

**NON-SPATIAL SETTING IN WHITE HMONG**

by

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## **Abstract**

Dixon (2010a,b, 2012) presents an excellent introduction to a framework for documenting a language's grammar. One portion of this framework is the marking of Non-spatial Setting, that is, the grammatical coding of marking of time, aspect, and other material in the verbal system. The primary aim of this thesis is to apply this portion of Dixon's framework to White Hmong (Hmong-Mien, Laos) by describing the system of Non-spatial Setting in this language. The thesis first looks at the Non-spatial Setting systems of typologically-similar languages from the region, continues by considering what it means for a word to be grammaticalized, and then provides a lengthy discussion on the Non-spatial Setting system of White Hmong itself. It is found that White Hmong possesses a robust system of Non-spatial Setting markers. These include several classes of Lexical Time Words as well as positive and negative Irrealis marking intertwined with a system of marking Modality, which itself includes a number of Modals and Semi-modals as well as one adverb. In addition, there is a set of Degree of Certainty markers made up of seven morphemes at two levels of certainty, high and moderate, and there is a group of Secondary verbs (following the terminology of Dixon 2006) that mark Phase of Activity. There are also five Completion morphemes—three of which mark distinct types of Perfect and two Imperfect—and two Completion-marking strategies, namely, an Attainment Serial Verb Construction (terminology following Jarkey 2004) for the Perfect and reduplication for the Imperfect. Finally, there is one Speed and Ease morpheme that marks slowness. Some implications that the system of White Hmong has for Non-spatial Setting in general are also briefly discussed.

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## Abbreviations

1DU	first person dual
1PL	first person plural
1SG	first person singular
2DU	second person dual
2PL	second person plural
2SG	second person singular
3DU	third person dual
3PL	third person plural
3SG	third person singular
ADP	final adverbs and particles position
ATT	attainment marker
CLF	classifier
COMP	complementizer
CONJ	conjunction
COP	copula
CP	completion particle
CRS	Currently Relevant State
CVB	coverb
EMPH	emphatic marker
EXP	experiential marker
IEP	interrogative and exclamatory particle
INDF.PRON	indefinite pronoun
IP	intensive particle
IPFV	imperfective
IPRF	imperfect
IRR	irrealis
MOD	modal position
NEG	negative
NEG.IRR	negative irrealis
NEGP	negative position
NMLZ	nominalizer
PC	Potential complementizer
PF	phase of activity—finishing position
PFV	perfective
PL.CLF	plural classifier
POS.IRR	positive irrealis
POSS	possessive particle
PostV	post-main-verb position
PPART	pause particle
PreMOD	pre-modal position
PreS	pre-subject position
PreV	pre-main-verb position
Q	question particle
RECP	reciprocal

REDUP	reduplication
REL	relative pronoun
TOP	topic marker

## 1. Introduction

In his three-part work on Basic Linguistic Theory, Dixon (2010a,b, 2012) presents an excellent introduction to a useful system for analyzing and documenting the grammar of a language. One part of this is Non-spatial Setting, that is, the grammatical coding of marking of time, aspect, and other material in the verbal system. The goal of this thesis is to apply Dixon's framework to White Hmong (Hmong-Mien, Laos) by describing the system of Non-spatial Setting in this language. It is found that White Hmong has a robust system of marking various elements of Non-spatial Setting, which is made up of Lexical Time Words<sup>1,2</sup> as Tense, Irrealis and, within it, Modality markers, Degree of Certainty markers, Phase of Activity markers, a relatively large set of Completion markers, and one Speed and Ease marker.

### 1.1 Source of Data

While a number of scholarly sources were relied on at times for examples throughout this work, a significant amount of data has been obtained from Tzerge (Jay) Yang, a native speaker of White Hmong originally from Xieng Khouang province, Laos who currently lives in Fresno, California. The data gathered includes three texts—a narrative that tells about Mr. Yang's background, a procedural text that gives instructions on how to cook eggs, and a hortatory text in the form of a Christian religious speech<sup>3</sup>—as well as a number of other examples, adapted either directly or indirectly from these texts.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see below for a brief description of this term from Dixon (2012:20).

<sup>2</sup> Specific terms from Dixon (2012)'s framework for Non-spatial Setting are generally capitalized to indicate that these are being used in Dixon's specialized sense.

<sup>3</sup> Please see the appendices below for interlinear transcriptions of these.

## 1.2 Summary of Conclusions

White Hmong possesses a system of Non-spatial Setting that encompasses several of Dixon (2012)'s categories. Among these are Lexical Time Words, markers of positive and negative Irrealis intertwined with a system of Modality markers that includes a number of Modals and Semi-modals and one adverb. In addition to these, White Hmong has a system of Degree of Certainty marking that includes seven morphemes at two levels of certainty and a set of Secondary verbs (following the terminology of Dixon 2006) marking Phase of Activity. Furthermore, the language has a set of five Completion morphemes, three which mark distinct types of Perfect and two Imperfect, two Completion-marking strategies, namely, reduplication for the Imperfect and an Attainment Serial Verb Construction<sup>4</sup> for the Perfect, and one Speed and Ease morpheme that marks slowness.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.3 Structure of Thesis

This thesis is made up of five sections. Section 1 is a brief introduction. Section 2 presents relevant background information, including a basic introduction to Non-spatial Setting, typological patterns in the grammar of nearby languages, and a brief presentation of the basics of White Hmong Grammar. Section 3 covers the individual words and constructions that constitute Non-spatial Setting in White Hmong. Section 4 summarizes the findings, suggests further directions of inquiry for Non-spatial Setting in White Hmong, and provides a brief discussion on the implications of the system found in White Hmong for the system as a whole, while Section 5 provides a brief conclusion.

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<sup>4</sup> Term following Jarkey (2006).

<sup>5</sup> The scope for this thesis is to describe how Non-spatial Setting is indicated in White Hmong and what role these markers play at the verb/clause level, with brief reference to sentence level (e.g., in regard to perfective-imperfective relationships, see below), as is relevant. The role that the Non-spatial Setting markers found in this thesis play at the sentence and discourse level is thus generally left for further research.

## 2. Background

This section is divided into three subsections, dealing first with a presentation of the basics of Dixon (2012)'s Non-spatial Setting, then continuing with a discussion on what constitutes genuine morphological marking apart from normal lexical items. This is followed by a discussion of a cross-linguistic typology for Southeast Asian languages, which includes a discussion on the Non-spatial Setting systems of three languages from the region. The section then finishes with a brief introduction to White Hmong grammar.

### 2.1 Summary of Non-spatial Setting

Dixon (2012)'s Non-spatial Setting takes the form of a framework of eleven categories that organize marking of tense, aspect, and modality as they appear across languages (2012:3, 5-6). These categories are presented below in Table 1.

Category	Content
Tense	past, present, and possibly future, if functions as tense; also words referring to time
Reality	realis and irrealis, which includes modality and possibly future time, if functions as irrealis
Degree of Certainty	level of probability
Phase of Activity	stage of an action
Completion	perfect and imperfect
Boundedness	telic and atelic
Temporal Extent	progressive, punctual, etc.
Composition	perfective and imperfective
Degree or Frequency	number of times an event occurs
Speed and Ease	rate of an activity and its degree of difficulty
Evidentiality	source of evidence

**Table 1.** Categories of Dixon (2012)'s Non-spatial Setting (based on Dixon 2012:5-9, 25).

The first category, Tense, is rather straightforward, marking the time at which an event happened in reference to the current time. Dixon's category also includes time adverbials, or in his terminology, Lexical Time Words, belonging to one of five

categories: Duration, Frequency, Specific Time Spans, With Respect to Expectation, which includes notions such as ‘soon’ and ‘already’, and Temporal Shifters, which includes ‘yesterday’ and ‘tomorrow’ (2012:20). Future time is a special case, since it can fall into either the Tense category or the Reality category, as Table 1 shows, depending entirely on whether forms that indicate future events function as a part of the tense paradigm or are themselves varieties of Modality (Dixon 2012:7-8).

