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I. INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt to establish the syntactically significant word classes in Brôm.¹ Class definitions have been stated in terms of several different criteria such as transformational battery function, tagmemic filler function, possibilities of other occurrence, etc., according as one or another criterion afforded an easier statement. In general an attempt was made to avoid negative definitions.

¹ Brôm is a language of the Mon-Khmer family. It is estimated that there are between thirty and fifty thousand Brôm speakers in the northwest corner of South Viet Nam and in the neighboring areas of Laos and North Viet Nam. Data for this paper were collected in Hương Hóa district of Quảng Trị province in South Viet Nam.

I am indebted to David D. Thomas of the Summer Institute of Linguistics for help in the organization and writing of this paper.
Words in Brôu may be simple or complex. A simple word is considered to be the minimum meaningful unit which can be spoken in isolation. A complex word is a combination of two or more simple words, whose meaning is not the same as the sum of the meanings of its parts. For the purposes of this paper both simple and complex words will be referred to as ‘words’.

II. MAJOR CLASSES

1. Nouns (N). A noun is any word that can fill the Noun Head slot in a substantive phrase. The tagmemic formula for the Brôu substantive phrase is: \( \pm (\pm \text{Nu} \pm \text{Cl}) \pm \text{NH} \pm P \pm M \pm D \pm L \), in which Nu = Number, Cl = Classifier, NH = Noun Head, P = Possessive, M = Modifier, D = Demonstrative and L = Location.


This class has the following subclasses: Pronouns (Pr), Indefinite Pronouns (indPr), Non-classifiable Nouns (nclN), and Classifiable Nouns (clN).

2. Carolyn P. Miller, ‘The Substantive Phrase in Brôu.’ In this same volume.
1. 1. Pr. A pronoun is any general replacer noun which can substitute for or refer back to another noun, and which cannot be possessed by another pronoun.

This class is limited to the following words: cúrq ‘I’, mói ‘you’, anhia ‘you’, án ‘he, she, it’, alóí ‘they (definite)’, nau ‘they (indefinite)’, hái ‘we (inclusive)’, héq ‘we (exclusive)’, ca ‘that one, some’, cáí ‘you (direct address)’. All members of Pr except ca ‘that one, some’ and cáí ‘you’ are also members of clN.

1. 2. indPr. An indefinite pronoun is any general replacer word that can substitute for a noun or substantive phrase and function like ntrou ‘what, whatever, anything’ in the following frames: ntrou mói i bown ‘what you want have’ ‘What do you want?’ cúrq taur eiq ntrou ‘I not want anything’ ‘I don’t want anything’.

This class has a limited membership. The following is complete for our data: ntrou ‘what, whatever, anything’, nau ‘who whoever’, aléq ‘which, whichever’, maléq ‘how many’, máh léq ‘how many’.

1. 3. nclN. A non-classifiable noun is any noun which cannot occur in immediate constituency with a preceding classifier.

This class comprises words such as daraq ‘water’, cumo ‘year’, casái ‘month’, phéac ‘smoke’, lúq ‘mud’, créq ‘feces’, achoang ‘measurement for outspread arms’, dóal ‘hill’, keing ‘side, edge’, etc. Words in this class tend to be items which are non-discrete or non-segmentable.
This class may be subdivided into countable (cncI\(N\)) and non-countable (ncncI\(N\)) nouns.

1. 3. 1. cncI\(N\). A countable non-classifiable noun is any ncl\(N\) which can be preceded directly by, and be in immediate constituency with, a number.

This class comprises words such as cumo ‘year’, casài ‘month’, achoang ‘measurement for outspread arms’, dòal ‘hill’, keing ‘side, edge’, etc. Words in this class tend to be locations or units of measurement of time or space.

1.3.2. ncncI\(N\). A non-countable non-classifiable noun is any ncl\(N\) which can never be preceded by a number.

This class comprises words such as daurq ‘water’, phèac ‘smoke’, lúq ‘mud’, créq ‘feces’, etc. Words in this class tend to stand for items which are somewhat amorphous or unbounded.

