AN INCHOATIVE CONJUNCTION IN HMONG :
EXTRA - SENTENTIAL TOPIC MARKER?

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0. INTRODUCTION

The White Hmong (Miao) of Laos[1] has an intransitive verb to directional motion, *los* [lɔ[11]] meaning ' to come, return (in a homing sense) '. There is another *los,* probably derived from the intransitive verb, which occurs with a preceding sentence and a following sentence. Previously (Clark 1985 & 1982:9 - 11) I claimed that this *los* was another verb synchronically derived from the intransitive verb, was an inchoative verb meaning ' become, (and/so) happen

that ', and occurred in the structure S1_____[S2], in which S2 was subordinate to the verb *los.* After further thought and investigation into the semantic and structural characteristics of this *los,* I have concluded that I was mistaken in the claim that it was a verb. I now believe it is a derived inchoative probably coordinate conjunction with the approximate meaning ' (and) then/so, thus, therefore, yet, and it happens, and it turns out, with the result. ' The sentence in 0.1 illustrates the use of the intransitive verb *los* and one use of inchoative conjunction *los.*

0.1 *Peb los   txog tim   no los   tsis muaj cou   Hmoob nyob ntawm no*[2]

we V : come to across this C : & then not have group Hmong stay place at this
We've come over here and there aren't any Hmong living here.

Los occurs as an interclausal conjunction in three patterns :.

S1 ____ S2,   in which neither S is subordinate but the two propositions are semantically related by
             los (e.g. 0.1);
S1 ___ S2 = V [+stative], in which *los* introduces a stative verb which refers to the event of S1;
[S1] ____ S2, in which the head (nuclear verb) of S1 is subordinate to the head of S2, S1 stating
             a condition for the event of S2.

In all these structures *los* has an inchoative function with respect to S2. By " inchoative function " is meant an indication of the commencement of actual or perceptual change, including such concepts as realization and consequence.

The speculation that intersentential *los* is derived from the verb ' to come, return ' is the fact of a common association of directional locomotion verbs such as ' come ' and ' go ' with inchoation. A few examples from other languages make the point :

English :	be - come	to become
	come off	to happen (successfully)
	go bad/off (of food)	to become spoiled
	go missing	to become missing, disappear
English - based pidgins : come		to become
Russian :	vi - khadit (*prefix out - go*)	to go out; appear, come out as
Hindi :	ho - jānā (*be/become - go*)	to become
Vietnamese :	trở - thành (*return - become*)	to become, turn into
	thành - ra (*become - go out*)	to become, eventualize
	hóa - ra (*become - go out*)	to change to

However, the speculation regarding derivation is not central to the paper and will not be discussed further.

I will discuss these three patterns and give the reasons for believing intersentential *los* to be an inchoative conjunction which is more closely associated with the second sentence but appears to be a coordinating conjunction not a subordinating conjunction. Then I will illustrate the use of conjunction *los* as a topic marker for NP's and, finally, suggest the possibility that conjunction *los* marks topicalized or given clauses, the first sentence being the given clause.

1. S1 and then happen S2

Following are some examples of *los* occurring as a conjunction between two sentences. In coordinated sentences such as those in 0.1 and the examples in this section, both sentences are grammatically independent sentences. However, the sentence following *los* relies on the proposition of the sentence preceding *los* for its full import; i.e., the proposition of the second sentence follows from the proposition of the first sentence, expressing sometimes consequence (1.1 - 4) and sometimes a situation contrary to expectation (1.5 - 7).

1.1   Peb nyob deb   deb   neb   lawm <u>los</u>   peb nco   txog neb   kawg li.
we   *stay* *far*   *far*   *you2* *already* *THEN* *we* *remember* *to* *you2* *much* *so*

We're living very far from you <u>so</u> we miss you very much.

1.2   Wb muab tso   rau   koj   muag <u>los</u>   wb   yeej   tso   siab   lawm.
we2 *take* *put* *to* *you* *sell* *THEN* *we2* *willing* *at* *ease* *already*

We gave it to you to sell <u>so/and</u> we're happy (whatever you do).

1.3   Neb muab txiav lawm tsib duas <u>los</u>   tsis   ua cas kav   liam.
you2 *take* *cut* *already* *five* *dollar* *THEN* *not* *do how* *so* *be it*

You're going to take out $5, <u>well</u>, it's no problem.

1.4   Meslis, kuv tsis   paub   sau   ntawv Askiv, kuv   sau   tsis   yog,
Mary *I* *not* *know* *write* *paper* *English* *I* *write* *not* *(be)so*

<u>los</u>   thov koj zam   txim   rau kuv thiab.
THEN *request* *you* *yield* *pardon* *to* *I* *also*

Mary, I don't know how to write in English so I make mistakes, <u>so</u> I ask you to please excuse me.