Dixon’s Reality category contains an Irrealis subcategory that includes more typical notions of irrealis as well as Modality (following Dixon 2012:22). Modality itself can be one of several semantic types, of which the most prominent cross-linguistically are Prediction, Obligation, Necessity, Ability, and Imminent Action (Dixon 2012:26-27). Others are also possible, including Desire, Intention, Scheduled Activity, Achievement, and Inevitability (Dixon 2012:26-27). Cutting across these semantic categories are two morphosyntactic categories of Modality marking, namely, Modals and Semi-modals, where Modals have reduced morphosyntactic features such as a lack tense marking (that is, in languages that make tense distinctions) and a requirement that they precede all other verbs in a series, while Semi-modals generally function as regular verbs (2012:26). For example, Dixon’s modals for English include words such as *will*, *should*, and *must* (2012:26)—a class of words that must precede the verb they modify, as in *will go*, *should go*, *must go*, and have no marking for tense—that is, to indicate past time requires the use of another auxiliary such as *have*, as in *must have gone*. In contrast, Dixon’s Semi-modals for English include phrasal verbs such as *be going to* and *get to* (2012:26), which can have other verbal content preceding them, as in *I would like to get to go*, and inflect for tense, as in *I got to leave early*.

Categories of Desire and Intention can also be part of Dixon's system of Modality, though only as long as other arguments are not allowed to appear (2012:27-28). For example, English allows sentence constructions such as *I want him to go*, where *want* takes *him* as an argument; in this case, *want* is not a Modality marker. On the other hand, in some languages the verb *want* can only be followed by a verb phrase or a complement clause, and an object argument is not allowed; in this case, the verb *want* would be a modality marker of Desire.

Dixon's Degree of Certainty includes modal-like words and other morphological elements that "describe the chance of some action or state eventuating" (2012:29). Phase of Activity covers the morphological marking of the beginning, finishing, and continuation of activities. Completion is the category for perfect and imperfect. For this category, Dixon provides the general definition of the perfect as "'an action which is completed before the present time' to which is often added 'and which has present relevance'" (2012:31). He defines imperfect as "refer[ring] to something which began before the present and is still continuing" (2012:31).

Dixon provides the Boundedness category for overt marking of telicity and phenomena associated with the inherent telicity of certain verbs (following Dixon 2012:33). Overt marking can include affixes, while phenomena can include a verb's behavior in regard to whether it is telic semantically (Dixon 2012:33).

Temporal Extent focuses on the explicit grammatical indication of "punctual" and "durative" (Dixon 2012:34). Composition is the domain of the distinction between Perfective' and Imperfective. Perfective functions such that "the event is regarded as a

whole, without respect for its temporal constituency,” while imperfective is concerned with “the temporal make-up of the event” (Dixon 2012:35).

The category of Frequency and Degree covers marking of senses such as ‘habitual’, ‘reiterative’, and ‘repeated’, as well as ‘a little bit’ and ‘a lot’ (Dixon 2012:36-37<sup>6</sup>). The category of Speed and Ease includes the morphological marking of concepts exemplified by words such as ‘quickly’, ‘rapidly’, and ‘slowly’, as well as ‘with ease’ and ‘with difficulty’ (Dixon 2012:37-38). Evidentiality considers the ‘system’ of “obligatory specification of the source of information on which” a ‘statement’ “is based” (Dixon 2012:38).

While the Non-spatial Setting framework appears to categorize most forms of marking on verbs, Dixon notes that other elements such as physical setting, mood, and “clause linking” (marking of relationships between clauses) are explicitly excluded from the Non-spatial Setting portion of his framework (2012:1-3). In addition, this set of eleven categories may not include all of the possibilities found in any given language, which, as Dixon notes, may “include...a variety of other types of Non-spatial Setting” (2012:6). Thus, Dixon (2012) provides a near-comprehensive system for marking temporal, modal, and aspectual information on verbs which is left open for new possibilities in specific languages.

### **2.1.1 Dixon’s verb classification**

One important aspect of Non-spatial Setting in Dixon (2012) is the use of “Secondary verbs” as a part of the grammar. Thus, a brief overview of Dixon’s system of classifying verbs is a necessary part of considering Non-spatial Setting, and is presented here.

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<sup>6</sup> Dixon (2012) cites a number of sources that describe the grammar systems of several languages that possess the categories listed here for Frequency and Degree as well as Speed and Ease. The reader is directed to Dixon (2012:36-38) for more information.

First, verbs are divided into two categories: Primary and Secondary. With Primary verbs, their “arguments can all be just [noun phrases],” while with Secondary verbs, their “arguments cannot all be just [noun phrases] or pronouns. That is, one argument must be a clause” (Dixon 2006:9). Primary verbs fall into Primary-A and Primary-B categories; the distinction is based on the fact that Primary-A verbs cannot have a complement as an argument while Primary-B verbs can (Dixon 2006:9). More important for Non-spatial Setting are Secondary verbs, which represent what Dixon (2006) calls “Secondary concepts,” which can be marked by full verbs, affixes, or some other strategy, depending on the language (Dixon 2006:9, 11). These Secondary verbs cannot occur on their own, but must be associated with an additional verb, which is found in a complement clause or as part of a “complementation strategy” (Dixon 2006:11, 12).

Secondary verbs fall into three categories, namely, Secondary-A, Secondary-B, and Secondary-C (Dixon 2006:12-13). Secondary-A verbs can be one of four types: 1) “Negators;” 2) “Modal-type” verbs, which includes modals; 3) “Beginning-type,” which includes verbs with semantic values associated with Phase of Activity; or 4) “Trying-type” (Dixon 2006:12-13). For a verb to be a Secondary-A verb, “the main and complement clauses must have the same subject” (Dixon 2006:13). Secondary-B verbs are verbs such as “want,” “intend,” or “hope,” which are characterized by the trait “that even when the subjects may differ, the expectation is that they are most likely to be the same, and the subject token in the complement clause is then generally omitted” (Dixon 2006:13). Secondary-C verbs are verbs with meanings like “let,” “make,” and “help,” where “main and complement clauses are likely to have different subjects” and with which “it is

unlikely that the subject token in the complement clause can be omitted” (Dixon 2006:13).

Important to Non-spatial Setting is category Secondary-A, which includes modals and potentially many other markers of Non-spatial Setting (Dixon 2012:26). At the same time, category Secondary-B is relevant to Non-spatial Setting in that if a verb could belong to Modality, such as “want,” but allows more than two arguments (one being the subject and the other a complement), it belongs to Secondary-B rather than Secondary-A, and is in such a case not a Modality-marking verb (Dixon 2012:27). Dixon’s system of verbal classification will be referenced below in the discussion on the Non-spatial Setting of White Hmong.

## **2.2 Grammaticalization and morphological marking**

The process of grammaticalization is important to Non-spatial Setting as many of the grammatical elements in a language like White Hmong—i.e., an isolating, generally monosyllabic language that is completely lacking in any overt affixation<sup>7</sup>—will have some connection with lexical words. Distinguishing between genuinely normal lexical items and grammatical ones is not an easy task when dealing with this kind of language, and so a clear, even if brief, presentation of the nature of grammaticalization is necessary for arguing whether a certain morpheme is actually operating as part of the grammar.<sup>8</sup> Here, grammaticalization will be defined and briefly discussed, and a set of processes

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<sup>7</sup> See below for the discussion on linguistic typology for the region.

<sup>8</sup> Dixon generally recognizes a basic distinction between lexicon and grammar in his version of Basic Linguistic Theory, where grammar is comprised of systems of small, closed sets of morphemes (2010a:47 ff., 214 ff.). It should be noted, however, that Dixon explicitly describes an expectation in the grammar that “each [member of a system] may be exhaustively listed, each being fully defined by the exclusion of all others” (2010a:47). At the same time, examples from specific languages may present difficulties for this definition, such as the English prepositions *on* and *upon*—noting that Dixon explicitly recognizes *on* as part of the grammar (2010a:214).

associated with grammaticalization will be presented with the ultimate goal of showing below which morphemes in White Hmong are connected with the language's grammar.

