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## Depictive and other secondary predication in Lao

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Lao (South-Western Tai, Laos/Thailand/Cambodia) is a typical isolating language, lacking inflectional morphosyntactic categories such as case-marking and agreement. It is of interest from a crosslinguistic perspective on depictive secondary predication, since most analyses of depictive expressions in other languages appeal largely to morphosyntactic patterns of agreement and finiteness, which are not overtly marked in Lao.

### 12.1 Preliminaries on Lao grammar

I begin by presenting some facts about the grammar of Lao which are relevant to a discussion of depictive and other secondary predication. These concern the nature of word classes, the nature of complex predication, and the general under-determination of distinctions in grammatical relationships, leading to heavy context-dependence of interpretation.

One large formally defined word class is the verb class. Words in this class express a range of concepts which in English are expressed in three distinct word classes: verb, adjective, and adverb. Grammatically, verbs take direct negation with the negator *bò̀ò̀1*, may be marked by the preverbal progressive marker *kamlang2* and the postverbal perfective marker *lè̀w4* as well as other tense/aspect/modality markers, and may freely function as unmarked modifiers in noun phrases. Minor sub-distinctions within this class may be established (e.g. accessibility to certain types of reduplication), and these correspond to distinctions more markedly grammaticalized in other languages (e.g. between ‘property concept words’ and ‘action/event words’;

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Enfield, 2004). There is no distinct class of adverbs. Adverbial meanings are often expressed by verbs in certain constructional slots.

The following examples show *vaj2* 'fast' as a main predicate (1), as a modifier in a noun phrase (2), and as an adverbial modifier of a main predicate *lèèn1* 'run/go' (3):<sup>1</sup>

- (1) *lot1 khan2 nii4 vaj2*  
 vehicle CLF this fast  
 'This vehicle is fast.'
- (2) *lot1 vaj2 khan2 nii4 ngaam2*  
 vehicle fast CLF this beautiful  
 'This fast vehicle looks good.'
- (3) *lot1 khan2 nii4 lèèn1 vaj2*  
 vehicle CLF this run fast  
 'This vehicle goes fast.'

The basic structure of the Lao clause is as follows ('AM' stands for 'aspect-modality marking', which may occur on either side of the verb):

- (4) LEFT POSITION—SUBJ—AM-[V (OBJ)]-AM—FINAL-PTCLS—  
 RIGHT POSITION

Noun phrases in almost any position may be ellipsed if their referent is contextually retrievable. Left aspect-modality marking may occur no more than once per clause. There are many ways in which two verbs can appear together in a single clause, involving adjunction, complementation, or compounding (Enfield 2003; to appear). An important point in the context of analysing secondary predication in this language is the complete lack of overt morphological marking of relationships between elements within complex structures. Many languages have various forms of the verb showing distinctions in 'finiteness', indexed by presence or lack of tense/aspect/modality marking, dedicated nonfinite forms, patterns of agreement or cross-referencing, which all can help to decide what role a certain element

<sup>1</sup> Transliteration used here follows IPA convention except for velar nasal /*ŋ*g/, glottal stop /*q*/, mid-high front vowel /*ê*/, low front vowel /*è*/, central vowel (schwa) /*e*/, low central vowel /*a*/, high back unrounded vowel /*u*/, low back vowel /*ò*/. Tones are represented by numbers following each syllable ( $\emptyset$ =unstressed/atonal, 1=mid level/, 2=/high rising/, 3=/low rising/, 4=/high falling/, 5=/low falling/).

Examples are drawn from a corpus of spontaneous texts (including personal narratives, procedural descriptions, folk tales, conversations, and the like) collected in Vientiane in 1996 and 1997. Numbers in brackets following the translation of each example refer to paragraph number in text transcriptions. Examples with no such reference number are constructed in consultation with native speakers.

has. In analysing depictive constructions in a wide range of languages, Schultze-Berndt and Himmelmann (2004) make extensive reference to patterns of agreement and other overt morphological marking of the role of different predicates in complex expressions (see also Ch. 1, this volume). In Lao, however, there is no agreement, no case-marking, no explicit finiteness distinction. There are, however, overt markings of aspect and modality (e.g. negation, perfective marking, illocutionary particles) which can be useful in analysing the structural status of certain elements in complex expressions. Also useful are tests involving movement and paraphrase. These are employed in the discussion below.