In 1.5 - 1.8, S2 contains anaphoric reference in the form of zero anaphora ([ϕ]) to one of the NP's in the first sentence. The sentences in 1.6 and 1.7 are from folk tales (Vang & Lewis 1984 : 20 & 16).[3]

1.5   Nws ua   paj-ntaub <u>los</u>   tsis muaj   chaw   muag Ø lawm.
3P *do* *stitchery* *THEN* *not* *have* *place* *sell*   *already*

She does needlework <u>and/but</u> there's no place to sell it.

1.6   Nws xav   coj   mus pub rau   luag lwm   tus,   <u>los</u> Ø   pub   tsis   tau   li.
3P *want* *take* *go* *give* *to* *others* *next* *person* *THEN*   *give* *not* *able* *so*

She wanted to give away her wealth to other people, <u>but</u> she couldn't.

1.7   Nws tau tsaus-ntuj <u>los</u> Ø tsaus ntev   heev.
3P *get* *dark sky* *THEN*   *dark* *long time* *very*

When it was night, it was night for a very long time.

Nws tau kaj -ntug <u>los</u> Ø kaj   ntev   heev.
3P *get* *light sky* *THEN*   *light* *long time* *very*

When it was day, it was daytime for a very long time.
(Lit. : It became dark <u>then</u> it was dark...)

Of course it is common for both sentences to have anaphoric reference to preceding discourse, as in 1.8.

1.8 Koj   xa   Ø   tuaj   rau   peb   <u>los</u>   peb   txais   tau   Ø   lawm   nawb.
     you send   hither to   we   THEN   we   receive   already sure
     You sent it to us <u>and</u> we received it already.

In all the sentences 1.1 - 8 *los* seems clearly to be a conjunction conjoining two independent but associated sentences. The earlier argument for *los* being a verb was based on its inchoative nature and the parallel with existential verbs such as *yog* ‘be’ and *muaj* ‘have’ which may take embedded sentences instead of NP arguments.

Given that inchoation means commencement of change, including consequence, and if one accepts that conjunctions may also serve an inchoative function, the first argument for verbs is invalid. The sentences in 1.9 - 1.11 have English conjunctions which serve an inchoative function. Note that the *and* in the second sentence in 1.9 represents simple coordination not inchoation, and that both the second and third sentences in 1.9 are different semantically as well as grammatically from the first sentence. (This shows that there are at least two *and*’s in English, one for coordination only and one to express realization. See Stubbs 1983 : 80 - 81 regarding the wide range of functions of *and* and other conjunctions common in conversational discourse)

1.9 He came there <u>and</u> (it turned out/he found) she’d left already.
     ≠ He came there <u>and</u> she talked with him.
     ≠ When he came there, she’d left already.
1.10 My parents need some money <u>so</u> I’m going to send them some.
1.11 She’s going to Vientiane, <u>*therefore*</u> she’s studying Lao.

Probably most languages have such interclausal inchoative conjunctions.[4] Here are examples in Vietnamese (1.12 - 13) and Thai (1.14), though the Thai sentence is a little unusual.[5] Compare the Vietnamese sentence in 1.13 with the Hmong one in 1.5 ; the Vietnamese conjunction has approximately the meaning “and on the contrary, on the other hand ’ and is derived from the Vietnamese verb ‘ to come ’.

1.12 Một ngày sau tôi đến đó <u>thì</u> cô   đã   bỏ   đi   rồi.
      one day   after I   reach there then Miss Past leave go   already
      The day after I came there <u>and</u> she had left already.

1.13 Chị ấy làm đồ thêu <u>lại</u> không có chỗ bán.
      sister that do thing embroidery however not have place sell
      She does embroidery <u>but/and yet</u> there’s no place to sell it.

1.14 Kháw thɔɔ phâa lɛ́ɛw <u>kɔ̂</u> phɔ̂ɔ-kháa mây ráp.
      3P   weave cloth already and then merchant not receive
      They did the weaving <u>and/but</u> the merchants didn’t buy it.

As for interclausal *los* being an existential verb, it must be admitted that this *los* may not be negated or questioned and may not take aspectual adverbs. Note the negation of existential *yog* in 1.4 above (with topicalized embedded sentence) and in 1.15 and the negation and questioning of existential *muaj* in 1.16 and 1.17. The sentences in 1.18 and 1.19, taken from 1.1 and 0.1 respectively, illustrate that *tsis los* ‘ not happen ” and *puas los* ‘ does’ it happen? ” are ungrammatical for interclausal *los*.