First, a definition of grammaticalization is needed. Hopper & Traugott provide a helpful definition:

Grammaticalization is the change whereby in certain linguistic contexts speakers use parts of a construction with a grammatical function. Over time the resulting grammatical item may become more grammatical by acquiring more grammatical functions and expanding its host-classes. (2003:99)

In addition to this, Brinton & Traugott make an important observation about semantic changes associated with grammaticalization:

There is no doubt that, over time, meanings tend to become weakened during the process of grammaticalization. Nevertheless, all the evidence for early stages is that initially there is a redistribution or shift, not a loss, of meaning. (2005:94)

As a result, it is clear that when a word is grammaticalized, it is affected both syntactically in terms of where it can appear, and semantically in terms of a change of meaning. It can be concluded from this that if a language such as White Hmong contains two homophonous words with slightly different semantic and syntactic properties from one another, and if one of these two words serves a more grammatical function than the other, then it can be suspected that the one is more likely a grammatical element.<sup>9</sup>

Second, there are several processes distinctly connected with grammaticalization presented by Brinton & Traugott, namely, decategorialization, bleaching, subjectification,

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<sup>9</sup> In fact, Bisang (1996:533-534) points out that grammaticalized elements are generally those used to serve the role of marking tense, aspect, and/or mood, or in his terms, "mak[ing] a concept or an action/process more concrete" (1996:533), in Southeast Asian languages. Please see section 2.3 below for the larger discussion.

productivity, frequency, and typological generality (2005:110). Each of these will be briefly introduced in turn.

Decategorialization is discussed by Brinton & Traugott as follows:

Hopper [1991:22] defines decategorialization as the process by which forms ‘lose or neutralize the morphological markers and syntactic privileges characteristic of the full categories Noun and Verb, and ... assume attributes characteristic of secondary categories such as Adjective, Participle, Preposition, etc.’

Decategorialization is the defining characteristic of grammaticalization since it is the mechanism by which lexical items become functional. (2005:107)

From this, it is clear that a grammaticalized element will have morphological and/or syntactic irregularities when compared to the “full categories,” which serve as the most prominent sign that a word has been grammaticalized—a trait that will be especially important for an isolating language such as White Hmong.

Bleaching is defined by Brinton & Traugott as “weakening of meaning through generalization, most especially loss of contentful meaning” and is associated with grammaticalization “at least in late stages” (2005:108).

Subjectification is defined as “the anchoring of meaning in the speaker’s assessment of the situation,” where the word becomes increasingly connected with the expression of “the speaker’s perspective...or to get others to do things” (Brinton & Traugott 2005:108).

For Productivity, Brinton & Traugott state that “items that grammaticalize become more productive in the sense that the grammaticalizing element occurs with

increasingly large numbers of categories, i.e., with increasing type frequency. The shift is from a less to more productive pattern...” (2005:109).

In regard to Frequency, Brinton & Traugott comment that “items that grammaticalize are used ‘in more contexts and for a larger set of lexical items’; therefore grammaticalizing items always become more token frequent than their source” (2005:109).

Typological generality is connected with grammaticalization in that “grammaticalization patterns tend to be cross-linguistically replicated...and may affect whole semantic classes...” (Brinton & Traugott 2005:109).

Altogether, grammaticalization is seen as a process that affects a word both syntactically and semantically, and changes its function such that it increasingly serves a grammatical purpose. In addition, grammaticalization is distinctly associated with six processes, namely, decategorialization, bleaching, subjectification, productivity, frequency, and typological generality.

### **2.3 Regional Typology**

Before considering Non-spatial Setting in White Hmong, we first turn to typological considerations from languages in the region as a helpful background.

The majority of languages in Southeast Asia share a number of typological features concerning their verbal systems. First, they exhibit a general absence of inflection, most notably in the areas of grammatical gender, number, marking or agreement for subject or object, or tense (Goddard 2005:3-5). Second, their primary word order is SVO, though the order is generally flexible (Goddard 2005:7-8).

Third, a number of languages in the region have particles that possess an emotional or affective value, termed ‘sentence-final particles’ (Goddard 2005:24).

Fourth, languages in the region typically have serial verb constructions (Goddard 2005:17). A number of these serial verb constructions have historically produced grammatical items that indicate causation, direction, grammatical case, and the result of the action of another verb, as well as tense, aspect, and mood, and even conjunctions (Bisang 1996:534, 563, 570). Verbs may also undergo ‘synchronic derivation’ to produce ‘locus prepositions’ and adverbs (Clark & Prasithrathsint 1985:34, 38), or, in other words, prepositions and adverbs that indicate the location of something can be derived from verbs.

Finally, these languages are characterized by what Bisang (1996) refers to as “indeterminateness.” While Bisang does not provide a clear definition of indeterminateness, it appears to refer to the degree of underspecification of grammatical notions that are often mandatory in other languages. In relation to the indeterminateness of verbs, Bisang states that “[a] verb in the languages to be described...merely posits an action or a state. One verb—which is often just one syllable—can show enough information in a given context...” (1996:532). He goes on to list areas of indeterminateness for verbs, including tense/aspect/mood marking, ‘role assignment’, ‘valency’ and ‘complex sentences’ (1996:532). Bisang also discusses how ‘discourse pragmatics’ may impact the general indeterminateness found in these languages, in that, in certain cases, increasing the degree of definiteness of a word by grammatical means may be required (1996:533). To fill this need, grammaticalized elements such as those marking causation, result, tense, aspect, and mood are used (1996:533-534).

As it will be apparent below, several of these typological traits of Southeast Asian languages will feature prominently in White Hmong. Before launching into the details of

White Hmong itself, three other Southeast Asian languages will be considered in terms of Dixon's framework for Non-spatial Setting: Mandarin Chinese, Guizhou Dong, and Green Hmong.

### **2.3.1 Mandarin Chinese**

Mandarin Chinese (Sino-Tibetan, China) is a language with strong typological similarities to Hmong and other languages in the region. Some scholars, e.g. Li (1991), argue that Chinese has historically influenced the verbal morphology of the Hmongic languages, and so Chinese is directly relevant to the Non-spatial Setting system of White Hmong. The grammar features that are especially relevant to Dixon's framework are Mandarin's auxiliary verbs, modal-like full verbs, and its system of marking aspect—or what Dixon (2012:5-6) calls “Completion” (Perfect vs. Imperfect), Composition (Perfective vs. Imperfective), and Degree. Each of these will be discussed below.

Mandarin auxiliary verbs are distinguished from normal verbs by their syntactic limitations and are rather abundant in number. Li and Thompson (1981:174-175) describe six limitations: 1) they must appear with a main verb (though a main verb may be implied by context); 2) they do not have their own aspectual marking; 3) they do not appear with adverbial “intensifiers;” 4) they are not available for nominalization processes; 5) they cannot be preposed in sentence-initial position; and 6) they do not appear with objects (1981:174-175). However, like verbs, they can undergo negation and ‘A-not-A’ type questions<sup>10</sup> (1981:172-173).

The auxiliary verbs that fit the above definition have several interesting features. Li & Thompson (1981:182-183) provide a list of these auxiliary verbs, reproduced below.

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<sup>10</sup> This type of question construction is a variety of polar question, and takes the form of ‘Subject Verb not Verb?’.