The chapter is structured as follows. In section 12.2, I discuss participant-oriented expressions<sup>2</sup> involving unmarked verbs in V1 and V2 structures, first where the depictive element is V2, then where the depictive element is V1. Some ambiguities in analysis are discussed. While these structures can and often do convey participant orientation, they are not dedicated depictive constructions, since the same structures are also used to express adverbial (manner) and resultative meanings. That is, they are GENERAL ADJUNCT CONSTRUCTIONS in terms of the distinctions proposed in the introduction to this volume.

In section 12.3, I look at two ways in which nominals can contribute to depictive expressions. They may appear as predicative nominal phrases, or in an adjunct structure headed by the verb *pèn3* (elsewhere a copula 'be'). The nominal hosted by *pèn3* describes the physical (or other) form of one of the main clause arguments. Once again, these are not dedicated depictive but general adjunct constructions, since the same structures may also be used with manner adverbial and resultative meanings. Section 12.4 concludes.

## **12.2 Depictive secondary predication by unmarked verb**

Many unmarked combinations of verbs in Lao clauses can be analysed as involving secondary predication. A predicative element (typically a member of the verb class) makes a predication *in addition to* a main or primary predication. This secondary predicative element may be omitted without changing the basic semantics of the primary predication, and in this sense secondary predicates are always adjuncts. The term SECONDARY PREDICATION refers to this phenomenon generally, and the various semantically definable subtypes may be termed DEPICTIVE, ADVERBIAL, and RESULTATIVE (perhaps among others in addition). I use the term EXPRESSION to refer to structures

<sup>2</sup> For the term PARTICIPANT-ORIENTED EXPRESSION, see the introduction to this volume.

with a certain meaning, but where the structure is not dedicated to expressing just that meaning. Thus, a **DEPictive EXPRESSION** is a complex structure in which a secondary predication has depictive meaning.

Semantically, I make the following distinctions among secondary predications (although the distinctions are in practice not always neat):

- **DEPictive** Expresses the incidental and transient state of one of the participants in a primary predication. There is no connection of cause, result, or manner between the two predications. Stock examples are *She ate the fish raw* and *He gave the lecture nude*.
- **ADVERBIAL (MANNER)** Says something about the **manner** of the primary predication, as in *He ate fast* and *She spoke hesitantly*.
- **RESULTATIVE** Expresses something that happens or is the case **because** the primary predication takes place. Typical examples are *She licked the platter clean* and *He broke it in half*.

#### 12.2.1 *V<sub>2</sub> depictives*

Many clauses in Lao are of the form (NP<sub>1</sub>) V<sub>1</sub> (NP<sub>2</sub>) V<sub>2</sub>, where V<sub>1</sub> and V<sub>2</sub> are in a relationship of either coordination or subordination (with only the former normally allowing insertion of clause-linking particles without altering the truth-conditional meaning of the complex expression). In the latter case, either V<sub>1</sub> or V<sub>2</sub> may be the secondary predicate. We first consider structures in which V<sub>2</sub> conveys a depictive meaning.

A prototypical if not archetypal depictive secondary predicate is ‘raw’. It predicates a changeable/transient state of a (usually edible) primary predicate object argument, and has little if any bearing on how the action involving that object (typically ‘eating’) is carried out. While the word order of English distinguishes between *He eats meat raw* versus *He eats raw meat*, an equivalent construction in Lao makes no surface distinction:

- (5) *man<sub>2</sub> kin<sub>3</sub> siin<sub>4</sub> dip<sub>2</sub>*  
 3SG eat meat raw  
 i. ‘S/he eats meat raw.’  
 ii. ‘S/he eats raw meat.’