1.15 Wb   hais   lus   Askiv   <u>tsis yog</u>   hais   lus   Hmoob.
      we2 speak word English   not be   speak word Hmong
      We spoke in English not (be the case that we spoke) in Hmong.

1.16 <u>Tsis muaj</u> leej twg noj kiag.
not have person which eat at all

There isn't anyone eating them.

1.17 <u>Puas muaj</u> leej twg noj lawm ?
whether have person whichever eat already

Is there anyone (else) who wants to eat?

1.18 *Peb nyob debdeb neb lawm <u>tsis los</u> peb nco txog neb.

We're living very far from you <u>& it doesn't happen that</u> we miss you.

1.19 *Peb los txog tim no <u>puas los</u> tsis muaj cov Hmoob nyob ntawm no ?

We've come over here <u>& is it that</u> there are no Hmong living here?

There seems to be no real justification for claiming that interclausal *los* is a verb. However, the question of subordination remains. Is *los* a subordinating conjunction?

Both sentences in the conjoined sentences of 1.1 - 1.8 are grammatical sentences and may therefore be considered to involve coordination rather than subordination. However, *los* is entirely associated with the second sentence and, as mentioned before, the second sentence depends on the proposition of the first sentence to be properly interpreted, i.e., it is pragmatically dependent on S1. Foley and Van Valin (1984 : 256ff) and Olson (1981) have given the term cosubordination to clause linkages that do not involve embedding but are not altogether independent. It may be that the *los* sentences might be termed as one class of cosubordination in which the second sentence is loosely dependent in terms of syntax and more tightly dependent semantically on the first sentence.

Such a linkage is mediated by *los* and its properties are formulated in the lexical matrix of *los*.

The approach of some kind of dependence being involved seems even more appropriate when one examines the sentences in the following section.

2. S1 WITH THE RESULT S2 (= STATIVE)

The second " sentence " in this pattern is a sentence only in that it is a verb with optional verb modifiers, and in Hmong a VP[6] with no accompanying arguments may form a full sentence, especially in discourse. However, in these constructions the stative verb phrase is dependent on S1, being a tag comment on the proposition in S1 in that it is a description of state regarding that proposition or some element in it. Here *los* at once conjoins the stative sentence to S1 and separates it from S1, making explicit that the stative comment is not an integral part of S1.

2.1 Nws ua pajntaub qab qwj txiav <u>los</u> zoo nkauj.
3P do stitchery snailshell cut THEN beautiful

She does snailshell applique <u>and</u> it's beautiful.

2.2 Muaj luag tus muab lawm <u>los</u> puám chawj.
have others person take already THEN so be it

Somebody took it, <u>well so</u> too bad - that's the way it is.

2.3 Neb tau muag wb cov pajntuab poob lawm <u>los</u> zoo kawg.
you2 get sell we2 group stitchery gone already THEN good very

You sold our pieces of needlework already, <u>well</u> that's very good.

The Vietnamese copula - like conjunction in 1.12 above can be used in the same way :

2.4 Chị ấy cũng đi với chúng tôi <u>thì</u> vui lắm.
sister that also go with we(Excl) then happy very

She went with us too <u>so</u> it was a lot of fun.

Conjunction *los* occurs in what appears to be an idiomatic expression in which *los* introduces the stative verb *tau* 'be possible'. As with the other stative verbs in this structure, *tau* takes no arguments but may take adverbs and negation (e.g. 2.7), which confirms it as a verb. In these sentences, S2 refers to the possibility or non-possibility of the proposition stated in S1. This fact is made clearer by comparing the sentences in 2.5. S2 in 2.5b has an animate subject and another verb, in which case *tau* refers to the possibility of the action of preceding verb *ua*. 2.5b is acceptable but unusual and 2.5a, with its direct reference to the proposition in S1, is preferred (Chu Lee, pers. comm.).

2.5 a | Kuv | mam | li | sau | rov | tuaj | qhia | rau | koj | <u>los</u> | <u>tau.</u>
I | *presently* | *write* | *back* | *hither* | *tell* | *to* | *you* | *THEN* | *possible*

It's alright: I'll write back to tell you.

b | Kuv | mam | li | sau | rov | tuaj | qhia | rau | koj | <u>los</u> | <u>kuv ua tau.</u>
I | *presently* | *write* | *back* | *hither* | *tell* | *to* | *you* | *THEN I* | *do possible*

I can write back to tell you, *it doesn't worry me*.

2.6 Tau | kawg. | Kuv | muaj | mentsis | thiab | kuv | mam | li | muab
possible | *very* | *I* | *have* | *a little* | *and* | *I* | *presently* | *hand*

ob | peb | duas | rau koj | <u>los</u> | <u>tau.</u>
2 | *3* | *dollar* | *to you* | *THEN possible*

Of course. I have a little and I'll give you a few dollars, *that's fine*.

