tlaa*
flower each 3NOM fall
Each of the flowers fell.

b. *ar1-tui1 tin a1 keh*
egg each 3NOM break
Each of the eggs broke.

When there is more than one subject, then the person of the subject pronoun is determined by the following hierarchy: first person outranks second person which outranks third person. Thus, if all three are in the subject NP, then the subject clitic is determined by the first person, as in:

(8) *kei2 le? nang2 le? a1-nii3 ka-n kal1 ang2*
1PRO and 2PRO and 3PRO-PL 1NOM-PL go MOD
(S)he, you and I will go.

If there is only first person with either one, then first person outranks the others, as in:

(9) a. *kei2 le? nang2 ka-n kal1 ang2*
1PRO and 2PRO 1NOM-PL go MO
You and I will go.

b. *kei2 le? a1-nii3 ka-n kal1 ang2*
1PRO and 3PRO-PL 3NOM-PL go MOD
(S)he and I will go.

If there is only second and third person, then the subject agreement is with the second person, as in:

(10) *nang2 le? a1-nii i-n kal1 ang2*
2PRO and 3PRO-PL 2NOM-PL go MOD
You and (s)he will go.

Objects are also ranked similarly. In this case, the accusative markers indicate agreement, as in:

(11) a. *ui1 in kei2 le? nang2 le? a1-nii3 mi1 uum3*
dog ERG 1PRO and 2PRO and 3PRO-PL 1ACC chase
A dog is chasing you, him/her and I.

b. *ui1 in nang2 le? a1-nii3 a1 uum3 ce1 u1*
dog ERG you and 3PRO-PL 3NOM chase 2ACC PL
A dog is chasing you and him/her.

The above agreement rules are true for all clause types except hortatives, in which case one finds the second person marking in both nominative and accusative forms, i.e. *i*, and *uu1:*

(12) *i kal1 ang uu1*
2NOM go MOD HORT
Let us go!

The second person object marker, *i* may be a dual inclusive as in Thadou, cf. Krishan (1980).

3.1.3 Word order

Mizo is a fairly rigid SOV language. In the previous section we have seen the internal structure of the phrases: attributes follow the head noun (see section 2.3.4 and 2.3.5); case markers follow the head noun (see sections 2.6.2.2 and 2.6.2.3): genitival-of constructions precede the head noun (sections 2.3.3 and 2.6.1.3). Moreover, as we will see in section 4, relative clauses precede the main clause.

At the sentence level, the normal order is SOV.

(13) *nau1-pang1 in sa-zuu3 ø a man1*
child ERG rat ABS 3NOM catch
The child caught a rat.

Permutation is allowed when there is a change in focus. Thus, if the object is in focus, the word order is OSV.

(14) *sa-zuu3 ø nau1-pang1 in a man1*
rat ABS child ERG 3NOM catch
The child caught a rat (not a cat).

If the event is in focus, then the word order is OVS.

(15) *sa-zuu 3* *ø* *a* *man 1* *nau 1-pang 1* *in*
rat ABS 3NOM catch child ERG
The child *caught* a rat!

Example 15 is rather awkward as it sounds like two incomplete sentences. If there is more than one object, the indirect object precedes the direct object.

(16) *pi1-tar1* *in* *nau1-pang2* *ip* *ø* *a1* *pee*
old-woman ERG child bag ABS 3NOM give
The old woman gave the child a bag.

Locatives usually come between the subject and the object, as in:

(17) *nau1-pang1* *in* ***poon 1*** ***a?*** *ui* *ø* *a1* *uum3*
child ERG outside LOC dog ABS 3NOM chase
A child is chasing a dog outside.

It is also possible to have both instrument and locative

(18) *nau1-pang1* *in* *poon1* *a?* *tiang* *in1* *ui* *ø* *a1* *vuaa*
child ERG outside LOC stick OBLQ dog ABS 3NOM hit
A child is hitting a dog with a stick outside.

Furthermore, one can also get an adverbial NP preceding the nominative clitic marker, so that a maximally modified sentence would look like.

(19) *nau1-pang1* *in* *poon1* *a?* *tiang* *in1* *ui* *ø* *na* *deu?* *in1* *a1* *vuaa*
child ERG outside LOC stick OBLQ dog ABS hard INT OBLQ 3NOM hit
A child is beating a dog with great force outside.

3.2 Verbal sentences

Verbs with a single argument (objectless verbs) become the subject/topic in a simple sentence. Such verbs may denote either temporary or permanent states of the subject/object. Various semantic case roles occur for NPs in verbal sentences. Verbal sentences in which the subject is patient-of-state are:

(20) a. *keel* *a* *thii1*
goat 3NOM dead
A goat is dead.

b. *cem1* *a* *rhiaam1*
knife 3NOM sharp
The knife is sharp.

c. *nou1 a1 ke?*
cup 3NOM broken
The cup is broken.