<i>yīnggāi, yīngdang, gāi</i>	‘ought to, should’
<i>néng, nénggòu, huì, kěyi</i>	‘be able to’
<i>néng, kěyi</i>	‘has permission to’
<i>gǎn</i>	‘dare’
<i>kěn</i>	‘be willing to’
<i>děi, bìxū, bìyào, bìděi</i>	‘must, ought to’
<i>huì</i>	‘will, know how to’ (Li & Thompson 1981:182-183)

Several interesting observations are to be made here. First, *gǎn* ‘dare’ and *kěn* ‘be willing to’ are auxiliary verbs, which are interesting as these fit Dixon (2012)’s definition of Modal syntactically, though semantically they represent categories of Modality in addition to the set he presents in his work. Second, while Dixon (2012:26-27) provides a single category of Ability, Li & Thompson split the concept into three categories, glossed as ‘be able to’, ‘has permission to’, and ‘will, know how to’, which contain unique words not shared by the other two categories. While some auxiliary verbs such as *néng, kěyi*, and *huì* show overlap between these, *nénggòu* does not, and none appear in all three categories. This shows a clear ‘specialization of labor’ between these auxiliaries of ability. Lastly, two degrees of obligation are signaled by the categories of ‘ought to, should’ and ‘must, ought to’, with no overlap in terms of category membership.

Mandarin also has several verbs with meanings similar to the above auxiliary verbs, though unlike auxiliary verbs or Dixon’s modals, they allow events with additional arguments to appear as their objects (Li & Thompson 1981:175ff.). These include *yào* ‘want’, *qíngyuàn* ‘wish, prefer’, *jìxù* ‘continue’, *xūyào* ‘need’, *xīwàng* ‘hope’, *xiǎng* ‘think, miss’, and *biǎoshì* ‘express’ (1981: 175-177). While some of these are semantically similar to the examples of Modality markers that Dixon provides, they do not qualify as true Modality since they can have additional arguments (Dixon 2012:27-28).

Other potential cases for auxiliaries or modals found in Li & Thompson (1981) include *yào* ‘be going to, in the immediate future’, *kěnéng* ‘possible, likely’, and several kinds of adverbs (1981:175-176, 181). First, the word *yào* ‘be going to, in the immediate future’ does not qualify as a true auxiliary since it cannot appear in negative or the ‘A-not-A’ question constructions (Li & Thompson 1981:175-176). However, this does not disqualify it from Modality status by Dixon’s definitions, since Modality can include syntactic particles (following Dixon 2012:27). Note that while this word is identical in form as *yào* ‘want’ above, the distribution of the ‘be going to’ meaning is comparatively more restricted; there is also some cases where ambiguity between the two is possible (Li & Thompson 1981:175-176). In regard to Dixon’s categories of Modality marking, while Li & Thompson provide no further information that would help elucidate the category membership of *yào*, the glosses they provide, namely, ‘immediately, in the immediate future, am going to’, suggest that *yào* belongs to the Imminent Activity category, and this interpretation is provisionally adopted here.

Second, the word *kěnéng* ‘possible, likely’ is similar to auxiliary verbs semantically and syntactically in some contexts, such as in sentences where it immediately precedes a verb, though it itself patterns as a verb, or specifically, an ‘adjectival verb’ (Li & Thompson 1981:179-180). This word seems to fall into Dixon’s category of Degree of Certainty, except that *kěnéng* is a full verb, while morphological markers for this category should be either modals or morphological affixes; thus, this verb would be a Semi-modal at best (following Dixon 2012:26, 29).

Third, several kinds of adverbs behave in ways similar to auxiliaries, such as *dàgài* ‘approximately’, *yídìng* ‘definitely’, and *kuài(yào)* ‘soon’. These adverbs fail the

‘A-not-A’ question test as well as a second test where auxiliaries appear as an acceptable response to a question, showing that they are not auxiliaries. The semantic domain of Modality in Mandarin is thus comprised of a complex system of auxiliaries, full verbs, and possibly adverbs.

Aspectual particles, or what Dixon considers Completion and Composition, also form an important portion of Mandarin grammar. These include the ‘Currently Relevant State’ marker *le* (‘CRS’), the ‘Perfective’ marker *-le* (‘PFV’), ‘Imperfective’ markers *zài* and *-zhe* ‘IPFV’, and the ‘Experiential’ marker *-guo* (‘EXP’) (Li & Thompson 1981:185, 240).

The ‘Currently Relevant State’ marker, *le*, is defined by Li & Thompson (1981:240) as denoting:

...that some state of affairs is *current* with respect to some particular situation.

When no other situation is mentioned, then it is always assumed that the statement signaled by the sentence with the *le* is relevant to *now*, that is, to the situation of the speech context in which the speaker and hearer are engaged.

Li & Thompson further provide five types of contexts where this kind of definition applies, namely, if it expresses a situation that “is a changed state,” “corrects a wrong assumption,” “reports progress so far,” “determines what will happen next,” and/or “is the speaker’s total contribution to the conversation at that point” (1981:244).

The general idea of having implications for the present makes this seem identical to Dixon (2012)’s perfect, for which he adopts the general definition that it refers to “an action which is completed before the present time,” to which is often added, ‘and which has present relevance’” (2012:31). However, this particle does not necessarily mark

completed action on the verb with which it appears since *le* can refer to present relevance even with stative verbs to indicate a change in state (per Li & Thompson 1981:244), often in cases where the cause—that is, the completed action or event that brings about the change of state—is not mentioned.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Dixon argues against the English *have...-en* construction’s status as a perfect when it refers to a continuing event (2012:32), suggesting that the ‘progress so far’ context of *le* is equally unacceptable as a perfect. Unfortunately, since Dixon does not provide a clear category for the English construction<sup>12</sup>, and since the particle *le* has no relevance to tense, it is unclear how *le* can be categorized in the Non-Spatial Setting framework. The solution here is to honor Li & Thompson’s descriptive term, ‘Currently Relevant State’.

Similar to *le* is the ‘Perfective’ particle *-le* ‘PFV’. Li & Thompson define the usage of this affix as that “it indicates that an event is being viewed in its entirety or as a whole” (1981:185). This matches Dixon’s definition for Perfective within his Composition category perfectly (2012:35). Li & Thompson further develop this idea for *-le* by finding four types of possible boundedness, namely, “...being a quantified event,” “...being a definite or specific event,” “...bounded because of the meaning of the verb,” and “...being the first event in a sequence” (1981:185-186). Thus, the particle *-le* is characterized as a variety of perfective and is associated with an event that is somehow bounded. At the same time, Li & Thompson (1981:215) demonstrate that *-le* cannot indicate simple completion, as there are situations where it is used that have little to do with a completed action. Thus, *-le* should be placed within Composition as a Perfective.

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<sup>11</sup> Please see Li & Thompson (1981:245 ff.) for examples of this kind of construction, virtually all of which lack any mention of a completed action that brings about the change in state.

<sup>12</sup> Apart from possibly treating one form of it as a “relative tense;” see Dixon (2012:32) for details.

The ‘Imperfective’ or ‘Durative’ (Li & Thompson 1981:185, 217) particles *zài* and *-zhe* are additional aspectual markers in Chinese, which “signal the ongoing, or durative, nature of an event,” much like English *be -ing* (Li & Thompson 1981:217). These two morphemes have specific distributions in the grammar, where *zài* appears only with verbs of ‘activity’ (Li & Thompson 1981:218), while *-zhe* only appears in the standard language with states, but not with adjective-type verbs (Li & Thompson 1981:219-222). In either case, while Dixon’s framework provides two potential matches for an ‘ongoing, durative’ marker, namely, Imperfect as part of Completion and Durative as part of Temporal Extent, the fact that Li & Thompson (1981) links these two forms with English *be -ing* suggests that *zài* and *-zhe* mark the Imperfect.

On the other hand, the behavior of *zài* and *-zhe* is such that it cannot co-occur with *-le* ‘PFV’, due to the fact that they disagree semantically, where the former indicate “unbounded” action and the latter indicates “bounded” action (Li & Thompson 1981:203). This suggests a paradigmatic relationship in Mandarin that involves Completion and Composition at the same time.

The affix *-zhe* also functions as a marker that “signal[s] that one event provides a durative background for another event” (Li & Thompson 1981:223). With this usage, *-zhe* can occur with activity verbs as well as state verbs (Li & Thompson 1981:224). This form of *-zhe* matches Dixon’s examples for ‘Imperfective’ rather well, since they also signal backgrounded events (2012:35). However, the forms used in Chinese for the other event, which would then be “regarded as a whole” (Dixon 2012:35), are not obligatorily

marked with the *-le* suffix<sup>13</sup>. In general, though, this form is a good fit within Composition.

