THE COMPLEMENTIZER (HAIS) TIAS 'THAT' IN HMONG

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The purpose of this paper is to discuss the complementizer (hais) tias 'that' in Hmong. (Hais) tias is used with a certain group of verbs, which I will characterize, to introduce direct speech quotations as well as embedded sentences reporting a proposition. In the latter case, it functions like its counterparts in English ('that') and French ('que'). The study of (hais) tias will involve a review of tias, first in Heimbach's dictionary (1979) and second in Mottin's grammar (1978). Then I will proceed to discuss findings from my own research and compare them with Heimbach's and Mottin's treatments of tias. In conclusion I will offer a new analysis of this complementizer based on research findings.

Review of tias as Defined in Heimbach's Dictionary

Heimbach describes tias as a "restricted post verbal intensifier used after verbs involving speech, sound, or thought" (320). In Appendix 8, he defines post verbal intensifiers as "particles used immediately following the verb to intensify the action of the verb" (468). He divided these particles into unrestricted post verbal intensifiers, which "may occur with any verb", and restricted post verbal intensifiers, which "occur with only a certain group of verbs" (468). According to him, tias falls into the latter category, illustrated with examples like (320):

hais tias... 'said, spoke saying...'
Kuv xav tias... 'I think that...'
piau tias... 'explained that...'
nug tias... 'asked that...'
teb tias... 'answered that...'
nco tias... 'remembered that...'
nthresh tias... 'feared that...'

He adds that tias is "similarly used with the following verbs" (translations are from his dictionary):
paub 'know that'
qw 'shout, cry out loudly'
ntxub 'hate'
yws 'mutter, continue talking angrily'
yog 'that is to say'
xam 'reckon that'
hu 'call, cry out'
ntxhi 'whisper'
hawv 1. 'cry out', 2. 'threaten'
quaj 'cry aloud, weep aloud'
mloog 'listen'
cem 'scold'
hnov 'hear'

Heimbach also claims that "the expression hais tias is used to introduce quotations. Sometimes it is shortened so that tias is used alone after the subject without an intervening verb. In this case, tias may be understood as including the meaning of the verb hais 'speak'. Thus..."
(1) a. Nws tias... 'he said...
  b. Nws hais tias... 'he said...

Review of tias as Defined in Mottin's Grammar

Mottin (126) discusses tias in his section on subordinate clauses. According to him, "reported speech and thought are introduced by tias, which translates the 'that' found in 'I said that...' and 'I think that...'. Tias is inserted...between the main clause and the subordinate clause, as seen in the following example:

(2) Kuv hais rau nws tias kuv yuav mus
    I say to him that I fut. go
    'I told him that I would go'."

Mottin goes on to say that "after tias, speech is reported either directly or indirectly. In the former case, the speaker's words are reported as spoken ('he said tias I will come'). In the latter case, which might be the most prevalent, you merely switch from the first to the third person personal pronoun without paying any attention to the sequence of tenses ('he said tias he will come')... The main verb is often deleted. When this is the case, hais 'say' is always understood. In other words, tias by itself can be translated by 'say that', as seen in:

(3) Kuv tias...
    I that
    'I said that...'"

Then Mottin says that hais is possible before tias if there is a direct or indirect object NP between the main verb and tias: "On the other hand, if the main verb is followed by a direct or indirect object noun phrase, hais is often used before tias, no matter what the main verb is". He illustrates this point with the following examples:

(4) a. Kuv qhia nws hais tias...
    I inform him that
    'I informed him that'...
b. Kuv piax rau lawv hais tias...
    I explain to them that
    'I explained to them that'...
c. Kuv hais rau nws hais tias...
    I say to him that
    'I told him that'...

"With certain verbs involving thought, tias can often be deleted. These verbs then fall into the category of verbs followed by object clauses", which he discussed in another section. He illustrates the deletion of tias with the following example:

(5) Kuv paub nws yuav mus
    I know he fut. go
    'I know that he will go'

Mottin adds that "tias can follow yog 'be', yog 'if', or vim 'because'. In the first case, it can be translated by 'that is to say that', but in the other two cases, it adds virtually nothing to the meaning and merely allows for an oral pause" (127). He gives the following three sentences to illustrate this (127):

(6) Yog tias nws yuav mus
    be that he fut. go
'That is to say that he will go'

(7) Yog tias koj tsis mus...
    if that you NEG go
    'If you don't go...'