The subject can also be dative-of-state

(21) a. *Zou1-a a dam1-lou*
-MSUF 3NOM well-NEG
Zova is sick.

b. *pi1-tar1 a lhim1*
woman-old 3NOM happy
The old woman is happy.

Sentences where the subject is patient-of-change are:

(22). a. *in a1 cin*
house 3NOM collapse
The house collapsed.

b. *tlhaai a1 troi?*
vegetables 3NOM rotten
The vegetables have rotted.

c. *ar1-tui1 a1 keu3*
egg 3NOM hatch
The egg hatched.

Sometimes the change in the object is brought about by an external agent or an instrument, as in:

(23) a. *tiang in1 nou1 ka1 vo-ke?*
stick OBLQ cup 1NOM hit-break
I (hit) broke the cup with a stick.

b. *co-mhe? ka1 chuum-mhin1*
food-side 1NOM cook-cooked
I (completed) cooked the side dishes.

In sentences with both the subject and object, the subject can be dative-of-state, as in:

(24) a. *i1 paa3 ka rhiaa2*
2P father 1NOM know
I know your father.

b. *kong1-kaa1 ka hong1 thiam2*
door 1NOM open know
I know how to open the door.

c. *phuung3-pui-nuu3 ka lhau2*
1NOM fear
I'm afraid of Phungpuinu (an evil witch).

Other verbs are subject-of-change, as in:

(25) a. *lhaa2 ka-n zir1*
song 1NOM-PL learn
We are learning a song.

b. *caang1 a vong2*
verse 3NOM memorise
(S)he is memorising verses.

Still others are object-of-change verbs, as in:

(26) a. *Maam1-i1 ka1 ti?-trhai?*
-FSUF 1NOM frighten
I frightened Mami.

b. *Rual1-a ka1 ti-thin-rim3*
-MSUF 1NOM make-angry
I made Ruala angry.

c. *nau1-pang2 ka1 zir-tiir1*
children 1NOM learnII-make
I'm teaching the children.

Sometimes the objects of sentences coding a physical change do not directly impact the dative object, as in:

(27) a. *nau1-pang2 le?-kha-buu3 ka1 pee*
child book 1NOM give
I gave a book to the child.

b. *zual-kou1 ka-n tiir1*
messenger 1NOM-PL send
We sent a messenger.

c. *le?-khaa3 ka-n thou3*
letter 3NOM-PL send
We sent a letter.

3.2.1 Obligatoriness of subjects

The Mizo subject is obligatory in VPs for all clause types, except non-first person subjects with a first person object and imperatives. From the examples in the previous section, one can see that the subject is coded the same, whether it is (semantically) an agent or a patient. Moreover, the subject pronoun clitics are the same for both transitive and intransitive clauses.

The subject NP is obligatory for certain verbs. For instance, meteorological verbs cannot have a dummy subject like 'it', as in English.

(28) a. *nii1 a saa1*
sun 3NOM shining
The sun is shining.

b. *tlhii1 a thoo2*
wind 3NOM blowing
The wind is blowing.

c. *khua1 a1 voot3*
place 3NOM cold
The weather is cold.

Emotive verbs also require a subject, as in:

(29) a. *ka lung1 a leeng1*
1P heart 3NOM gone away
My heart is lonesome.

b. *ka luu1 a hai1*
1P head 3NOM dizzy
My head is dizzy.

c. *ka khua1 a1 sik*
1P place 3NOM fever
My disposition is feverish.

d. *ka1 tra? a1 chuak3*
1P cryII 3NOM leave
My tears are coming out.

3.2.2 Sentences with obligatory objects

In transitive sentences, the subject must be represented by the obligatory pronoun clitic in the VP but the full NPs are often omitted, see example 33. Some sentences require an object. These are usually change-of-state verbs where the object either causes the change or is affected by the change. The object can be animate or inanimate. Thus, consider:

(30) a. *ui a1 vo-lhum*
dog 3NOM beat-dead
(S)he beat a dog to death.

b. *cem1 a1 taat3-rhiaam1*
knife 3NOM sharpen-sharp
(S)he sharpened the knife.

c. *tui1 a? a1 tla-lhum*
water LOC 3NOM fall-dead
(S)he fell in the water and died (drowned).

d. *milem al thai2-chiaa*
picture 3NOM scratch-bad
(S)he scratched out the picture.