2.7 Peb | xav... | tabsis | peb | tsis | muaj | nyiaj | lawm | es | <u>los tsis tau</u> | <u>xwb.</u>
we | *want* | *but* | *we* | *not* | *have* | *money* | *already* | *and* | *THEN not possible* | *only*

We want... but we don't have money *so it's not possible at all*.

The preceding clause with this idiom is sometimes a conditional, as shown in 2.8 and 2.9. S1 in 2.9 is itself an idiomatic expression and S2 refers not to S1 but to previous discourse or an understood situation. Conditionals with conjunction *los* are discussed further in Sec. 3.

2.8 (Yog) | koj | xav | hu | mus | nrog | kuv | tham, | <u>los</u> | <u>tau.</u>
be that | *you* | *want* | *call* | *away* | *with* | *I* | *converse* | *THEN* | *possible*

If you want to call and talk with me, *then it's alright*.

2.9 Tshav | kub | los | nag, | <u>los</u> | <u>tau.</u>
sunshine | *be hot* | *come* | *rain* | *THEN possible*

Come rain or come shine *I'll do it* : I'll do it for you whatever happens.

Since it is possible for *los tau* to be preceded by a subordinate conditional clause 'then it must be said that *tau* is a main clause in these *los tau* sentences. However, *tau* in a VP-only sentence occurs only in conversational discourse as a response, as shown in 2.6 and 2.10, not as a presentative comment. Note that *los* cannot initiate an utterance and such a response cannot be preceded by *los*:

2.10 Koj | ua | rau | kuv | puas | tau ?   Tau.   *Los tau.
you | *do* | *for* | *I* | *whether* | *able*   *can/possible*
Can you do it for me ?   Yes, I can.

It is possible that, where S2 is reduced to a stative VP as in the sentences in this section, *los* can not be characterized in the same way as the *los* in the Sec. 1 sentences. In Sec. 5 I will discuss the possibility of conjunction *los* and nominalization of S1. First, we will look at *los* with S1 as a conditional.

3.   IF S1 THEN S2

In the third type of interclausal *los,* the first sentence is clearly subordinate to the head of the proposition in the second sentence but not to the conjunction *los,* which is still more closely associated with the second sentence.   In these sentences *los* explicitly states " given S1 *then* S2 is the case ", the first sentence being a conditional, as in 2.8 - 9 above and the sentences below.

S1 may be marked with (and subordinate to) the copula verb *yog* ' to be ' for ' if ' (hypothetical) clauses, as in 2.8 and 3.1 - 5.   Typically, noun phrases with indefinite question words (3.6 - 8) and various conjunctions mark other types of conditionals preceding *los* clauses, e.g. *tab (txawm)* for some counterfactuals (3.9 - 10).   (The sentences in 3.7 - 10 are from Mottin 1978 : 132.[7]).

3.1   (Yog)   koj   tsis   pom qab   sau   no   <u>los</u>   tsis   ua   li   cas.
      be that   you   not   know   write   this   THEN   not   do   as   how

If you don't know how to write this *(so)* it doesn't matter.

3.2   Yog   koj   xav   nrog   peb tham   <u>los</u>   koj   thiaj li   tau tham   nawb.
      be that   you   want   with   we converse   THEN   you   consequently   get converse   sure
If you want to talk with us *then* certainly you can.

3.3   (Yog)   nws   yuav   tuaj   <u>los</u>   tsis   txhob   qhib   qhov   rooj.
      be that   3P   will   come   THEN   not   don't   open   door

If she's going to come, *then* don't open the door (for her).

3.4   Thaum   twg   koj   muab tau   nyiaj   tuaj   rau   peb,   yog   peb   pauv   tau,
      time   which   you   hand able   money   hither   to   we   be that   we   exchange   able

<u>los</u>   peb   mam li   qhia   koj   nawb.
THEN   we   right away   tell   you   sure
Any time you can give us money and (if) we can cash it, *then* we'll tell you right away.

3.5   Ho   yog   peb   pauv   tsis tau   <u>los</u>   peb   qhia   koj   paub   thiab.
      and then   be that   we   exchange   not able   THEN   we   tell   you   know   also

And if we can't cash it, *then* we'll let you know too.

3.6   Muab   rau   qhov   twg   <u>los</u>   tau.
      take   to   place   which   THEN   possible

Wherever you put it *(then)* it's alright.

3.7   Koj   nrog   leej   twg   mus,   <u>los</u>   kuv   tsis   nrog   koj   mus.
      you   with   person   which   go   THEN   I   not with   you   go

You can go with whomever you want, I'm not going with you.