(8) Kuv tsis nyiam nws vim tias nws tsis pab kuv
    I NEG like him because he NEG help me
    'I don't like him because he doesn't help me'

Finally, Mottin gives a partial list of verbs which can be followed by tias. This list includes (127):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hais</td>
<td>'say that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piav</td>
<td>'explain that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qhia</td>
<td>'inform, teach that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nug</td>
<td>'ask if'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teb</td>
<td>'answer that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hnov</td>
<td>'hear that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paub</td>
<td>'know that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xav</td>
<td>'think that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ua xyem xyav</td>
<td>'wonder if'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xam</td>
<td>'reckon that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lees</td>
<td>'acknowledge that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zeem</td>
<td>'admit that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pom</td>
<td>'see'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yog tias</td>
<td>'that is to say that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsis yog tias</td>
<td>'not that'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yog tias</td>
<td>'if'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vim tias</td>
<td>'because'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Research Findings

I collected all the sentences with tias I could find in Johnson's Hmong Folk Tales (1981), in Bertrais's Hmong-French Dictionary (1979) and in Heimbach's White Hmong-English Dictionary (1979). The data revealed that the main verbs which are followed by tias fall into two categories. The first category includes verbs involving speech and the second verbs involving perception, i.e. sound, thought, or feeling, as seen below:

**Verbs involving speech:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cem</td>
<td>'scold'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dag</td>
<td>'lie'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hais</td>
<td>'say, speak'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hu</td>
<td>'call'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nug</td>
<td>'ask'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qw</td>
<td>'shout, yell'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qhia</td>
<td>'inform, teach'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teb</td>
<td>'answer'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hnyos</td>
<td>'ridicule, laugh at'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quaj</td>
<td>'cry aloud, weep aloud'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foom</td>
<td>'curse'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laug</td>
<td>'assure, speak at great length'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ntuas</td>
<td>'advise, urge'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Verbs involving perception:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hnov</td>
<td>'hear'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pom</td>
<td>'see'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
nco  'remember'
paub  'know'
xav  'think'
ntshai  'fear, be afraid'
ntseeg  'believe'

From a semantic standpoint this list confirms Heimbach's claim that tias is "used after verbs involving speech, sound, or thought" (320). Heimbach's and Mottin's lists and mine are not exhaustive, but they overlap enough that we can hypothesize that the verbs which can be followed by tias fall into the two categories defined above. Mloog 'listen', however, should be taken off Heimbach's list. Both Se Yang and Yang Dao said it cannot be followed by tias and the sentences I collected with mloog show that this verb does not take any complementizer and falls into a different group of main verbs.

From a syntactic standpoint the data collected revealed the following two patterns:

(A) NP main verb  raun 'to' NP  (hais) tias, "NP VP"
    NP

(B) NP main verb  c[ (hais) tias NP VP ]

In the sentences I collected pattern (A) is used to introduce direct speech quotations and occurs with the following main verbs, which all involve speech:

cem  'scold'
dag  'lie'
hais  'say, speak'
hu  'call'
hnyos  'ridicule, laugh at'
laug  'assure, speak at great length'
nco  'remember'
nug  'ask'
quaj  'cry aloud, weep aloud'
qw  'shout, yell'
qhia  'inform, teach'
teb  'answer'
xav  'think'

Heimbach hinted at this pattern when he noted that "the expression hai tias is used to introduce quotations" (320). So did Mottin when he said that tias introduces direct speech. But their analysis is limited to hai 'say'; the data shows that a much greater variety of verbs involving speech can be used to introduce direct speech quotations. Pattern (A) is illustrated in the following sentences:

(9) a. Tus nuu  txawm hai rau tus muam hai tias, "Koj yuav kuv
clf brother then say to clf sister that you marry me
    'Then the brother said to his sister, "Marry me"'
    (From The Flood, Level 1:14)

b. Nws qw hai tias, "Dabtsi?"
    he yell that what
    'He yelled, "What?"
    (From The Woodcutter, His Rooster and His Wife, Level 2:16)

c. Zaj  nug sawv daws tias, "Nej puas ntshai?"
    Dragon ask everyone that you Q be afraid
    'Dragon asked everyone, "Were you afraid?"