3.2.3 Adjectival sentences

Objectless sentences are stative verbs, as in:

(31) a. *a ngou1*
3NOM fair
(S)he is fair (complexion).

b. *a thaau1*
2NOM fat
(S)he is fat.

c. *a ngui2*
3NOM sad
(S)he is sad/despondent.

d. *a rhiaam1*
3NOM sharp
It is sharp.

3.2.4 Copula sentences

The copula verb *nii* can be used with NPs, as in:

(32) a. *mi-sual al nii*
person-bad 3NOM be
(S)he is evil.

b. *nou1-thar1 al nii*
cup-new 3NOM be
It is a new cup.

c. *zaan al nii*
night 3NOM be
It is night time.

3.2.5 Transitive sentences

Transitive verbs are characterised by the ergative marker *in* on the agent NP and an absolutive marker ϕ on the patient NP. Moreover, the nominative and accusative pronoun clitics are found in the VP. Since the NP is optional in most cases it will be shown in parentheses to show that its omission is possible.

(33) a. *(kei1 in) thing2 ø ka phur1*
(1PRO ERG) wood ABS 1NOM carry
I'm carrying firewood.

b. *(nang1 in) thing2 ø i phur1*
(2PRO ERG) wood ABS 2NOM carry
You are carrying firewood.

c. *(a1 nii3 in) thing2 ø a phur1*
(3PRO-PL ERG) wood ABS 3NOM carry
(S)he is carrying firewood.

d. *(Zou1 in3) thing2 ø a phur1*
(-FSUF ERG) wood ABS 3NOM carry
Zovi is carrying firewood.

e. *(Zou1-i1 le? kei1 in) thing2 ø ka-n phur1*
(-FSUF and 1PRO ERG) wood ABS 1NOM-PL carry
Zovi and I are carrying firewood.

f. *(Zou1-i1 le? nang1 in) thing2 ø i-n phur1*
(-FSUF and 2PRO ERG) wood ABS 2NOM-PL carry
You and Zovi are carying firewood.

g. *(Zou1-i1 le? Moi1 in3) thing2 ø a-n phur1*
(-FSUF and -FSUF ERG) wood ABS 3NOM-PL carry
Zovi and Mawii are carrying firewood.

Transitive verbs can also have an instrumental NP, as in:

(34) a. *nau1-seen1 ø puan in1 ka tuam2*
baby ABS cloth OBLQ 1NOM wrap
I wrapped the baby with a blanket.

b. *pu1-tar1 in tiang in1 nau1-pang ø a1 vuaa*
old man ERG stick OBLQ child ABS 3NOM beat
The old man beat the child with a stick.

3.2.6 Sentences with instrumental NP's

Instrumental NPs are formally very similar to ergative NPs since the morphological markings are similar. The instrumental marker *in1* functions to mark the instrument and manner adverbs, e.g.

(35) a. *tiang in1 ka1 vuaa*
stick OBLQ 1NOM hit
I hit (it) with a stick.

b. *tiang2 lian-pui1 in1 ka1 vuaa*
stick big-very OBLQ 1NOM hit
I hit it with a big stick.

c. *tiang in1 i1 vuaa*
stick OBLQ 2NOM hit
You hit (it) with a stick.

d. *tiang in1 a1 vuaa*
stick OBLQ 3NOM hit
(S)he hit (it) with a stick.

e. *tiang in1 mi1 vuaa*
stick OBLQ 1ACC hit
(Someone) hit me with a stick.

f. *tiang in1 a1 vuaa ce1*
stick OBLQ 3NOM hit 2ACC
(Someone) hit you with a stick.

Note that the oblique marker can occur in both transitive and intransitive sentences. In transitive clauses the instrument is usually something concrete whereas intransitive instruments are generally abstract, as in:

(36) *lung1-ngai?-na1 in1 a1 khat*
sad-NLZ OBLQ 3NOM full
(S)he was full of sadness.

3.2.7 Sentences with locative NPs

Intransitive sentences often have locative NPs, as in:

(37) a. *in-chuung1 a? a1 luut3*
house inside LOC 3NOM enter
(S)he went inside the house.

b. *sa-kor2 cung1 a? a cuaang1*
horse top LOC 3NOM ride
(S)he rode on a horse.

c. *Ai1-zool1 a? a-n peem1*
LOC 3NOM-PL move to
They moved to Aizawl.

Locatives can also occur in transitive sentences, as in:

(38) a. *do?-kaan cung1 a? nou1 ø a huung1*
table top LOC cup ABS 3NOM place
(S)he set the cup on the table.

b. *sum2 - mhun a? puan ø a1 ta?*
mortar-place LOC cloth ABS 3NOM place
She is weaving on the porch

c. *in-cung1 a? puan2 ø a phou1*
house-top LOC clothes ABS 3NON to sun
(S)he is drying the laundry on the roof.

d. *poon1 a? bu? ø a-n deeng1*
outside LOC rice ABS 3NOM-PL pound
They are pounding rice outside.