1. 4. cI\(N\). A classifiable noun is any noun which can be preceded by, and be in immediate constituency with, a classifier. This class may be subdivided on the basis of semantic criteria inherent in the classifiers with which they occur, but there appear to be no syntactic criteria for subdividing it.

cloth’, *parṇōh* ‘a gong’, *tangan* ‘bowl’, *cachei* ‘lumber’, *ratàng* ‘woven bamboo wall’, etc. Words in this class tend to be items which are somewhat discrete by nature.

2. **Verbs (V).** A verb is any word that can be preceded by *i* ‘to want’.

This is a large open class comprising words such as *paurq* ‘go’, *lūh* ‘run’, *tacu* ‘sit’, *tayīrng* ‘to stand’, *tāq* ‘do’, *toàn* ‘hit’, *cha* ‘eat’, *howm* ‘see’, *chēic* ‘write’, *őat* ‘sing’, *cachāng* ‘laugh’, *nhiam* ‘to cry’, etc. Words in this class tend to be actions rather than states.

*cīrq* i *cha* ‘I want eat’  
*cīrq* i *paurq* ‘I want go’

I *want to eat*  
*I want to go*

This class is divided into *Intransitive Verbs (iV)* and *Transitive Verbs (tV)*.

2. 1. **iV.** An intransitive verb is any verb that can function like *paurq* ‘go’ in the following pair of transforms:

*acho paurq* ‘dog go’ *The dog goes*  
*paurq acho* ‘go dog’ *Go, dog!*

This class comprises words such as *paurq* ‘go’, *tacu* ‘sit’, *lūh* ‘run’, *tayīrng* ‘stand’, *cachāng* ‘laugh’, *nhiam* ‘cry’, etc.

2. 2. **tV.** A transitive verb is any verb which can take an object. Clauses with transitive verbs cannot fit the 〈1,2〉, 〈2,1〉 transformations of section 2.1 above. Transitive clauses which might appear to be transforms of the 〈1,2〉, 〈2,1〉 type actually are simple statement forms, from two different batteries (similar to *John saw (Bill)* and *Bill saw John* in English).
This class comprises words such as *hourm* ‘see’, *cha* ‘eat’, *táq* ‘do’, *toán* ‘hit’, *chèic* ‘write’, *ðat* ‘sing’, etc.

*círq* *hourm acho* ‘I see dog’ *I see the dog*

3. **Modifiers (Mod).** A modifier is any word that can fill the modifier slot in a substantive phrase, and is not a verb. I.e., a modifier can function as a word describing the noun head.

This is a fairly large class comprising words such as *toár* ‘big’, *cótt* ‘small’, *dein* ‘low’, *sarárih* ‘tall’, *o* ‘good’, *siuuq* ‘bad’, *cruï* ‘correct’, *bein* ‘accurate’, *rëñg* ‘powerful’, *lamën* ‘pliable, soft’, etc.

*acho toår paurq* ‘dog big go’ *The big dog goes*
*acho o paurq* ‘dog good go’ *The good dog goes*

This class has one significant subclass, Adjectives (Adj).

3. 1. **Adj.** An adjective is any modifier that can function like *o* ‘good’ in the following set of transforms:

-N - o - V. *o* describes N \( \langle 1, 2, 3 \rangle \)
-N - V - o. *o* describes V \( \langle 1, 3, 2 \rangle \)
-o - N - V. *o* describes V \( \langle 3, 1, 2 \rangle \)

In other words, adjectives can modify either nouns or verbs.

*acho o paurq* ‘dog good go’ *The good dog goes*
*acho paurq o* ‘dog go good’ *The dog goes well*
*ö acho paurq* ‘good dog go’ *The dog goes well*

The membership of this class is quite fluid, varying with individual speakers and situations. This class comprises perhaps
three-fourths of the modifiers and includes words such as o ‘good’, sāuq ‘bad’, crāi ‘correct’, bein ‘accurate’, rēng ‘powerful’, lamēn ‘soft, pliable’, etc.