The last important aspectual element under discussion for Mandarin is the ‘Experiential’ *-guo* affix. Li & Thompson define the usage of this affix as follows:

The aspect suffix *-guo* means that an event has been *experienced* with respect to some reference time. When the reference time is left unspecified, then *-guo* signals that the event has been experienced at least once at some indefinite time, which is usually the indefinite past. (1981:226, emphasis original)

They further go on to contrast this affix with *-le*, stating that “the perfective *-le* signaling a bounded event typically conveys the message that the event took place, while *-guo* signals that an event has been experienced at least once” (1981:227). This form seems to fall into Dixon’s Completion category, since *-guo* effectively expresses “‘an action which is completed before the present time’... ‘and which has present relevance’” (2012:31), because *-guo* indicates that an event has occurred and is relevant to some point in time. At the same time, *-guo* ‘EXP’ cannot co-occur with *-le* ‘PFV’, providing further evidence that Completion and Composition form a paradigmatic relationship with one another.

A final aspectual construction found in Mandarin is verbal reduplication, which indicates “doing an action ‘a little bit,’ or for a short period of time” with activity verbs (Li & Thompson 1981:232, 234). This construction can also optionally include the word *yi* ‘one’, which is placed in the middle of the construction, with the two parts of the reduplicated verb on either side (Li & Thompson 1981:232). The meaning ‘a little bit’

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<sup>13</sup> See Li & Thompson (1981:223-226) for examples where *-le* does and does not appear.

here fits perfectly within Dixon’s Degree category (following Dixon 2012:36), while the ‘short period of time’ meaning can probably be treated as an extension of ‘a little bit’.

Altogether, Mandarin has a number of morphological and syntactic forms that fit well into Dixon’s Non-Spatial Setting in the areas of Irrealis (Modality), Completion and Composition (as a single category), and Degree, as well as the distinctive category ‘Currently Relevant State’, summarized below in Table 2.

Category	Subcategory	Examples
Modality as part of Irrealis	Obligation	<i>yīnggāi, yīngdang, gāi</i> ‘ought to, should’ <i>děi, bixū, biyào, bìdēi</i> ‘must, ought to’
	Ability	<i>néng, nénggòu, huì, kěyi</i> ‘be able to’ <i>néng, kěyi</i> ‘has permission to’ <i>huì</i> ‘will, know how to’
	Imminent Activity	<i>yào</i> ‘in the immediate future, be going to’
	Other	<i>gǎn</i> ‘dare’ <i>kěn</i> ‘be willing to’
Completion-Composition	Perfect	<i>-guo</i> ‘EXP’
	Imperfect	<i>zài</i> ‘be -ing’
	Imperfect-Imperfective	<i>-zhe</i> ‘be -ing, IPFV’
	Perfective	<i>-le</i> ‘PFV’
Degree		reduplication: ‘a little bit, for a short period of time’
Currently Relevant State		<i>le</i> ‘CRS’

**Table 2.** Summary of Non-spatial Setting elements in Mandarin Chinese.<sup>14</sup>

As it will be seen, the findings here for Mandarin will have parallels in White Hmong.

### 2.3.2 Guizhou Dong

Guizhou Dong<sup>15</sup> (Tai-Kadai, China) is another language that is typologically similar to White Hmong. Historically, at least one language of the family of which Dong is a part

<sup>14</sup> Undoubtedly, Mandarin Chinese has a number of other morphemes and processes relevant to Non-spatial Setting; however, what is displayed here is the forms discussed in Li & Thompson (1981).

has served as a ‘superstratum language’ in the Hmong homeland (Li 1991:43), suggesting the possibility of direct influence on the development of Hmong, and Guizhou Dong is currently spoken in areas in contact with various Hmong dialects. As a result, Dong provides useful parallels for the grammar of White Hmong. Grammatical points of interest available include modals, aspectual markers, and marginal reduplication, each of which is discussed below in reference to Dixon’s Non-spatial Setting.

Guizhou Dong has a number of “modals,” including *wo*<sup>31</sup> ‘know’, *ju*<sup>53</sup> ‘want’, *haj*<sup>13</sup> ‘agree’, *non*<sup>33</sup> ‘be willing’, *ʔam*<sup>323</sup> ‘dare to’, and *li*<sup>323</sup> ‘have N to V’ (Long & Zheng 1998:120, 122). Long & Zheng’s modals typically appear before a verb, though some modals, such as *wo*<sup>31</sup> ‘know’ and *non*<sup>33</sup> ‘be willing’, can be followed by a pronoun or noun instead (1998:122-123). This suggests that at least these last two do not belong to Dixon (2012)’s Modality, as they behave as Primary verbs in the verbal classification system of Dixon (2006). Likewise, the gloss for *li*<sup>323</sup>, ‘have N to V’, suggests the mandatory presence of a different subject for the second verb, which suggests that it is a Secondary-C verb (per Dixon 2006:13), and is thus not a marker of Modality (following Dixon 2012:26). Information on how the other ‘modals’ behave is unavailable, so their status is unknown. As for the specific semantic categories of Modality, such as Necessity or Obligation, *ju*<sup>53</sup> ‘want’ can be provisionally placed in the Desire category, while the semantics of *haj*<sup>13</sup> ‘agree’ and *ʔam*<sup>323</sup> ‘dare to’ are such that they do not neatly fit into the canonical categories provided by Dixon (2012:26), and so can be provisionally placed in an “Other” category.

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<sup>15</sup> The source for this language, Long & Zheng (1998), provides data from both ‘southern’ and ‘northern’ dialects; generally, the southern forms are the ones cited in the discussion unless indicated otherwise; this tendency is reflected in the discussion here.

Aspectual markers in Guizhou Dong include *to*<sup>323</sup> ‘action in progress’, *ta*<sup>33</sup> ‘completed action’, *ljeu*<sup>31</sup> ‘completion, change, or past event’, *khwən*<sup>35</sup>(*ljeu*<sup>31</sup>) ‘finished action’, and *tən*<sup>212</sup>*ma*<sup>35</sup> ‘beginning/continuation of an action’ (Long & Zheng 1998:148).

The first of these, *to*<sup>323</sup>, expresses ongoing action; it follows the verb (Long & Zheng 1998:148). Though there is relatively little data to determine the exact status of this form, Long & Zheng (1998:148) relate it to the Mandarin *-zhe*, suggesting that it would qualify as an imperfective under Dixon’s system.

The second aspectual marker, *ta*<sup>33</sup> ‘completed action’, is further defined as expressing previous experience, and is paralleled by the Mandarin *-guo*; it appears after the verb and sometimes after the object as well, depending on the dialect (Long & Zheng 1998:149). As an experiential following the pattern of *-guo*, it appears that this form would be a type of perfect, as discussed for Mandarin above.

The third and fourth markers, *ljeu*<sup>31</sup> ‘completion, change, or past event’ and *khwən*<sup>35</sup>(*ljeu*<sup>31</sup>) ‘finished action’, mark completion and follow the verb (Long & Zheng 1998:150). The marker *ljeu*<sup>31</sup> is suggested to parallel Mandarin *le*<sup>16</sup> (Long & Zheng 1998:150). As a result of its semantic value of completion, it appears that this form may be a perfect within Dixon’s system, because of the notion of being “completed before the present time” (Dixon 2012:31). The other marker here, *khwən*<sup>35</sup>(*ljeu*<sup>31</sup>), seems to fall into the same category for the same reason.

The fifth marker, *tən*<sup>212</sup>*ma*<sup>35</sup> ‘begin –ing’, is used to signal the starting or ongoing status of an activity, and follows the verb (Long & Zheng 1998:150). As such, this falls

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<sup>16</sup> Note, however, that it is unclear which version of *le* is intended. It is assumed here that the perfective form is in fact the one under consideration.

into Dixon's Phase of Activity category, which includes notions of "beginning" and "continuing" (Dixon 2012:30).