3.2.8 Sentences with three NPs

The following are examples of verbs with three NPs: subject, object and indirect object.

(39) a. *Zou1 in3 ip mi1 pee*
-FSUF ERG bag 1ACC give
Zovi gave me/us a bag.

b. *Zou1-i1 le? Dou1-an3 ip mi1 pee*
-FSUF and -MSUF ERG bag 1ACC give
Zovi and Dova gave me/us a bag.

c. *Zou1 in3 ip a1 pee ce1*
-FSUF ERG bag 3NOM give 2ACC
Zovi gave you a bag.

d. *Dou1-a le? Zou1-in3 ip a2-n pee ce1*
-MSUF and -FSUF ERG bag 3NOM-PL give 2ACC
Dova and Zovi gave you a bag.

e. *Zou1 in3 ip a1 pee ce1 u1*
-FSUF ERG bag 3NOM give 2ACC PL
Zovi gave you all a bag.

f. *Zou1-i1 le? Dou1-an3 ip a2-n pee ce1 u1*
-FSUF and -MSUF ERG bag 3NOM-PL give 2ACC PL
Zovi and Dova gave you (pl) a bag.

g. *Dou1-an3 Zou1-i1 ø ip a1 pee*
-MSUF ERG -FSUF ABS bag 3NOM give
Dova gave Zovi a bag.

h. *Dou1-an3 ip a1 pee*
-MSUF ERG bag 3NOM give
Dova gave someone a bag.

i. *Dou1-a le? Zou1-in3 Rin3-i ø ip a2-n pee*
-MSUF and -FSUF ERG -FSUF ABS bag 3NOM-PL give
Dova and Zovi gave Rini a bag.

3.3 Comparison

Comparisons can be made either by comparing two items, or the standard of comparison need not be mentioned. Comparatives and superlatives are the most common forms of comparison. These can occur both with the full NP or with just the determiners, as shown in the following sections.

3.3.1 Comparatives

In Mizo, comparisons are made by adding *aai1 in1* to the object being compared and *zook3* to the standard of comparison.

(40) a. *ka2-n in aii1 in1 i2-n in a1 lian zook3*
1P-PL house than OBLQ 2P-PL house 3NOM big more
Your house is bigger than our house.

b. *i2-n in a1 lian zook3*
2P-PL house 3NOM big more
Your house is bigger.

c. *hei3 aii1 hian1 soo3 so1 a1 trha zook3*
this than DET-OBLQ that DET 3NOM good more
This here is better than that there.

d. *hei3 hi1 a1 trha zook3*
this DET 3NOM good more
This one is better.

3.3.2 Superlatives

The construction of superlatives is similar to that of comparatives. The only difference is that the object of comparison is extended to include a whole class of something related to it. This is generally done by adding *zong zong3* meaning 'all, the whole set' or *zong zong3 ziing1 a?* meaning 'amongst all'.

(41) a. *hee nuu3 hi1 nuu3 zong zong3 aii1 in1 a saang1 ber*
DPRO woman DET woman all than OBLQ 3NOM tall most
This woman is the tallest of all (other) women.

b. *hee nuu3 hi1 nuu3 zong zong3 aii1 in1 a saang1*
this woman DET woman all than OBLQ 3NOM tall
This woman is taller than all the other women.

c. *nuu3 zong zong3 ziing1 a? hee nuu3 hi1 a saang1*
woman all among LOC this woman DET3NOM tall most
This woman is the tallest among all other women.

d. *hee nuu3 hi1 a saang1 ber*
this woman DET 3NOM tall most
This woman is the tallest.

3.4 Questions

There are two types of questions in Mizo: wh-question and yes-no questions. These two types of questions have two different constructions. Wh-questions are marked in the NP while yes-no questions are marked in the VP. Furthermore, wh-questions have both a wh word and a question word. Both types of questions can be modified to fit the situation. Thus, one can have alternative questions where the speaker offers an alternative to which the hearer must respond. Then there are questions to confirm what has just been said or to clarify a point. These types of questions are rhetorical because the speaker already knows the answer but asks a question to let the hearer know that his or her statement has been understood. Lastly, there are some questions that can be stated only in the negative.

3.4.1 Wh-questions

The wh-question consists of a question word *ngee3* and a wh word such as *tuu,* for humans, *eng,* for non-humans and *khoi3* for deictic questions. There are several variations of wh-questions. The basic form consists of the wh word followed by the question word. Of these, *eng* can be modified for questions involving time, reason or purpose, see 45c, d. The deictic wh word *khoi3* can also be used for questions involving spatial location and spatial direction.