In the ‘depictive’ reading (5i), the main predication is the idea that ‘S/he eats meat’, and predicated in addition to this is the idea that the meat is, at this time, in the state of being ‘raw’. A verb such as *vaj<sub>2</sub>* ‘fast’ can appear in the same position, with adverbial meaning (see example (3), above). The difference here is that the secondary element *vaj<sub>2</sub>* ‘fast’ does not make a predication about the *meat*, but about the manner of the event.

In the (sii) reading, *dip2* 'raw' is a nominal modifier, forming a constituent with the nominal head *siin4* 'meat' to give a noun phrase *siin4 dip2* 'raw meat' which could, for example, function as a subject argument:

- (6) *siin4 dip2 bə̀ə dii3*  
 meat raw NEG good  
 'Raw meat is no good.'

The difference between the two interpretations of the role of *dip2* 'raw' in (5) corresponds in many other languages to an overt morphosyntactic distinction (e.g. in patterns of agreement, word order, derivational morphology). The distinctions in Lao are covert in (5). They come to light when we look at possibilities for movement, paraphrase and insertion. The distinction between an analysis of a nominal followed by a stative predicate (as in (5)) as a complex noun phrase (with N + modifier structure) or as a simple noun phrase (N) followed by a secondary predicative element can be made explicit if the noun phrase is more complex (e.g. with a determiner included, as in (7, 8)), or 'extracted' and fronted (9, 10):

- (7) *man2 siə kin3 [siin4 dip2 nii4]<sub>NP</sub>*  
 3SG IRR eat meat raw this  
 'S/he's going to eat this raw meat.' [does not entail that she'll eat it raw]
- (8) *man2 siə kin3 [siin4 nii4]<sub>NP</sub> dip2*  
 3SG IRR eat meat this raw  
 'S/he's going to eat this meat raw.'
- (9) [*siin4 nii4*]<sub>i</sub> *man2 siə kin3 ə<sub>i</sub> dip2*  
 meat this 3SG IRR eat raw  
 'This meat, s/he's going to eat raw.'
- (10) [*siin4 dip2 nii4*]<sub>i</sub> *man2 siə kin3 ə<sub>i</sub>*  
 meat raw this 3SG IRR eat  
 'This raw meat, s/he's going to eat.' [does not entail that she'll eat it raw]

Such tests using constituent extraposition can reveal differences in grammatical behaviour between potentially depictive elements such as *dip2* 'raw' in (11a) and modifiers such as *nə̀j1* 'big' in (12a). The (b) examples show that the nominal head of the object argument can be fronted in the case of the depictive expression, but not in the case of the noun-modifier expression:

- (11) a. *man2 kin3 siin4 dip2*  
 3SG eat meat raw  
 'S/he eats meat raw.' (also possible: 'S/he eats raw meat.')

- b. *siin4 man2 kin3 dip2*  
 meat 3SG eat raw  
 'Meat, s/he eats raw.'
- (12) a. *man2 juu1 hùan2 ñaj1*  
 3SG live house large  
 'S/he lives in a large house.'
- b. \**hùan2 man2 juu1 ñaj1*  
 house 3SG live large  
 (A house, s/he lives in large.)

A final point concerns the yes-answer properties of the two readings of (5). Ambiguity in a question between depictive and noun-modifier readings (i.e. (5i) vs. (5ii), above) can be removed in an affirmative answer (in favour of the depictive reading), by using both the primary and secondary verb together (without the object argument), as opposed to just the primary predicate (in which case the response remains ambiguous):

- (13) Q: *man2 kin3 siin4 dip2 bòò3*  
 3SG eat meat raw Q  
 i. 'Does s/he eat meat raw?'  
 ii. 'Does s/he eat raw meat?'
- A1: *kin3 dip2*  
 eat raw  
 '(Yes, s/he) eats (it) raw.' [depictive interpretation]
- A2: *kin3*  
 eat  
 i. '(Yes, s/he) eats (it).' [non-depictive interpretation, preferred]  
 ii. '(Yes, s/he) eats (it raw).' [depictive interpretation, possible]