3.8   Koj   hais   li   cas,   <u>los</u>   nws   tsis   mloog.
      you   say   as   how   THEN   3P   not   listen
Whatever you say, *(even so)* he won't listen.

3.9   Tab   yog   nws   hu,   <u>los</u>   kuv   tsis   mus.
      even   be that   3P   call   THEN   I   not   go

Even if he calls me, *(even so)* I won't go.

3.10   Tab   txawm   nyuaj   npaum   li   cas,   <u>los</u>   koj   ua   siab   loj.
       even though   difficult   equal   as   how   THEN   you   do   liver   big

Whatever the difficulties, *(even so)* be courageous.

S1 as a subordinate clause occurs as well with the Vietnamese conjunction cited above; the sentence without the hypothetical ' if ' is more natural.

3.11 (Néu) cô   đồng ý (thì) tôi sẽ   đến.
     if   *Miss* *agree* *then* *I* *will* *arrive*

If you agree, (*then*) I'll come.

To understand further the nature of conjunction *los,* we can 1) look at its use *within* a clause, i.e. within an equivalent of S2, and 2) compare it with somewhat similar conjunctions.

4. NP TOPICALIZATION AND OTHER INCHOATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

There is a structure in which conjunction *los*

occurs between the apparent subject and the main verb of a sentence, say S2, in discourse :

(S1), NP____V,

as in 4.1, 4.2 (from Mottin 1978 : 142), and in 4.3 where the NP is a Time phrase in a subjectless meteriological statement.

4.1 Koj thiab koj tsev neeg   puas   noj qab nyob zoo lawm ?
    you *and* *you* *house* *person* *whether* *happy & well*   *already*

    <u>Peb</u> <u>los</u>   tseem noj qab nyob zoo li   qub   thiab.
    we *THEN* *still*   *happy & well*   *as*   *old*   *also*

How are you and your family? As for us, we're still fine as usual.

4.2 Nws paub, <u>kuv</u> <u>los</u>   kuj   paub   thiab.
    3P *know* *I*   *THEN* *likewise* *know* *also*

He knows it, and me, I know it too.

4.3 <u>Tamsim no</u> <u>los</u>   tseem   no thiab.
    now   *this* *THEN* *still*   *cold* *also*

And right now, it's still cold.

In these sentences, *los* is clearly a topic marker for the preceding noun phrase, creating a topic - comment structure. In fact, the topicalized NP may be even more explicitly marked for topic by the topic - marking noun *ntawm,* as in 4.4 (from Mottin

1978 : 142) and 4.5. The topic in 4.6 is a clause nominalized by the noun *ntawm. Kuj* ' equally, likewise ' is conjunctive and emphatic, underlining the inchoative aspect implied by *los.*

4.4 Nws mus,   <u>ntawm kuv</u>   <u>los</u>   kuj   mus   thiab.
    3P *go*   *place at* *I*   *THEN* *likewise* *go*   *also*

He's going; and me, me I'm going too.

4.5 <u>Ntawm kuv thiab kuv niam</u>   <u>los</u>   noj qab nyob zoo.
    place at I   *and I* *mother*   *THEN happy & well*

As for me and my mother, we're fine.

4.6 <u>Ntawm kuv nyob tim</u>   <u>no</u> <u>los</u>   kuj nco   txog koj kawg li thiab.
    place at I   *stay place over* *this* *THEN* *also* *remember to* *you very so also*

As for my living over here, I likewise miss you very much.

However, this type of occurrence of *los* seems to be fairly restricted in usage. More frequently occurring in such a role is the conjunction *mas.* Fuller (1985 & 1987) gives a convincing argument for *mas*

as topicalizer of the preceding NP, and I accept that analysis.[8] The sentences in 4.7 - 8 are given by her (1985 : 113) as examples of NP topicalization. 4.9 is another example.

4.7 <u>peb lub zos mas</u> yog peb tib pawg kwv tij xwb.
our CLF village PRT BE our one brothers only

Our village was only our group of cousins.

4.8 <u>Cov Suav mas</u> muaj nyiaj heev.
group Chinese PRT have money very

The Chinese had a lot of money.

4.9 Kuv zaum hauv av (thiab) <u>koj</u> <u>mas</u> zaum nyob saum rooj nawb.
I sit inside earth and you then sit at top bench sure

I'll sit on the floor and you, you sit on the bench, alright?

Mas also occurs as a clause linker similar in function to *los*. It can occur in a preceding conditional, as in 4.10, or linking two more or less independent sentences, as in 4.11 and 4.12 (4.10 - 11 from Mottin 1978 : 141).

4.10 Yog nws tuaj, <u>mas</u> koj hais rau kuv.
be that 3P come so then you say to I

If he comes, (*so*) tell me.