Wh-questions are further classified according to whether or not the subject is known. If the subject is unknown but the object is known, then the question takes the regular class of verbs. Moreover, nominative markers are absent in this type of wh-question. Therefore, questioned subject and object will be differentiated not only in the NPs but also in the choice of verb stem. Wh-questions with Stem I verbs are shown in the next three examples. All wh-questions have the same construction, the only difference being in the choice of the wh word. Questions involving humans are stated thus:

(42) a. *tu ngee3 chuak3*
WH Q leave
Who left?

b. *tuu in ngee3 mi1 kou*
WH ERG Q 1ACC call
Who is calling me?

c. *tuu in ngee3 hau1 ce1*
WH ERG Q scold 2ACC
Who scolded you?

Questions about non-humans have a different wh word but are similar in all other respects.

(43) a. *eng ngee3 tlaa*
WH Q fall
What fell?

b. *eng in ngee3 mi daal2*
WH ERG Q 1ACC block
What is blocking/hindering me?

c. *eng in ngee3 daal ce1*
WH ERG Q block 2ACC
What is blocking/hindering you?

Deictic questions are similar to the other wh-questions.

(44) a. *khoi3 in ngee3 cim*
WH house Q collapse
Which house collapsed?

b. *khoi3 puan ngee 3 kaang*
WH cloth Q burn
Which cloth burned?

c. *khoi3 laai1 ngee3 naa1*
WH about Q hurt
Whereabouts does it hurt?

Stem II verbs are used in these types of questions:

(45) a. *tu ngee3 i1 tha?*
WH Q 2NOM killII
Whom did you kill?

b. *eng ngee3 i1 ti?*
WH Q 2NOM doII
What are you doing?

c. *eng a? ngee3 i1 ti?*
WH LOC Q 2NOM doII
Why did you do it? / For what do you want it?

d. *eng tik a? ngee3 i1 zo? doon1*
WH time LOC Q 2NOM finishII ASP
When are you going to finish it?

e. *khoi3 a? ngee3 i1 kal doon1*
WH LOC Q 2NOM goII ASP
Where are you going?

f. *khoi3 hi1 ngee3 ka2-n ei ang2*
WH DET Q 2NOM-PL eatII MOD
Which one(s) shall we eat?

A question can be made more specific by including a noun or any of its modifiers such as the ergative marker, oblique marker and the locative marker. Thus, the wh-question word basically replaces the head noun in the NP. In genitival-of constructions, the wh word is relativised as shown by the change in tone from low tone to high tone, see section 2.6.1.3. The above can be expanded further, thus:

(46) a. *tuu1 vok ngee3 i1 lei*
WH-REL piq Q 2NOM buyII
Whose pig did you buy?

b. *eng a1-taan1 ngee3 i1 ti?*
WH purpose Q 2NOM doII
For what purpose do you want it?

c. *eng vaang in1 ngee3 i lou2-kal*
WH reason OBLQ Q 2NOM comeII
For what reason did you come?

d. *eng cen3 ngee3 i1 caam doon1*
WH length Q 2NOM stayII ASP
How long are you staying?

e. *khoi3 laai1 a? ngee3 a1 tlaak3*
WH around LOC Q 3NOM fallII
Whereabouts did (s)he fall?

f. *khoi3 vok hi1 ngee3 i1 du?*
WH pig DET Q 2NOM wantII
Which one of these pigs do you want?

g. *hei3 hi1 tuu1 ui ngee3 nii*
DPRO DET WH-REL dog Q be
Whose dog is this dog here?

h. *tuu1 nheen a? ngee3 i1 om*
WH-REL with LOC Q 2NOM liveII
Who are you living/staying with?

3.4.2 Yes-no questions

Yes-no questions are simpler than the wh-questions. This type of question requires only one question marker *em2* at the end of the sentence, with the verb taking the stem appropriate for its clause type. Thus, for example:

(47) a. *i dam1 em2*
2NOM well Q
Are you well? (traditional greeting)

b. *i2-n lou-kal1 doon1 em2*
2NOM-PL come ASP Q
Are you planning to come?

c. *vok i2-n vul? doon1 em2*
pig 2NOM-PL raise ASP Q
Are you going to raise pigs?

d. *coo3 i-n ei1 ang1 em2*
food 2NOM-PL eat MOD Q
Will you be eating?

3.4.3 Alternative questions

Wh-questions take the prefix *a1-* when the question is about one particular item out of a larger set, cf. example 118 in section 2.6.1.3.