III. ADVERBIALS

4. Adverbs (Adv). An adverb is any word that can function like sia ‘repeat’ in the following set of transforms, in which 1 = actor, 2 = action, 3 = adverb.

\[
\begin{align*}
cārq & \text{ pauq sia} & \text{‘I go repeat’} & \text{I go again} & \langle 1, 2, 3 \rangle \\
cārq & \text{ sia pauq} & \text{‘I repeat go’} & \text{I go again} & \langle 1, 3, 2 \rangle \\
pauq & \text{ cārq sia} & \text{‘go I repeat’} & \text{I go again} & \langle 2, 1, 3 \rangle \\
pauq & \text{ sia cārq} & \text{‘go repeat I’} & \text{I go again} & \langle 2, 3, 1 \rangle
\end{align*}
\]

In each of these forms 3 is always in immediate constituency with 2, the predicate.


This class has one significant subclass, Temporal Adverbs (tAdv).

4. 1. tAdv. A temporal adverb is any adverb that can occur sentence initial. These are mostly words referring to time.

sanua cirq pauq ‘now I go’ I’m going now <3, 1, 2>
sanua pauq cirq ‘now go I’ I’m going now <3, 2, 1>

5. Indefinite Adverb (indAdv). An indefinite adverb can substitute for any adverbial phrase except a temporal adverb and can function like nôq ‘how, why’ in the following frames:

nôq mòi táq nài ‘how you do this’ How do you do this?
cirq taur dúng táq nôq ‘I not know do how’ I don’t know how to do it.

This class has only one member: nôq ‘how, why’.

6. Postverbs (poV). A postverb is bound to a preceding verb and functions as a modifier of that verb. This class has two members: thăng ‘uncertain duration’, loàng ‘uncertain duration’.

cirq pauq thăng ‘I go uncertain’ I’m going (and not returning right away)
pauq thăng cirq ‘go uncertain I’ I’m going (and not returning right away)
7. Preverbs (preV). A preverb is a word that can occur before a verb and be in immediate constituency with that verb. A preverb cannot be immediately preceded by taur ‘not’.

This class is limited to the following members: i ‘to want’, ërt ‘continually’ phái ‘must’, chouï ‘don’t’. i ‘to want’ occurs only bound to a following verb. chouï ‘don’t’ can occur alone as a negative command.

mōi chouï paurq ‘you don’t go’ Don’t you go
chouï mōi paurq ‘don’t you go’ Don’t you go
chouï ‘don’t’ Don’t !

8. Negativizers (Neg). A negativizer is any word that can function like taur bourn ‘no’ in the following set of transforms, in which 1 = actor, 2 = negativizer, 3 = action.

mōi taur bourn paurq ‘you no go’ You aren’t going <1, 2, 3>
taur bourn mōi paurq ‘no you go’ You aren’t going <2, 1, 3>
mōi paurq taur bourn ‘you go no’ Are you going? <1, 3, 2>

This class has a limited membership. The following is complete for our data: taur ‘no’, taur bourn ‘no’, ngeaurn ‘no’, taur caurn ‘no’, yōah ‘not yet’, taur yōah ‘not yet’.

9. <tē>. tē ‘also’ is a one-word class that can occur following the predicate. It can also occur as a final particle. In both instances it functions as a modifier of the predicate.

cirq paurq tē ‘I go also’ I’m going too
paurq tē cirq ‘go also I’ I’m going too
cīr̥q bōrn dōng tē 'I have house also'  I also have a house

10. ⟨ dōq ⟩. The ⟨ dōq ⟩ class consists of words which function like dōq 'usually' in the following set of transforms, in which 1 = actor, 2 = action, and 3 = dōq.

cīr̥q paurq dōq 'I go usually'  I usually go ⟨ 1, 2, 3 ⟩
cīr̥q dōq paurq 'I usually go'  I usually go ⟨ 1, 3, 2 ⟩
dōq cīr̥q paurq 'usually I go'  I usually go ⟨ 3, 1, 2 ⟩
dōq paurq cīr̥q 'usually go I'  I usually go ⟨ 3, 2, 1 ⟩
* paurq cīr̥q dōq cannot occur
* paurq dōq cīr̥q cannot occur

In each form that can occur dōq functions as a modifier of the verb.