4.11 Nws ua teb tas lawm, <u>mas</u> txhiaj li ua si.
3P do field finished already so then consequently play

He has finished working his fields *so* he's enjoying himself.

4.12 Nyaj Zuag ... kom ntxawm Npis rho koj cov nyiaj los mus yuav ...
aunt Zua cause sis-in-law Bee extract you group money hither go buy

<u>mas</u> ntxawm Npis rho lawm 26 duas mus yuav ...
so then sis-law Bee extract already 26 dollar go buy

Aunt Zua...asking Bee to take some of your money to go buy...,
so Bee took $26 and went and bought...

The sentence in 4.13 shows the use of *mas* both as NP topicalizer and as interclausal conjunction.

4.13 <u>Ib duas mas</u> yog kuv coj mus yuav daim tshev... <u>ob duas</u> <u>mas</u>
one dollar then be that I take go buy sheet check 2 dollar then

yog kuv rho los ua nyiaj xa... <u>mas</u> tag peb duas lawm nawb.
be that I extract do money send so then finish 3 dollar already sure

One dollar that was for buying the check, two dollars that was for paying the postage, *so* altogether it was three dollars.[9]

The conjunction *ho* appears to function in much the same way; i.e., it appears to be an inchoative conjunction which can occur both intersententially and preverbally (4.15 from Heimbach 1979 : 53):[10]

4.14 Kuv xav tias neb... <u>ho</u> kuv kuj noj qab nyob zoo li qub thiab.
I wish that you2 & then I likewise happy & well as old also

I hope that you...*and* I too am happy and well as usual.

4.15 <u>Nws ho</u> yuav sau nyiaj.
3P then want collect money

And so he wants to collect money.

Similar conjunctions in Vietnamese and Thai, which were illustrated above as intersentential conjunctions, occur more often as NP topicalizers: Vietnamese sentences in 4.16 (from Huffman & Tran 1980 : 150), 4.17 and 4.18, and Thai in 4.19 (from T. Diller and P. Juntanamaḷaga, pers. comm.).

4.16　<u>Bao giờ thì</u>　trời bắt đầu　mưa,　anh ?
　　　what time　then　sky　begin　rain　brother

(So) when does it begin to rain? (speaking of seasons)

4.17　<u>Quần　áo　thì</u>　đề　chị　giặt.
　　　trousers　blouse　then　put　sister　wash

As for your clothes, leave them for me to wash.

4.18　Chị　tôi　<u>lai</u>　không thích　đi　Brisbane.
　　　sister　I　however　not　like　go　Brisbane

My older sister, on the other hand, doesn't like to go to Brisbane.

4.19 · Kháw thɔɔ phâa　lέɛw　<u>phɔ̂ɔ-kháa　kɔ̂</u>　mây ráp　súu.
　　　3P　weave　cloth　already　merchant　then　not　receive　buy

She did the weaving but the middleman wouldn't buy it.

Fuller (1985 & 1987) groups *mas* and the conjunction *ces* together in her discussion of NP topicalization but gives no examples of *ces* with NP and, in fact, *ces* seems rarely if ever to occur with NPs, only with clauses, i.e. verbs dominated by S. Following are examples (4.20 from Bertrais 1979 : 14; glosses and English translation mine).

4.20　Peb　mus　ntsib　suav　rog　<u>ces</u>　peb　khiav.
　　　we　go　meet　stranger　war　so then　we　run

We chanced upon the enemy <u>and so</u> fled.

4.21　Nag hmo　kuv　pw　lig　lig　<u>ces</u>　tagkis　no　kuv　thiaj　sawv　lig　lig.
　　　yesterday　I　lie　late　late　so then　morning　this　I　therefore　rise　late　late

I went to bed very late last night <u>so</u> this morning I got up very late.

With *ces,* S1 can be a conditional clause (from Fuller 1985 : 118) :

4.22　Yog　koj　mus　<u>ces</u>　nrog　peb　mus　niam no.
　　　if　you　go　PRT　with　us　go　now

If you are going, go with us now.

The regular coordinating conjunction *thiab* ' and ' links NPs (4.23), predicates (4.24, from Fuller 1985 : 80), and clauses (4.25, from Indochinese Refugee Education Guide 15 : 14).

4.23　Kuv　<u>thiab</u> Pov tsis　sib　tham.
　　　I　and Pao　not　Recip　talk

Pao and I don't talk to each other.

4.24　Nws　pom cov　me nyuam　<u>thiab</u>　nyiam　lawv.
　　　s/he　see group　child　and　like　they

S/he saw the children and liked them.