(48) a. *a1-tuu te1 ngee3 lou-kal1*
of-WH EX Q come
Who all came (out of those we invited)?

b. *a1-eng te1 ngee3 i1 lei*
of-WH EX Q 2NOM buyII
Which ones/what all did you buy?

c. *a1-eng khu1 ngee3 ka-n peek3 ang2*
of-WH DET Q 1NOM-PL giveII MOD
Which of the things down there should we give?

The above types can sometimes be ambiguous. For instance, example 48b can also mean 'Which of these did you buy for him/her?'.

3.4.4 Echo questions

The simplest form of echo question is an unmodified wh-question, following a statement. The question 'who?' or 'what?' is inserted mainly for the speaker's benefit. This type of question uses *moo2* instead of *ngee3*.

(49) a. *a ei?2 lou. tuu moo2*
3NOM answer NEG who. Q
He did not answer. Who (didn't answer)?

b. *a2-n vok a bou1. tuu*
3P-PL pig 3NOM lost. who
Their pig is lost. Whose (pig is lost)?

c. *a ui1 a-n zong1. tuu1 ui2*
3P dog 3NOM-PL search. WH-REL dog
They are looking for his dog. Whose dog (....) ?

With yes-no echo questions, the speaker must repeat part of the question in the answer, as in:

(50) a. *i2-n zin doon1 em2*
2NOM-PL travel ASP Q
Are you going on a trip?

b. *kei-nii3 moo3. doon1 lou ang2*
1PRO-PL Q . ASP NEG MOD
Us? We won't (be going on a trip).

3.4.5 Requests

Requests are similar to questions except that they have no morphological markings of other question forms. The question is indicated by intonation and by the word *oo3* which means 'yes'.

(51) a. *ka kal1 ang oo3*
1NOM go MOD yes
Can I go, (yes)?

b. *ka ei1 ang oo3*
1NOM eat MOD yes
Can I eat this (yes)?

The above forms are frequently used by children when requesting permission for something they are normally allowed to do.

3.4.6 Alternative questions

Questions can be stated so that the expected answer has to be either in the affirmative or negative. To indicate that a positive reply is expected, a form of the verb 'to be' *nii* after the yes-no question marker *em2* is used. Another common tag is *e1-lou* which means something like 'Is it really?'. Unlike English there is no reversal of polarity; the tag is basically on the question marker itself.

(52) a. *co-ei i1 buat3-sai? em2 nii*
food 2NOM prepare Q be
You are preparing food (supper), aren't you?

b. *rua? a suur1 e1-lou*
rain 3NOM rains Q
Is it raining, really?

Questions can also be stated so that the answer has to be in the negative, as in:

(53) a. *ka kor2 i la1 trhui1 lou em2 nii*
1P dress 2NOM yet sew NEG Q be
You have not sewn my dress yet, have you?

b. *hei3 hi1 i1 du? lou em2 nii*
this DET 2NOM want NEG Q be
You don't want this, do you?

Sometimes *lou em2 nii* is shortened to *loom2 nii* so that one has:

(54) *ka2-n in-mhu to? a1 ni loom2 nii*
1NOM-PL meet already 3NOM be NEG-Q be
We have met already, haven't we?

The wh-question has a special negation form *na-ngee3* which is sometimes used in place of the negated yes-no question. Thus, we can have.

(55) *i la1 thou2 na-ngee3*
2NOM yet arise NEG-Q
You still have not got up, have you?

instead of

(56) *i la1 thou2 lou em2 nii*
2NOM yet arise NEG Q be
You still have not got up, have you?

Sometimes the speaker will assume that the other person does not want to do something, in which case the yes-no question word is replaced by *e1-mo,* which means something like 'perhaps'.

(57) a. *min biak3 i1 caak3 e1-mo*
1ACC speakII 2NOM desire perhaps
Perhaps you (don't) desire to speak to me.

b. *zin i1 du? e1-mo*
travelII 2NOM desire perhaps
Perhaps you'd like to go on a trip.

3.5 Imperatives

There are two types of imperatives, one I call *standard imperative* since this is the normal form; and the other I call *familiar imperative* since it is used more among close friends and family. The two have been called 'strong imperative' and 'polite/weak imperative' but I will show that this is not the case since the politeness or impoliteness of a request is indicated by the tone of voice. The appropriateness of the request within the social context also determines if an imperative will be considered polite or impolite.

3.5.1 Standard imperative

The standard imperative is the one used more often. In its simplest form, an imperative consists of the verb followed by the imperative marker *ro?*, as in

(58) a. *trhu1 ro?*
sit IMP
Sit down!

b. *lou-kal1 ro?*
come IMP
Come here!

c. *muang1 tɛɛ in1 kal1 ro?*
slowly very OBLQ go IMP
Go slowly!

d. *kha1 ta? kha-an1 trhu1 ro?*
DPRO LOC DET-OBLQ sit IMP
Sit over there!