In addition to these, one remaining marker is found in Long & Zheng (1998): *kən*<sup>17</sup> 'finished action'<sup>17</sup> (1998:150). It follows the verb, and when it appears with *lja*<sup>31</sup> 'completion',<sup>18</sup> an emphatic sense of 'already' is expressed (Long & Zheng 1998:150). Whether this would belong to Dixon's Phase of Activity (as 'finishing') or Completion as a perfect is uncertain, due to the lack of sufficient data.

Reduplication in Guizhou Dong is only marginally attested and is likely the result of influence from Chinese; the attested examples are either: 1) reduplicated monosyllables that can signal 'try out' or 'for a short time', or 2) reduplicated bisyllabic words that indicate repetitive action (Long & Zheng:121-122). It seems that these uses would likely make reduplication fit into Dixon (2012)'s category of Frequency and Degree.

As a whole, Guizhou Dong has a system of Modality belonging to Dixon's Irrealis, a system of aspect marking that seems to belong to his Phase of Activity, Completion, and Composition categories, and a marginal reduplication process; these are summarized in Table 3 below.

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<sup>17</sup> This is a northern dialect form. It is uncertain whether this is related to the southern *khwən*<sup>35</sup> found above.

<sup>18</sup> This form is the northern version of *ljeu*<sup>31</sup> (Long & Zheng 1998:150).

Category	Subcategory	Elements
Modality as part of Irrealis	Desire	<i>ju</i> <sup>53</sup> ‘want’
	Other	<i>haŋ</i> <sup>13</sup> ‘agree’, <i>ʔam</i> <sup>323</sup> ‘dare to’
Phase of Activity	Beginning	<i>tən</i> <sup>212</sup> <i>ma</i> <sup>35</sup> ‘begin –ing’
Completion	Perfect	<i>ljeu</i> <sup>31</sup> ‘completion’, <i>khwən</i> <sup>35</sup> ( <i>ljeu</i> <sup>31</sup> ) ‘finished action’, <i>ta</i> <sup>33</sup> ‘EXP’
Composition	Imperfective	<i>to</i> <sup>323</sup> ‘action in progress’
Degree		reduplication: ‘try out, for a short time’, ‘REPETITIVE ACTION’

**Table 3.** Summary of Non-spatial Setting in Guizhou Dong.

### 2.3.3 Green Hmong

Green Hmong (Hmong-Mien, China/Laos) represents a group of Hmongic dialects belonging to the Chuanqiandian cluster. Two of these dialects are considered here: one from Xiaodala village, Honghe prefecture, Yunnan province, China<sup>19</sup> (Xiong & Cohen 2005:7), and the other from Laos.

#### 2.3.3.1 Xiaodala Honghe dialect

The Xiaodala variety of Green Hmong has a number of aspectual particles, modal verbs, and Lexical Time Words. The particles include *leuf*<sup>20</sup> ‘complete situation’, *lak* ‘change in progress’, *dangl* ‘finish’, *dluat* ‘experienced action’, and *zhenf* ‘in the process of’ (Xiong & Cohen 2005:54-56). The phrase *zhit dout* ‘has not, did not’ also appears (Xiang & Cohen 2005:56-57). Each of these is discussed below in turn.

The word *leuf* can either follow the verb or be sentence-final, and indicates that “the speaker is looking at the action of the verb as a total event or a complete situation, without attention to the internal structure of the event” (Xiong & Cohen 2005:54). This

<sup>19</sup> The dialect represented in Xiong & Cohen (2005) is specifically the variety spoken in Xiao Dala village within Honghe prefecture.

<sup>20</sup> In the orthography of the Honghe dialect, tones are represented with final consonants. For this dialect, <b> represents high falling tone, <t> mid-high level tone, <l> low falling breathy tone, <d> mid rising tone, <x> mid falling tone, <k> mid level tone, <s> mid breathy tone, and <f> low falling creaky tone (Xiong & Cohen 2005:12).

definition fits Dixon's definition of the perfective perfectly and so belongs to the category of Completion.

The word *lak* is sentence-final and “indicates that a change of state is currently in progress or that an action has begun to happen” (Xiong & Cohen 2005:55). As such, this seems to be some sort of progressive marker, which would place it in the category of Completion as an imperfect.

The particle *dangl* either follows the verb or is sentence final; it only accompanies an ‘action verb’ (Xiong & Cohen 2005:55). It “shows that the action of the preceding verb has been finished;...a speaker uses [it] to show that a process has been completed or that a series of repeated events has come to an end” (Xiong & Cohen 2005:55). This particle seems to fit into both the perfect Completion (as marking a completed process) and Phase of Activity categories.

The word *dluat* marks ‘experiential aspect’ and follows the verb (Xiong & Cohen 2005:56). It “indicates that the action of the main verb took place at least once in the past or with respect to some reference time” and “implies that the person referred to in the subject of the sentence has had the experience of undergoing or accomplishing this type of action, and that the person's past experience still has current relevance” (Xiong & Cohen 2005:56). The “current relevance” status makes this particle a perfect within Dixon's Completion, and specifically one of marking past experience.

The word *zhenf* is a preverbal particle and marks ‘progressive aspect’ (Xiong & Cohen 2005:56). Its possible translations include “in the process of” and “in the course of” (Xiong & Cohen 2005:56). From these traits, it appears that this particle fits Dixon's category of Imperfect as a part of Completion. *Zhenf* can also be used in the construction

*zhenf zhit*, where it is combined with the negative *zhit* to indicate ‘not yet, still not’ (Xiong & Cohen 2005:56-57), making it extend semantically into the domain of Dixon’s Lexical Time Words, specifically With Respect to Expectation (2006:20).

The phrase *zhit dout* ‘has not, did not’ provides an example of a marker that signals that “an expected action has not taken place or did not take place” (Xiong & Cohen 2005:56). It seems that this would likely fall into the category of Perfect as part of Completion in Non-spatial Setting.

Modal verbs in Honghe Green Hmong include *yuad* ‘will, want, need’, *dout* ‘be able’, *dout* ‘get the chance, have the opportunity to’, *dout* ‘must’, *doul* ‘be physically able’, *sangd* ‘want’, and *nchait* ‘probably’ (Xiong & Cohen 2005:54-56, 81-82). The phrase *zhit xaob* ‘need not’ also appears (Xiong & Cohen 2005:81). Each of these is discussed in more detail below.

The word *yuad* is a preverbal modal marking ‘prospective aspect’ and indicates “that someone is intending to do some action, or is on the point of doing it” (Xiong & Cohen 2005:54). This is clearly a Modal in Dixon (2012)’s sense from a semantic standpoint; the few examples available suggest that it is a regular Modal. This would place it within Dixon’s Irrealis, as a marker of the Modality of Intent.

*Yuad* also serves a second purpose as a marker of Obligation or Necessity, where it is translated as ‘need’ or ‘want’; this use appears before the verb (Xiong & Cohen 2005:81). This usage would fall into the categories of the same names, Obligation and Necessity, in Dixon (2012).

In the negative, *yuad* as part of the phrase *zhit yuad* indicates the notion expressed by the phrases ‘need not, there’s no need to, don’t have to’ (Xiong & Cohen 2005:81).

Xiong & Cohen (2005:81) explicitly note here that this serves as a “negation of necessity or obligation.” In the framework of Dixon (2012), this is straightforward: *zhit yuad* is the negative form for Obligation and Necessity as categories.

The modal *dout* ‘be able’ is postverbal and indicates “that the action of the verb is permitted or capable of being accomplished” (Xiong & Cohen 2005:55). While it is unclear whether this is operating as a full verb<sup>21</sup>, semantically, this is clearly Ability Modality within Dixon’s Irrealis.

The modal *dout* can also be used preverbally with the meaning ‘get the chance, have the opportunity to’ and signifies “that the person referred to in the subject of the sentence has received the opportunity or privilege of doing some desired action” (Xiong & Cohen 2005:55). While the nuance is different from *dout* ‘be able’ above, there is still a semantic trait of Ability present, and so appears to fit within Dixon’s Ability Modality.