It seems that particular combinations of main verb and depictive element in expressions such as (5), (8), (9), and (11b) are associated with familiar, conventionalized combinations of primary and secondary predications. This does not mean that the combination must be typical in itself, and in fact it may be that depictive expressions are more likely to be used when the combination of predications is pragmatically *marked* (as, for example, in the celebrated case of 'eating meat raw'). But the combination must make sense *with reference to* some kind of conventionalized or sensible scenario (i.e. as 'eating meat raw' presupposes a contrasting norm of 'eating meat cooked'). Out of context, a V2 depictive *jèn3* 'cool' is perfectly natural with a primary predication *kin3* 'eat/consume' but not with

*tak2* ‘scoop’:

- (14) *nam4, man2 dajø kin3(/\*tak2) jèn3*  
 water 3SG attain eat(/scoop) cool  
 ‘Water, he drank cool.’ (not: ‘Water, he scooped cool.’)

It is my impression that depictive expressions are subject to pragmatic restrictions on specific combinations of primary and secondary predicate, related to the relevance and/or conventionality of the combination (see Enfield 2002a for a study of this phenomenon in associated postural constructions). The issue needs further exploration.

Participant-oriented expressions such as (5), (8), (9), and (11b), involving *dip2* ‘raw’, are not formally distinct enough from secondary predicates of other kinds (e.g. adverbials) to be regarded as distinct ‘depictive constructions’. The following examples, involving *vaj2* ‘fast’ as a V2 *adverbial* expression, show the same grammatical properties as have been illustrated for unmarked V2 depictive expressions: (a) manner versus modifier ambiguity (15), (b) disambiguation by different insertion of demonstrative (16a, b), (c) disambiguation by topicalization of the object nominal head alone (17a) vs. object nominal together with secondary predicate (17b):

- (15) *man2 khap2 lot1 vaj2*  
 3SG drive car fast  
 i. ‘He drives cars fast.’  
 ii. ‘He drives fast cars.’
- (16) a. *man2 khap2 lot1 vaj2 nii4*  
 3SG drive car fast this  
 ‘He drives this fast car.’  
 b. *man2 khap2 lot1 nii4 vaj2*  
 3SG drive car this fast  
 ‘He drives this car fast.’
- (17) a. *lot1 man2 khap2 vaj2*  
 car 3SG drive fast  
 ‘Cars, he drives fast.’  
 b. *lot1 vaj2 man2 khap2*  
 car fast 3SG drive  
 ‘Fast cars, he drives.’

#### 12.2.2 V1 depictives

Some verbs, such as verbs of posture and wearing, can have depictive function in V1 position. These verbs include in their internal semantics an event

(e.g. ‘putting on a hat’ or ‘moving into a sitting position’) followed by a resultant state (e.g. ‘wearing a hat’ or ‘being in sitting position’). V<sub>1</sub>-V<sub>2</sub> strings with posture verbs in V<sub>1</sub> position are thus interpretable as either a series of actions (e.g. ‘sit and then read’) or an overlapping of state and action (e.g. ‘sitting [i.e. in the state of having sat] and reading at the same time’: see Enfield 2002*b*). These can appear to be compounds (‘He drunk-drives’), subordinating adverbial constructions (‘He drunkenly drives’), or clause chains (‘He [gets] drunk [and then] drives’). The distinction is difficult to make in the absence of simple morphosyntactic tests, and tests such as paraphrase and movement can upset the integration of such structures and make judgements difficult.

Here are two examples of V<sub>1</sub> depictive expressions:

- (18) *man2 nang1 qaani pum4*  
 3SG sit read book  
 ‘He sat reading a book.’ (or: ‘He read a book sitting.’)
- (19) *man2 maw2 maa2 huan2*  
 3SG drunk come house  
 ‘He came home drunk.’