The plural form is the same as the plural for the second person accusative, thus:

(59) *lou leeng1 ro? uu1*
hither visit IMP PL
You all come and visit us!

3.5.2 Familiar imperative

The other imperative *te?* is used in a similar manner:

(60) a. *trhu1 te?*
sit IMP
Sit!

b. *lou-kal1 te?*
come IMP
Come here!

The plural form is the same as the other imperative, thus:

(61) *trhu1 te? uu1*
sit IMP PL
You all sit!

The standard imperative is certainly not less polite than the familiar because one is expected to say example 58a to a guest who has just entered the house. On the other hand, one would say example 60a to a child who is misbehaving. Thus, the politeness or impoliteness of an imperative depends entirely on the context. The second form does not carry as much force as the first one and is usually used among close friends and relatives. For instance, children use it when they are trying to get the attention of their parents or relatives; mothers use it when they are annoyed with their children. An imperative can be softened by using the plural form but even this is not necessarily more polite.

3.5.3 Weak imperatives

Weak imperatives sound more like a direct statement to a person. This form is used to encourage or goad a person. The weak imperative is indicated by *ta cee3* which roughly means 'I say to you'.

(62) *kal1 ta cee3*
go IMP
Go (why don't you)!

The negative weak imperative is indicated by *ma-ta cee3.*

(63) *kal1 ma-ta cee3*
go NEG-IMP
Don't (bother to) go!

Another form of request is stated with the future-irrealis mode markers. Thus we get:

(64) a. *lou leeng1 ang ce1*
hither visit MOD you
Come and visit us!

b. *i2-n lou leeng1 doon1 niaa1*
2NOM-PL hither visit ASP be-FP
You will have to visit us some day.

3.6 Optatives

Optatives are indicated by adding *se1* after any one of the imperatives mentioned above. Thus one gets:

(65) a. *trhu1 ro? se1*
sit IMP OPT
Let him sit!

b. *thi ro? se1*
die IMP OPT
Let him die!

c. *mu1 te? se1*
sleep IMP OPT
Let him sleep (it's about time)!

3.7 Prohibitives

Prohibitives are the same for both negative standard imperative and negative optatives. Prohibition is indicated by using *su?* in place of the standard imperative form.

(66) a. *kal1 su?*
go PROHIB
Don't go!

b. *kal1 su? se1*
go PROHIB OPT
(S)he should not go / Don't let him (her) go!

For the negative familiar imperative *su?* is simply added after the imperative, as in:

(67) *kal1 te? su?*
go IMP PROHIB
Don't you go!

3.8 Hortatives

Hortatives can be stated in any of the following ways; all contain the irrealis marker *ang2*, as in 64a. This may be followed by a hortative as in 68a and 68b; preceded by the familiar imperative as in 68c; followed by an adverb as in 68b; or alone, as in 68e.

(68) a. *i kal1 ang uu1*
us go MOD PL
Let us go!

b. *i ti lou mai1 ang uu1*
us do NEG just MOD PL
Let's not do it!

c. *i kal1 te? ang2*
us go IMP MOD
Let's go (it's time) !

d. *kal1 ang2 mhiang3*
go MOD sure
Let us go then (if you want to)!

e. *kal1 ang2*
go MOD
Let's go (now)!

3.9 Performatives

These are as follows.

(69) a. *ka1 nei a1-ce1*
1NOM marry PERFM
I now marry you.

b. *ka1 fak a1-ce1*
1NOM praise PERFM
I praise you now.

Some speakers combine performatives with adjectives or adverbial particles to express their annoyance or pleasure. Depending on the modifier that the speaker uses, this type of statement can have the force of an expletive. Thus, many people use it negatively to insult someone else. The positive form is generally reserved for small children, and this is equivalent to the expression in English, 'How cute'!

The following are some examples of negative usage. Some of the expressions are difficult to translate into English.

(70) a. *te?-rok1 a1-ce1*
impertinent PERFM
How presumptuous of you!

b. *tei3-vet1 a1-ce1*
persistent PERFM
You are such a nuisance!

Similarly, one can also express pleasure, as in:

(71) a. *te?-reu?1 a1-ce1*
small PERFM
How cute (of you)!

b. *liam1 liam1 a1-ce1*
talking in a cute way PERFM
You have a cute way of talking.

3.10 Conclusion

This section has examined the structure of simple sentences in Mizo. Transitive sentences are distinguished from intransitive sentences by the ergative-absolutive case markers in the NP and nominative-accusative clitics on the VP.