This class has a limited membership: dōq 'usually', lorq 'seldom', ngur māh kēi 'sufficient', ngur māhēi 'sufficient'.

IV. NOMINAL SUBORDINATES

11. Classifiers (Cl). A classifier is any word which can fill the classifier slot in a substantive phrase. Classifiers can occur only accompanied by one of the other tagmemes within the substantive phrase. I. e., a classifier cannot occur as a minimal manifestation of the substantive phrase.

mó̊i ̥ ̤i̥ ̤i̥t̥ ̤nt̥r̥h̥ ̤ḁlu̥ḁu̥n̥g̥ ̥ 'you get Cl tree' You get a tree
mó̊i ̥ ̤i̥ ̤i̥t̥ ̤nt̥r̥h̥ ̥ki̥ ̥ 'you get Cl that' You get that tree
mó̊i ̥ ̤i̥ ̤i̥t̥ ̤nt̥r̥h̥ ̥o̥ ̥ 'you get Cl good' You get a good tree
* mó̊i ̥ ̤i̥ ̤i̥t̥ ̤nt̥r̥h̥ cannot occur.
This is a fairly large class but one of limited membership. The following is complete for our data, though presumably not complete for the language. It should be noted that some classifiers can be used with only one or two nouns, but others can be used with a wide range of nouns. Also, there is often more than one classifier which would be appropriate with any given noun.


choang — classifies string-like objects: casái ‘vein’, theip ‘wire’, etc.

churoq — classifies saráq ‘word, letter’.

churoc — classifies sei ‘vehicle’.

clông — classifies sa-ôh ‘a quiver’.

clu — classifies onion-like vegetable: sakieu ‘onion’, taveil — ‘an onion-like vegetable’, etc.

coâl — classifies living plants: aluang ‘tree’, aho ‘bamboo’, etc.

couiq — classifies root-like vegetables: abáng ‘bamboo sprouts’, bat ‘vegetable’, etc.

duong — classifies taméang ‘crossbow’, and kên ‘a musical instrument’.


lau — classifies saniat ‘gun’.

lám — lám is a general classifier that can classify both animate and inanimate objects. Many of the nouns that can take lám as a classifier also occur with other more specific classifiers. When lám occurs it must always be preceded by a quantifier. lám can be used to classify words such as acáp ‘a trap’, achoiq ‘large basket’, atéi ‘hand’, carvih ‘trigger’, acho ‘dog’, atia ‘duck’, ai ‘older brother’, ariaih ‘chief’, etc.

láng — classifies dông ‘house’ and sei ‘vehicle’.


lot — classifies balls or spools of priai ‘thread’.


phein — classifies broad flat objects: pian ‘plank’, ratâng ‘wall’, akéng ‘windmill’, etc.


plau — classifies déiuq ‘pipe’.


pûrng — classifies cakes of dëng dang ‘sugar’ and tarang ‘wax’.


racong — classifies stalks of fruit: priat ‘banana’, saro ‘unhusked rice’, etc.

talāh — classifies hands of priat ‘banana’.


tōp — classifies groups of animates: côai ‘people’, tamōr ‘monkey’, chōm ‘bird’, etc.

yac — classifies coins: proaq ‘money’.


12. Prepositions (Prep). A preposition is any word that is bound to a following noun, demonstrative, or locative, and marks a subordinate construction within a clause.


cīrq paqrq nūng môi ‘I go with you’ I’m going with you

cīrq tāq youn môi ‘I work for you’ I’m doing it for you

13. Locatives (Loc). A locative is any word that functions like paqrng ‘above’ in the following set of transforms:

mōi axt paqrng mpuol ‘you stay above roof’ You stay on the roof (1, 2, 4, 5).
mōi airt tāng paурng mpuol ‘you stay at above roof’ You stay on the roof 〈1, 2, 3, 4, 5〉
mōi airt tāng paурng ‘you stay at above’ You stay up there 〈1, 2, 3, 4〉

In the first sentence paурng ‘above’ functions as a preposition of location, with mpuol ‘roof’ as object of the preposition. In the second sentence paурng functions simultaneously as the object of the preposition tāng ‘at’ and as a preposition of location, with mpuol ‘roof’ as object. In the third sentence paурng functions only as object of the preposition tāng.