It is possible, but dispreferred, for the depictive element in these expressions to appear after the primary predicate:

- (20) ??*man2 maa2 huan2 maw2*  
 3sg come house drunk  
 ‘He came home drunk.’

The preference for the constituent order in (18) and (19) is presumably due to the nature of the ‘depictive’ element being an expression of ‘process-followed-by-result’ (e.g. ‘sitting-followed-by-being-seated’, ‘putting-hat-on-followed-by-wearing-hat’, ‘getting-drunk-followed-by-being-drunk’). The depictive expression needs to occur in V<sub>1</sub> position to preserve the iconicity of the process occurring *before* the state, which then holds over the primary predicate. This is not the case when the depictive element expresses a simple state (which does not inherently presuppose a preceding process) such as ‘raw’, ‘fresh’, or ‘cool’ (cf. section 12.2.1 above).

### 12.3 Use of nominals in depictive expressions

Nominals are used in depictive expressions in Lao in at least two ways. First, certain constituents which appear formally to be noun phrases (but which turn out to be stative predicates) can have depictive function. Second, a type



of adjunct headed by a copula verb *pên3* hosts nominals with a range of depictive, adverbial, and resultative meanings.

12.3.1 *Body part noun + stative verb as V2 depictive*

An apparent case of an NP in depictive function is as follows:

- (21) *man2 mũa2 hũa2 mù2 paw1*  
 3SG return house hand empty  
 ‘S/he returned home empty-handed.’

While the sequence *mù2 paw1* (hand empty) can indeed be analysed as an NP meaning ‘empty hand(s)’, in this context it is a predicative NP, not a referential NP—i.e. it is predicating a state of affairs (‘having empty hands’) rather than a thing (‘empty hands’). Nominals in Lao may occasionally be used predicatively—e.g. in equational expressions such as *phuu5-nan4 qaaj4 khòj5* (person-that brother 1) ‘That person [is] my brother’. But they are quite restricted in this function. Most importantly, they can take no verbal trappings (negation, aspect marking, etc.) whatsoever. The sequence *mù2 paw1*, however, is of a different type.

As a general rule in Lao, sequences of the form ‘body part noun’ + ‘stative verb’ can function as predicates, taking full verb trappings (see Clark 1996 on this phenomenon in South-East Asian languages more generally). The following examples show the sequences *taa3 khiaw3* (eye green) (elsewhere a noun phrase ‘green eye(s)’) and *phom3 dèng3* (hair red) (elsewhere a noun phrase ‘red hair’) as main predicates, taking direct negation and irrealis marking, respectively:<sup>3</sup>

- (22) *khon2 laaw2 bə̀ taa3 khiaw3*  
 person Lao NEG eye green  
 ‘Lao people [are] not green-eyed.’
- (23) *luuk4 caw4 caə phom3 dèng3*  
 child 2SG IRR hair red  
 ‘Your child will [be] red-haired.’

Thus, the depictive element *mù2 paw1* ‘empty hand(ed)’ in (21) can be analysed as a predicate in V2 position, and is therefore not a genuine case of an unmarked ‘nominal’ having depictive function. Instead, it belongs to the type of construction discussed in 12.2.1 above.

<sup>3</sup> This is similar to a ‘topic-comment’ construction, but not the same. The difference here concerns the placement of verb marking (negation, irrealis marking). In a regular topic-comment construction, verb marking occurs immediately before the verb (e.g. *ton4-sak2 baj3 bə̀ nòj4* (tree-teak leaf not small) ‘Teak trees, [the] leaves are not small’).