A third use of *dout* is to indicate the notion of ‘must’, and precedes the verb (Xiong & Cohen 2005:81). Xiong & Cohen comment that *dout* here indicates obligation and necessity, placing it in the corresponding categories provided by Dixon (2012).

*Dout* can also appear in the phrase *yuad dout*, where the resulting combination can be translated ‘need to, should, have to’ and is placed before the verb (Xiong & Cohen 2005:81). Like *dout*, this serves as marking Obligation and Necessity (Xiong & Cohen 2005:81), and falls into the Modality categories in Dixon (2012) with the same names.

The word *doul* ‘be physically able’ is postverbal and accompanies ‘verb[s] of physical activity’ (Xiong & Cohen 2005:55). It signals “that a person is physically

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<sup>21</sup> The data from the parallel word in White Hmong, *tau* ‘can,’ suggest that it is a regular verb and thus a Semi-modal; see below for details.

capable of accomplishing the action” (Xiong & Cohen 2005:55). This appears to be another Modal belonging to Dixon’s Ability category.

The word *sangd* ‘want’ is an auxiliary verb which precedes the matrix verb; it indicates “desire or intent” (Xiong & Cohen 2005:56). While the data here does not include tests for direct objects, it seems that this is a likely candidate for Dixon’s Desire category of Modality, due to its semantic value and status as an auxiliary verb.

The word *nchait* ‘probably’ is a probability marker that Xiong & Cohen consider a modal (2005:81-82). It precedes the verb and other auxiliaries such as *yuad* (following Xiong & Cohen 2005:82). If this is in fact a modal (and not an adverb), then it fits well within Dixon’s Degree of Certainty category.

The phrase *zhit xaob* is used as a ‘negative command’ and signifies the idea of ‘need not, do not need to’ (Xiong & Cohen 2005:81). As such, it would be a sort of Modality marker indicating negative Necessity in the framework of Dixon (2012).

A few ‘lexical time words’ are also attested in Xiong & Cohen, including *uat nax* ‘usually’, *zeuf* ‘already’, and *let* ‘finally’ (2005:71).

As it has been seen, the Honghe dialect has morphology belonging to Dixon (2012)’s Tense (in the form of lexical time words), Irrealis, Degree of Certainty, Phase of Activity, and Completion categories. These are summarized in Table 4 below.

Category	Subcategory	Elements
Lexical Time Words		<i>uat nax</i> ‘usually’, <i>zeuf</i> ‘already’, <i>let</i> ‘finally’
Modality as part of Irrealis	Necessity-Obligation	<i>yuad</i> ‘need’, <i>dout</i> ‘must’
	Negative Necessity	<i>zhit xaob</i> ‘need not, do not need to’
	Ability	<i>dout</i> ‘be able’, <i>dout</i> ‘get the chance’, <i>doul</i> ‘be physically able’
	Desire	<i>sangd</i> ‘want’
	Intent	<i>yuad</i> ‘will, want’
Phase of Activity	Finishing	<i>dangl</i> ‘finish’
Completion	Perfect	<i>dangl</i> ‘finish’, <i>dluat</i> ‘experienced action’, <i>zhit dout</i> ‘has not, did not’
	Imperfect	<i>lak</i> ‘change in progress’, <i>zhenf</i> ‘in the process of’
Composition	Perfective	<i>leuf</i> ‘complete situation’

**Table 4.** Summary of Non-spatial Setting in the Honghe dialect.

### 2.3.3.2 Laotian Green Hmong

The Laotian dialect of Green Hmong shows striking similarities to the Honghe dialect above, especially in the area of grammatical markers. Li provides information on *yuav*<sup>22</sup> ‘Future tense’, *tau* ‘get to’, *tau* ‘potential mode’, *tau* ‘Attainment aspect marker’,<sup>23</sup> *lawm* ‘Completion aspect marker’, and *taabtom* ‘Progressive aspect marker’ (1991:32, 35, 37, 52).<sup>24</sup> Each of these is considered in turn.

The word *yuav* ‘Future tense’ is considered by Li to be an optional future tense marker (1991:52). It has a phonologically identical counterpart *yuav* ‘buy’ with which it cannot co-occur (Li 1991:52-53). It is likely to be left out if a time adverb signaling the

<sup>22</sup> In the orthography of the Laotian dialects of Hmong, including Green and White Hmong, tones are represented with final consonants, like in the Honghe dialect discussed above. For these dialects, <b> represents high level tone, <Ø> mid level tone, <s> low-mid level tone, <v> mid rising tone, <j> high falling tone, <g> low falling breathy tone, and <m> short low tone (Mottin 1978:15).

<sup>23</sup> These three instances of *tau* are treated as differing uses of the same word by Li (1991).

<sup>24</sup> Other relevant Laotian Green Hmong forms mentioned by Li include *yuavtsum* ‘must, should’, *phiej* ‘reiterative’, *taag* ‘finish’, and *xaav* ‘want’ (1991:39, 52, 54). Coverage of these in the article, however, is rather limited.

future is present, and, according to Li, *yuav* is mandatory in the apodosis of conditional statements if no such adverbs are present (1991:53). Li's description of *yuav* suggests that it belongs to Dixon's Tense category, although this assessment contrasts with that of *yuad* 'prospective aspect' in the Honghe dialect above, where it is found to be a modal. As a result, it is not completely clear here whether *yuav* should be considered Tense or Irrealis in Dixon's model, or if the two categories should be treated as one concept in this dialect.<sup>25</sup>

The word *tau* 'get to' appears immediately before the verb, and Li appears to consider it a regular verb (following Li 1991:32, 34). This form may occur with the future *yuav* in the form *yuav tau* with the meaning 'will get to' (Li 1991:31). Li does not provide significant information for this form apart from his analysis of the 'Attainment' meaning of *tau*, so the exact status of this form is somewhat unclear. However, since Li treats it as a verb—with no further indication otherwise—it should be treated as falling outside the realm of Non-spatial Setting for the purposes of the discussion here.

The word *tau* with the function of 'potential mode' can appear in one of two places: 1) immediately after the verb, or 2) after the direct object following the verb (Li 1991:35). While Li does not appear to provide a significant amount of additional information about this use of *tau*, his treatment of it as marking 'potential mode' strongly suggests that it serves as an Ability-type Modal or Semi-modal, an analysis adopted here.

The particle *tau* 'Attainment aspect marker' precedes the verb and the sentence in which it appears must have some sort of phrase or marker that "bounds" the action, such as a direct object, a time phrase, a "direction/location phrase," or the "Completion aspect

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<sup>25</sup> It will be found below that the synonymous form *yuav* in White Hmong is a Modal, rather than tense marking.

marker” (Li 1991:29, 34). The particle signals “the attainment of the event signaled by the sentence,” where the event could “be a hypothetical or future event,” (Li 1991:29). Li argues strongly against a common analysis of *tau* as past tense, and gives a conclusive example where *tau* appears in a hypothetical protasis of a conditional statement (1991:26-29). As a result, it is clear that *tau* is not a tense marker, and likely falls into the category of Perfect as a part of Completion, as is found for its White Hmong counterpart below.

The particle *lawm* ‘Completion aspect marker’ appears at the end of the clause and marks “the completion of an event” (Li 1991:37, 39). In terms of its distribution, its appearance with the future *yuav* is allowed if the negative marker *tsi* is also present, since “an overtly specified future event in Hmong cannot be seen as completed” (Li 1991:40-41). At the same time, Li asserts that *lawm* can occur in an “irrealis” context, and provides an example where *lawm* appears in a ‘when’ time clause marking a yet-to-be-completed action (1991:39, 41). In either case, *lawm* clearly follows Dixon (2012)’s definition of Perfect, and so belongs to his category of Completion.