4.25   Pia   yog   Yaj   Txhim poj   niam   <u>thiab</u>   nkawd   muaj ib   tug   tub.
       Pia   be   Yang   See   Clf   wife   and   they   have one   Clf   son

       Pia is Yang See's wife, and they have one son.

This conjunction seems to have a somewhat inchoative value in the sentence in 4.26. Perhaps, like English *and*, *thiab* is generating an inchoative counterpart. (See Li 1987 for a discussion of Green Hmong *hab* ' and ' as strictly coordinate.)

4.26   Peb   twb   tau   mus nees nkawm   kilo   <u>thiab</u> sawvdaws   nkees   heev.
       we   already   go   twenty   kilometer   and   everyone   tired   very

       We've already gone twenty kilometers and we're all very tired.

It is obvious from the examples with conjunctions *mas*, *ho*, and *ces* that they share an inchoative function with *los*, i.e., they signal that S2 relates to S1 in terms of realization. There are subtle differences among these conjunctions; for example, almost all the sentences with *los* given in Sec. 1 disallow either *ces* or *mas* in place of *los*, or are much better with *los*. However, I do not intend here to attempt to discover the nature of these distinctions but rather to focus on their semantic and functional similarities.

The parallel uses of *los* and other conjunctions between intersentential juncture and NP topicalization raises the question of topicalization of clauses within discourse, and I will discuss this in the next section.

5. INCHOATIVE CONJUNCTIONS AND TOPICALIZATION

So far we have seen conjunction *los* as mediator between two sentences where S2 may 1) be an independent sentence which follows from S1, 2) be a stative VP which comments on S1, 3) be a superordinate clause whose subordinate S1 is a conditional, or 4) contain a subject - position NP which is marked for discourse topicalization by a succeeding *los*. This overview suggests a number of overlapping possibilities.

To what extent could S1 be a topic for S2? Almost all of the discussion through the years involving topicalization has centered on topicalization of noun phrases within a sentence, although, it is recognized that topicalization usually has extrasentential reference. Definitions of topics frequently refer specifically to the sentence (e.g. Gundel 1985), and perhaps the term " topicalization " is not appropriate for cross -

sentence phenomena, but it seems to me that there is some kind of topicalization or backgrounding (setting the scene) involved in the cases of S1 *los* S2 and the same structure with *mas, ho, ces,* and *es,* another ' and so ' conjunction. Just as preverbal *los, mas,* and *ho* can topicalize preceding NPs, it seems quite likely, given the semantic relationship between S1 and S2 in the sentences here, that these conjunctions operating intersententially also make topics of a sort of the preceding sentence.

For the purposes of this discussion I will take the position that a topic is what is assumed by the speaker to be given background information as far as the addressee is concerned. I have excluded " old " and " known " information for the reason given below. With this position it is reasonable to suppose that the notion of topic can be extended from NP to a non - nominal clause in discourse. In fact, Haiman (1978), in his discussion of conditionals as topics, does just that. Furthermore, his argument is based strongly on identity of marking: the assumption that " superficial similarities of form are reflections of underlying similarities of meaning " (586, also discussion on p. 565). That is the situation we have here with conjunctions *los, mas,* and *ho*. They can mark both topic NPs and clauses which are semantically linked in a given - S1 - *then* - S2 type of association.

The givenness property in all cases of S1 when associated with *los* suggests that S1 is probably a topic. Haiman (1978 : 585) has a definition that seems to be workable for the situation here. He defines topic as follows :

The topic represents an entity whose existence is agreed upon by the speaker and his audience. As such, it constitutes the framework which has been selected for the following discourse.

I would add to this, at least for topicalized whole sentences, that the agreement may occur at the time of uttering S1, i.e., it may be that S1 is not old information already known to the audience, but that S1 is received by the audience as given background to what follows. I would also add that the foregrounded discourse following a topicalized sentence (whether the topicalized sentence is conditional or presentative and independent) is frequently a single comment. This is certainly true of conversational discourse, as opposed to narrative discourse where a topic may be background for a whole paragraph.

If we are to consider the S1 sentences of the type described here to be topics, it is reasonable to ask whether they might not be nominalized sentences, the nominalization signalled by the inchoative conjunction. This is a tempting notion especially with respect to the sentences in Sec. 2, where S2 is a stative VP which describes the speaker's attitude toward the event of S1. However, the usual structures of sentences in Hmong and its neighboring languages do not favor nominalization. Naturally, nominalization of clauses does occur, marked by particular nouns, especially *ntawm* ' the place at ' (as in 4.6) and *thaum* ' the time when ' (3.4), but on the whole these languages tend to be highly " verbalizing " languages. Therefore, I will admit that there is a possibility of S1's or some types of S1's being nominalized topics, but at this point in the investigation I will consider them still to be full verbal clauses dominated by S.