12.3.2 *Depictive/resultative/adverbial adjuncts marked by pên3 'be'*

A construction which involves an adjunct headed by the copula verb *pên3* often has depictive meaning, but also shows resultative and adverbial meanings. In these cases, the complement of *pên3* 'be' is always a nominal.<sup>4</sup> In the following example, the verb phrase *hòðp5 phuu2* 'carry [a] mountain' takes an adjunct formed by *pên3* and its nominal complement *nuaji* (a classifier):

- (24) *bak2 ñak1 kum3phan2 hòðp5 phuu2 pên3 nuaji*  
 FAM.M ogre K. carry.in.arms mountain be CLF  
 'The Ogre Kumphan carried the mountain whole.' (201)

In (24), the word *nuaji* is the classifier for mountains (among other things), and the adjunct *pên3 nuaji* in this context means 'whole' or 'as a unit'. The expression is depictive in that it makes an extra predication about the state (as 'whole' rather than in parts) of one of the participants involved in the main predication (i.e. the object of *hòðp5* 'carry in arms'). The use of sortal classifiers in *pên3*-adjuncts with the meaning 'whole, as a unit' is fully productive in Lao.

The marker of the *pên3*-adjunct construction is the verb *pên3* 'be', which has a range of main verb functions in other contexts. For example, it may serve as a copula (25), and as a predicator of illness (26):

- (25) *tòð3 nan4 khòðj5 pên3 nak1-hian2*  
 time that 1SG be student  
 'At that time, I was a student.' (243)

- (26) *pên3 khaj5*  
 be fever  
 '[They] had fever.' (139)

It may also appear as a postverbal modal expressing inherent, learnt, or acquired ability:<sup>5</sup>

- (27) *hòq2 bòø pên3 dêê4*  
 fly NEG be PTCL  
 '[He] couldn't fly, you know.' (169)

<sup>4</sup> There are only a few exceptions. For example, the sequence *pên3 pok2katiq2* (be normal/regular) (where *pok2katiq2* is a verb), is a common adverbial adjunct meaning 'in normal/regular fashion'.

<sup>5</sup> In some uses, and in some dialects, *pên3* may be used with this meaning as a preverbal complement-taking predicate—cf. Stung Treng Lao (NE Cambodia) *bòø pên3 vaw4 laaw2* (NEG 'be' speak Lao) 'don't know how to speak Lao' versus Vientiane Lao *vaw4 laaw2 bòø pên3* (speak Lao NEG 'be') 'don't know how to speak Lao'.

- (28) *mùŋg2 kaø hêt1 kin3 bòø pên3 dðòk5*  
 2SG FOC make eat NEG be PTCL  
 ‘You don’t know how to cook [them]!’ (42)

The *pên3*-adjunct makes a secondary predication which can express meanings ranging from depictive to resultative to adverbial. Some examples are difficult to categorize uniquely, since they combine elements of more than one adjunct type.

Like example (24) above, the following two examples have genuinely depictive semantics, in that the secondary expressions describe the form or state of the main clause object at the time of the main verb event taking place (with no necessary relation of cause or manner holding between the two predications):

- (29) *khaw3 kin3 siin4 pên3 tòðn1*  
 3PL eat meat be chunk  
 ‘They ate [the] meat in chunks.’
- (30) *man2 hènŋ5 lèø kèq2 qòðk5 pên3 phèèn1 cia4*  
 3SG dry PTCL scrape/peel exit be CLF/sheet paper  
 ‘[When] it’s dry, then peel it off in/as paper sheets.’ (113)

Similarly, in the next example, the *pên3*-adjunct is depictive in that it describes the physical arrangement of the argument of the main clause ‘they’ during the time that the action of the main clause takes place:

- (31) *khaw3 nang1 kin3 khaw5 pên3 thèèw3*  
 3PL sit eat rice be row  
 ‘They sat and ate in rows.’

A final example is perhaps more abstract, where ‘being in English’ is a predication about the ‘form’ of a story:

- (32) *man2 law1 lüang1 nii4 pên3 phaa2saa3 qang3kit2*  
 3SG tell story this be language English  
 ‘He told this story in English.’

*Pên3* adjuncts can express a state of the primary predicate object which is not incidental to the primary predication but rather *results* from it. The main semantic difference between these expressions and genuine depictive expressions is the temporal relationship between the two predications. In these cases, the secondary predication is true *after* the primary predication, while in the case of depictives, the two predications overlap temporally. There are a number of subtypes of these ‘state as result’ secondary predications.