The two types of questions, wh-questions and yes-no questions, were also examined. These two types of questions have different constructions. Wh-questions have both the wh word and the question word in the NP, where the wh word replaces the head noun in the NP. In contrast, yes-no question words have the question word in the VP; yes-no question can also be stated in the negative. A further complication to the wh-question is the use of the Stem II verb form when the object is unknown. The only time a Stem I verb is used in a wh-question is when the object is known but the subject is not.

There are several types of imperatives, these along with optatives, hortatives and performatives have basically the same construction.

Much more work remains to be done on the syntax of complex sentences in Mizo. Hillard (1977) and Chhangte (1986) have considered the relative clause, and Chhangte (1986) has briefly discussed other clause types as well. Future work on Mizo syntax and phonology is planned by the author.

NOTES

[1] Most of the data for this paper comes from my own experience as a native speaker. The sociolinguistic data was gathered during my brief visit to Mizoram (September to November 1986). It is based on chapters 3 and 4 of my thesis, Chhangte (1986).

I am greatly indebted to the following for their contributions; I never would have finished the thesis without their guidance and encouragement. First, I would like to thank the members of my committee: Dr J.A. Edmondson, chairman of the committee, for his enthusiastic help in all matters concerning the thesis, especially with the analysis and presentation of data; Dr Shin Ja Hwang for her thorough revisions and suggestions; and Dr D.A. Burquest for clarifying critical issues, especially those related to phonology.

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To all of the above I say, *ka lawm e (ka-loom e1),* thank you.

2 See Chhangte (1986: 32-33) for details; briefly, [w] produced by intervocalic glide insertion is hardened to [v].

3 See Chhangte (1986: 49-50) for details; briefly, a rising tone becomes a low tone when followed by a high tone or a falling tone.

4 It is interesting that the first two names are also names of birds, an owl and a dove respectively. Their names are often used to frighten children.

5 Many Mizo verbs have two stems. Bright (1957) suggests that there is a regular phonological relationship between the two forms, but further data vitiates this suggestion. However, in most cases the two stems have the same initial and a similar vowel. For more details see section 2.5.4.3 and Chhangte (1986: 34ff).

6 See Chhangte (1986: 42-45) for details; briefly, the tone of a singular pronoun clitic dissimilates in pitch to the endpoint of the tone of the preceding word.

7 These are far less numerous than the verb pairs; for example see Changte (1986: 35).

8 I am indebted to Ken Gregerson for bringing this to my attention.

9 See Chhangte (1986: 31-32) for details; briefly, the final of the last syllable before a word boundary is geminated.

10 See Chhangte (1986: 38-99) for details; briefly, a contour tone is created when two syllables with different tones are reduced to one.

SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	absolutive	EMP	emphatic
ACC	accusative	EMT	endearment
Adj	adjective	ERG	ergative
ADV	adverb	EX	exemplifier
AGT	agentiviser	EXCL	exclamation
ASP	aspect	FSUF	female suffix
Att	attribute	FP	final particle
BEN	benefactive	FUT	future
CL	classifier	HORT	hortative
CM	case marker	HRD	hundred
COMP	complement	IMM	immediate
COMPL	completive	IMP	imperative
XM	cross-modal conjunction	INT	intensifier
DECL	declarative	LOC	locative
DEG	degree	MSUF	male suffix
DPRO	demonstrative pronoun	MOD	mode
DET	determiner	N'	N bar

N"	N double bar	RCP	reciprocal
NP	noun phrase	REF	reflexive
NEG	negation	REL	relativiser
NLZ	nominaliser	S'	S bar
NOM	nominative	II	Stem II
NFP	non-final particle	sm	small
NUM	numeral	Subj	subject
Obj	object	TB	Tibeto-Burman
OBLQ	oblique	TH	thousand
OPT	optative	VP	verb phrase
PST	past	WH	Wh-word
PERFM	performative	// //	underlying segment
PL/pl	plural	/ /	derived phonological form
P	possessive pronoun	[ ]	phonetic form
PROG	progressive	#	word boundary
PROHIB	prohibitive	e	mid front lax vowel
PRO	pronoun	o	mid back vowel
Q	question word	a	low back vowel
Ql	qualifier	r	retroflex lateral
QLP	qualifier phrase	tl	lateral affricate
Ql'	Ql bar	tr	palato-alveolar stop
Ql"	Ql double bar	ng	velar nasal
Qn	quantifier	ph, th, trh, kh	aspirated p, t, tr, k
QnP	quantifier phrase	mh, nh, ngh	voiceless m, n, ng
Qn'	Qn bar	ṛh, rh, lh, tlh	voiceless ṛ, r, l, tl
Qn"	Qn double bar		

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