I have called the association between S1 and S2 inchoative with respect to S2, inchoation being marked by the inchoative conjunction. As said above in Sec. 0, inchoation means commencement of actual or perceptual change. The notion embraces such concepts as realization, consequence (sometimes contrary to expectation), discovery, etc. The claim I wish to make here is that many languages, perhaps most, have a set of inchoative conjunctions, each conjunction with its own finer distinctive features which determine the selection of that particular conjunction. This set would probably include words with the meaning of ' but, etc., ' although they have not been discussed here.

The second claim is that the inchoative marking on such conjunctions allows them to be used in topicalizing functions : yet another technique for background - foreground processing (see Hopper 1979). Depending on the particular inchoative conjunction, it can be used to background phrases or clauses as givens for foreground comment.

These statements can be illustrated to some extent with English *then*. There are at least four *then's*; one, the Time pronoun in 5.1, does not concern us at all; nor does the sequential Time conjunction in 5.2.

5.1   We were busy preparing the meal *then* (at that time).
5.2   We chopped the veggies *then* cut up the meat.

The other two *then's* are inchoative conjunctions, or perhaps they are only one lexical item whose features allow it to function in two ways. For the time being I will say that there are two lexical items because of the formulaic difficulties in stating constraints on an environment in which in one case the conjunction is associated with the preceding phrase, as in 5.3, and in the other with the following sentence, as in 5.4. I have taken the liberty of using some of Jeanette Gundel's own text (Gundel 1977 : 39).

5.3   With respect to this one reading *then* Chomsky's analysis appears…
5.4   If this is the reading which is intended, *then* the claim…is incorrect.

The functions of *then* in 5.3 and 5.4 seem to parallel some of the functions of inchoative conjunction *los*, with the notable exception that, in English, the *then* which is associated with S2 occurs only with a hypothetical conditional as S1.
There is much that needs to be examined further before one can make statements about these conjunctions with any certainty, but, once more, one can say with certainty that investigation of discourse phenomena helps to shed much light onto what is going on inside the sentence.

NOTES

[1] The dialect represented here is primarily but not exclusively that of White Hmong as spoken in Xieng Khouang province in Laos. I am indebted to my many Hmong friends who have helped me through conversations, letters, and elicited responses. Especially helpful have been my teacher, Vangkoua Cheurtong, and Neng Chue Yang, Tong Vang, Youa Vang, Sai Xiong, Youa Yang, and, more recently, Chu Lee. Also I have received helpful consultation on this paper from Tony Diller and Preecha Juntanamalaga, and I wish to thank them. Although it is not customary to " thank " printed material, I would like to acknowledge the assistance of ideas gleaned from a study of Judy Fuller's " Topic and Comment in Hmong " (Fuller 1985).

[2] The orthography used for Hmong here is the Romanized Popular Alphabet (see Smalley 1976 : 87 - 88 and Bertrais 1979). Double vowel symbols indicate Vng and orthographic final consonants indicate tone : -b high, -j high falling, -v mid rising, 0 mid, -g low falling breathy, -s low, -m low with glottal, -d low rising.

[3] The sentences taken from *Grandmother's Path Grandfather's Way*, with their translations, follow the authors' presentation. The interlinear glosses are my own.

[4] I specify " interclausal " because there are conjunctions which have discourse reference to previous clauses but which, at least in Hmong, Thai and Vietnamese, occur immediately before the verb of the sentence with which they are most closely associated and can be preceded by an NP. (See especially Fuller 1985). This type of conjunction is discussed in Sec. 4.

[5] Tony Diller and Preecha Juntanamalaga, personal communication.

[6] By VP I mean here a verb and any of its modifying adverbs occurring in the sentence, and excluding any NPs, time NPs or otherwise.

[7] In sentence examples from Mottin the glosses are mine, as are the translations, from the Hmong and from Mottin's French translations.

[8] Fuller goes on to hypothesize a topic - comment typology for Hmong but that is not of concern here.

[9] Heimbach (1979) describes *mas* as a pause marker. This would be consistent with Chafe's notion (1976 : 51 - 52) of a speaker uttering a subject before choosing a case frame, then inserting a hesitation particle before completing the sentence. However, in addition to Fuller's arguments (1985 : 101 - 104) against *mas* being a pause marker, we have the evidence in 4.13. The sentence in 4.13 is written text, where one would hardly find conversational pauses.

[10] Li 1987 discusses Green Hmong coordinate conjunction *huas,* which I believe corresponds to White Hmong *ho,* as a switch reference device, a slightly contrastive conjunction which complements the " same subject " enumerative coordinate conjunction *hab* (White Hmong *thiab*).

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