This class has a limited membership. The following is complete for our data: paурng ‘above’, purn ‘below’, clēi ‘behind’, mpуurng ‘between’, clōng ‘inside’, тiah ‘outside’.

14. Indefinite Locatives (indLoc). An indefinite locative is a general replacer word that can substitute for a locative phrase and functions like léq ‘where’ in the following frames:
mōi paurq pa léq ‘you go loc. where’ Where are you going?
cūrq tar đáng pa léq mōi paurq ‘I not know loc. where you go’ I don’t know where you are going

This class is limited to two members: léq ‘where, wherever’ and nлēq ‘where, wherever’.

15. Quantifiers (Q). A quantifier is any word that can occur by itself in the numeral slot of the substantive
phrase. \textsuperscript{2} i. e., it can occur in preposed attributive construction with classifiers.

This class has a limited membership, of which the following is a sampling. Complete lists will be given under the subclasses. 


This class is divided into the following subclasses: Counters (C), Numbers (Nu), and Quantitative Interrogatives (Qi).

15. 1. C. A counter is any quantifier that can occur preceding another counter or a number, but cannot follow a number.


\textit{mòi èìt nheq pái lám alic} ‘you get all three Cl pig’ \textit{You get all three pigs}

15. 2. Nu. A number is any quantifier that can precede another number but cannot precede a counter. When a number precedes another number without an intervening number multiplier
(see 16. below) both numbers are in coordinate construction with one another.

This is a closed class with the following membership: *muoi* ‘one’, *bar* ‘two’, *pái* ‘three’, *poun* ‘four’, *sayn* ‘five’, *tapoát* ‘six’ *tapul* ‘seven’, *tacual* ‘eight’, *takēh* ‘nine’, *tadēi* ‘half’.

*mói ēit bar pái lám alic* ‘you get two three Cl. pig’ *You get two or three pigs*

15. 3. *Qi*. A quantitative interrogative is any quantifier that cannot occur with any other quantifier. This class is composed of *seiq* ‘how many’, *malēq* ‘how much’, *måh léq* ‘how much’.

*mói ēit seiq lám alic* ‘you get how-many pigs’ *How many pigs did you get?*

16. **Number Multipliers (NuM).** A number multiplier is any word that occurs only as a bound adjunct to a quantifier.

This is a closed class with the following membership: *chit* ‘ten’, *culám* ‘hundred’, *ngin* ‘thousand’, *vian* ‘ten thousand’, *ór* ‘hundred thousand’, *veu* ‘million’, *poan* ‘ten million’, *moq* ‘hundred million’.

*bar vian bar ngin bar culám bar chit la bar* ‘two ten-thousand two thousand two hundred ten and two’ *Twenty-two thousand two hundred and twenty-two.***

17. ⟨**ǒng**⟩. *ǒng* ‘only’ is a one-word class that occurs only bound to a following noun.
18. Demonstratives (Dem). A demonstrative is any word that can fill the demonstrative slot in a substantive phrase.

This class has a limited membership. The following is complete for our data: ki ‘that’, nāi ‘this’, nāi ‘here’, tīh ‘there (relatively far)’, aki ‘there’, anāi ‘this’.

mōi ēit aluang ki ‘you get tree that’ You get that tree

V. CONNECTIVES

19. Connectives (Con). A connective is any word that occurs between two verbs (when functioning as modifiers), two nouns, or two modifiers, to form a coordinate construction within a clause; or any word that occurs between two clauses and functions as a relator of the second clause to the first.

This class has a limited membership. The following list is complete for our data: cōp ‘and’, tōp ‘and’, māh ‘similar’, a-rōng ‘similar’, patoat ‘similar’, samoāt ‘similar’, samoāt samauri ‘similar’, machōng ‘same’, mpha ‘different’, ratoi ‘same’, ma ‘or’, neq ‘like this’.

mōi tāq māh cīrq tāq ‘you do similar I do’ You do like I do

mōi ēit acho cōp tariae cōp alic ‘you get dog and buffalo and pig’ You get a dog, a buffalo, and a pig.