For example, the *pên3* adjunct may express the form of the primary predicate object as resulting from the primary predication, in terms of physical transformation or modification (33, 34), a transformation in status or social role (35), or coming into existence (36):

- (33) *maa2 paat5 pên3 sii liam1*  
 come slice be four sides  
 'Bring [the wood and] cut [it] into four-sided [pieces].' (114)
- (34) *liaw3 beng1 sùak4 khanaat5 nii4 pùaj1 pên3 phong3*  
 turn look rope size this dissolved be powder  
 '[They] turned [and] looked [and saw] a rope of such size dissolved into powder.' (133)
- (35) *phen1 leej2 haj5 buat5 pên3 phaql*  
 3HON then give ordain be monk  
 'Then he had [me] ordained [as] a monk.' (321)
- (36) *can3thaa2 mèè1-khaw4 keet5 luuk4 pên3 sat2*  
 C. queen born child be animal  
 'Chantha the queen gave birth to children [as] animals.' (153)

There are also examples of adjuncts in *pên3* which are primarily manner-adverbial, such as the following:

- (37) *man2 khap2 lot1 pên3 labiap5*  
 3SG drive vehicle be regulation/orderliness  
 'He drives in an orderly way.'

Finally, some *pên3* adjuncts are comparable to 'predicative complements' such as *I consider him a brother* which in English are morphosyntactically and semantically quite distinct from depictive complements:

- (38) *kuu3 thùù3 khon2 nii4 pên3 qaaj4*  
 1SG regard person this be older.brother  
 'I regard this person [as a] brother.'

Semantically, this is not depictive. 'Being the speaker's brother' is not being asserted in the *pên3* adjunct merely as an incidental state of the primary predicate object. Clearly, there is a semantic subordination of 'being brother' to 'regarding' that something be the case. Unlike the examples we have seen so far, in this case the *pên3* adjunct cannot be omitted without changing the meaning of the main verb *thùù3*. (This is in explicit contrast to, say, example (35).) In (38), *thùù3* means 'regard, consider'. If the *pên3* adjunct were removed, the meaning of the verb *thùù3* would be 'hold, carry', and the

sentence as a whole would mean 'I carried this person' (cf. English *I regarded this person as a brother* versus *I regarded this person*).

#### 12.4 Summary

Depictive secondary predications are commonly expressed in Lao by the use of an unmarked predicative element (verb) in addition to the primary predicate. The status of secondary verbs as secondary is not overtly manifest in Lao (e.g. by distinct nonfinite forms). The nature of the grammar denies the analyst patterns of agreement or verb finiteness, thus making Lao—like any heavily isolating language—a useful addition to crosslinguistic research on a topic which has hitherto centred heavily around analysis in terms of those morphosyntactic indices. Secondary predicative verbs appear in V1-V2 sequences, with sub-types in which either the V1 or V2 element makes the secondary predication. V2 depictives express simple states (such as 'raw' or 'fresh'), while V1 depictives express post-states which are the inherent outcome of prior events (such as 'seated/having-sat' or 'drunk/having-drunk'). Nominals may be hosted in adjuncts headed by the verb *pên3* 'be', where the nominal describes the form of one of the primary predicate participants. A common use of this construction features a classifier, giving the meaning 'whole' or 'as a unit'. The *pên3* adjunct can also express not just form but *resultant* form, thus expanding beyond simple depictive meaning.

These various structures have broader secondary predicative function, being also able to express adverbial and resultative meanings. Since they are not restricted to the expression of depictive semantics only, I conclude that there is no dedicated depictive construction in Lao. Nevertheless, the sub-distinctions among depictive and other functions of these secondary predicate structures are essentially semantic in nature, and I would be surprised if such sub-distinctions did not correspond to some kind of demonstrable distinction in grammatical behaviour, however subtle.