20. Relators (Rel). A relator is any word that occurs
sentence initial and relates that sentence to the previous one.

This class has a limited membership. The following list is complete for our data: *ngkiq* ‘therefore’, *ki* ‘then’, *nōq* ‘then’ *toāq* ‘then’, *la* ‘then’, *ma* ‘but’. *ki* ‘then’ can also occur in combination with *la*, *ma*, and *nōq* to form complex relators.

*cūq sa-ōh mōi*, *ki hai rien*. ‘I visit you, then we study’

*I'll come to visit you. Then we will study*

21. Introducers (*Intro*). An introducer occurs only clause initial and introduces a subordinate clause in a conditional sentence. In this type of sentence the clause order may be reversed. This class has only two members: *khān* ‘if’, *riang* ‘if’.

*khān cūq taur bown mīaq*, *cūq sa-ōh mōi*  *If I not have busy, I visit you*  *If I'm not busy I'll come to visit you*

*cūq sa-ōh mōi*, *khān cūq taur bown mīaq* ‘I visit you, if I not have busy’  *I'll come to visit you, if I'm not busy*

22. ⟨*la*⟩. *la* is a one-word class that occurs between the number multiplier *chit* ‘ten’ and any one-syllable number in complex numeral constructions involving numbers eleven to fifteen. *la* also functions as a relator with the approximate meaning of ‘then’. It also occurs as a final particle.

*nuoi culām nuoi chit la bar* ‘one hundred one ten and two’

*One hundred and twelve*

*cīq sa-ōh mōi*, *la hái rien* ‘I visit you, then we study’

*I'll come to visit you. Then we will study*

*cīq i sa-ōh mōi la* ‘I want visit you *la*’  *I want to visit you*
VI. MISCELLANEOUS PARTICLES

23. Final Particles (finPart). A final particle occurs only sentence final. This class has a limited membership, the following list being complete for our data. All forms carry the meaning of ‘emphasis’. mo, möh, däi, däih, déh. mo and möh occur only in negated sentences.

taur bourn mo ‘not have emphasis’ No!

24. ⟨lürq⟩. lürq ‘intensive’ is a one-word class that can fill the modifier slot in a substantive phrase. It can also function as an interrogative, depending on the context in which it occurs. When functioning as an interrogative it may or may not be accompanied with interrogative intonation. It can also stand alone as an affirmative response to a question or as an indication of agreement with what has just been said.

ünkí ariaih lürq ‘he chief inten.’ He really is chief or Is he chief?

lürq ünki ariaih ‘inten. he chief’ He really is chief or Is he chief?

ünkí lürq ariaih ‘he inten. chief’ He really is chief or Is he chief?

25. ⟨no⟩. The ⟨no⟩ class is composed of words which can function like no in the following set of transforms, in which 1 = actor, 2 = action, 3 = ⟨no⟩. This class is limited to two members: no ‘huh?, okay?’, dör ‘huh?, okay?’.

móti táq no ‘you do okay’ You’ll do it, okay? ⟨1,2,3⟩
no mói tåq 'okay you do' You'll do it, okay? ⟨3,1,2⟩
mói no tåq 'you okay do' You'll do it, okay? ⟨1,3,2⟩
tåq no mói 'do okay you' You'll do it, okay? ⟨2,3,1⟩
* no tåq mói cannot occur.

VII. INTERJECTIONS

26. Interjections (Inj). An interjection is any word that must occur by itself without structural relationship to preceding or following forms.

This class comprises words such as u ‘exclamation’, wi ‘exclamation’, áu ‘oh!, my’, óq ‘indication of agreement’, or ‘yes, I hear you’, kih ‘call attention to’, ki ‘interest response’, ngkiq ‘interest response’, etc.

27. 〈thoui〉 thoui is a one-word class that functions as an interjection in that it can occur alone without any structural relationship with preceding or following forms. It can also occur within the sentence as a final particle. It can occur with or without a preceding la ‘then’. thoui carries approximately the meaning of ‘resignation to the circumstances’.

ntrou la thoui ‘what then thoui’ Whatever happens, okay!