The word *taabtom* ‘Progressive aspect marker’ appears after the subject noun and only accompanies ‘activity verbs’ (Li 1991:46). It can appear with *yuav* ‘Future aspect marker’; the resulting construction means ‘be about to’ and is allowed to appear preceding ‘stative verbs’ (Li 1991:46-48). The word *taabtom* is never accompanied by *lawm* ‘Completion aspect marker’ or *tau* ‘Attainment aspect marker’ (Li 1991:47). While it cannot appear with adverbs of past time in isolation, it can appear in a context giving information on a background activity in relation to another event (Li 1991:49-50). The restriction against *taabtom* appearing with perfect markers such as *tau* or *lawm* and

especially its use with past time adverbials to signal a background activity show that *taabtom* is an imperfective marker belonging to Dixon's Composition category.

The Laotian dialect of Green Hmong thus has markers belonging to Irrealis, Completion, and Composition, and, if Li (1991) is correct, Tense. A summary of these elements is shown below in Table 5.

Category	Subcategory	Examples
Tense	Future	<i>yuav</i> 'Future tense'
Modality as part of Irrealis	Ability	<i>tau</i> 'potential mode'
Completion	Perfect	<i>tau</i> 'Attainment aspect marker', <i>lawm</i> 'Completion aspect marker'
Composition	Imperfective	<i>taabtom</i> 'Progressive aspect marker'

**Table 5.** Summary of Non-spatial Setting in Laotian Green Hmong.

The findings for Non-spatial Setting within the grammar of the three languages, Mandarin Chinese, Guizhou Dong, and the two dialects of Green Hmong, are shown below in Table 6.

Category	Mandarin Chinese	Guizhou Dong	Honghe Green Hmong	Laotian Green Hmong
Tense: Future				<i>yuav</i> 'Future tense'
Tense: Lexical Time Words			<i>uat nax</i> 'usually', <i>zeuf</i> 'already', <i>let</i> 'finally'	
Modality: Necessity/Obligation	<i>yīnggāi</i> , <i>yīngdang</i> , <i>gāi</i> 'ought to, should' <i>děi</i> , <i>bìxū</i> , <i>bìyào</i> , <i>biděi</i> 'must, ought to'		<i>yuad</i> 'need', <i>dout</i> 'must',	
Modality: Negative Obligation			<i>zhit xaob</i> 'need not, do not need to'	

Category	Mandarin Chinese	Guizhou Dong	Honghe Green Hmong	Laotian Green Hmong
Modality: Ability	<i>néng, nénggòu, huì, kěyi</i> ‘be able to’ <i>néng, kěyi</i> ‘has permission to’ <i>huì</i> ‘will, know how to’		<i>dout</i> ‘be able’, <i>dout</i> ‘get the chance’, <i>doul</i> ‘be physically able’	<i>tau</i> ‘potential mode’
Modality: Imminent Activity	<i>yào</i> ‘in the immediate future, be going to’			
Modality: Desire		<i>ju</i> <sup>53</sup> ‘want’	<i>sangd</i> ‘want’	
Modality: Intent			<i>yuad</i> ‘will, want’	
Modality: Other	<i>gǎn</i> ‘dare’ <i>kěn</i> ‘be willing to’	<i>han</i> <sup>13</sup> ‘agree’, <i>ɔam</i> <sup>323</sup> ‘dare to’		
Phase of Activity: Beginning		<i>tən</i> <sup>212</sup> <i>ma</i> <sup>35</sup> ‘begin –ing’		
Phase of Activity: Finishing			<i>dangl</i> ‘finish’	
Completion: Perfect	<i>-guo</i> ‘EXP’	<i>ljeu</i> <sup>31</sup> ‘completion’, <i>kwən</i> <sup>35</sup> ( <i>ljeu</i> <sup>31</sup> ) ‘finished action’, <i>ta</i> <sup>33</sup> ‘EXP’	<i>dangl</i> ‘finish’, <i>dluat</i> ‘experienced action’, <i>zhit</i> <i>dout</i> ‘has not, did not’	<i>tau</i> ‘Attainment aspect marker’, <i>lawm</i> ‘Completion aspect marker’
Completion: Imperfect			<i>lak</i> ‘change in progress’, <i>zhenf</i> ‘in the process of’	
Composition: Perfective	<i>-le</i> ‘PFV’		<i>leuf</i> ‘complete situation’	
Composition: Imperfective	<i>-zhe</i> ‘IPFV’	<i>to</i> <sup>323</sup> ‘action in progress’		<i>taabtom</i> ‘Progressive aspect marker’

Category	Mandarin Chinese	Guizhou Dong	Honghe Green Hmong	Laotian Green Hmong
Degree	reduplication: 'a little bit, for a short period of time'	reduplication: 'try out, for a short time', 'REPETITIVE ACTION'		
Currently Relevant State	<i>le</i> 'CRS'			

**Table 6.** Non-spatial Setting in Mandarin Chinese, Guizhou Dong, and Green Hmong.

With the above findings as a background, we will now briefly touch on the basic grammar of White Hmong before considering its Non-spatial Setting in detail.

## 2.4 Basic grammar

White Hmong is an isolating language similar to other Southeast Asian languages, with a basic word order of SVO (following Fuller 1988:25). An example of the basic word order appears in (1).

- (1) *Tsov*<sup>26</sup> *tom* *twm* (Fuller 1988:18)  
 tiger bite water.buffalo  
 'Tigers bite water buffalo.'

Here, the subject *tsov* 'tiger(s)' appears first, followed by the verb *tom* 'bite', which is then followed by the object noun *twm* 'water buffalo'.

Grammatical marking is done through the use of additional words, such as particles or adverbs, rather than verbal affixes or inflection.<sup>27</sup> This is shown in (2) below.

<sup>26</sup> Throughout this thesis, White Hmong is written using the native orthography. For a description of this orthography, please see Fuller (1988), Heimbach (1969), or Jarkey (1991).

<sup>27</sup> As mentioned as a general trait for Southeast Asian languages in section 2.3 above.

- (2) *Lawv tau ntshai.* (Fuller 1988:20)  
 3PL ATT<sup>28,29</sup> afraid  
 ‘They were afraid.’

In (2), *lawv* ‘3PL’ serves the role of sentence subject and *ntshai* ‘afraid’ as predicate, and the notion of perfect is conveyed by the separate word *tau* ‘ATT’.

Noun phrases typically consist of either a single noun, a construction with a noun and an adjective, a construction including a noun classifier, or a possessive construction. When adjectives are used, the word order is generally Noun Adjective (Fuller 1988:13; Jarkey 1991:33), as in (3) below.

- (3) *lub tsev loj* (Mottin 1978:48)  
 CLF<sup>30</sup> house big  
 ‘the big house’

Here, the head noun *tsev* ‘house’ is followed by the adjective *loj* ‘big’. A small set of adjectives do not follow the Noun Adjective pattern, but immediately precede the noun, such as *niaj* ‘great’, *nyuam* ‘little’, and *qub* ‘old’ (following Fuller 1988:13; Jarkey 1991:33).

Noun classifiers are ubiquitous in White Hmong, and classifiers are generally assigned to nouns based on some semantic component of the noun. For example, if the noun is animate, the classifier *tus* ‘animate CLF’ will be the one used. Some common classifiers appear in Table 7 below.

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<sup>28</sup> Elements of Non-spatial Setting are glossed throughout based on findings presented in section 3 below. In some cases, these may rely in part on outside sources; the reader is directed to the relevant parts of section 3 below for citations of these sources.

<sup>29</sup> Glosses for content from outside sources are sometimes altered from the original to be consistent with other examples throughout, especially as different sources tend to gloss Non-spatial Setting markers in different ways.

<sup>30</sup> See Table 7 below for the citation for glosses referring to classifiers.

Classifier	Category
<i>cov</i>	plurals of an unspecified number
<i>lub</i>	round, bulky, hollow objects; abstract nouns
<i>rab</i>	tools and weapons
<i>tus</i>	animate beings; long, slender, cylindrical objects; abstract nouns
<i>txoj</i>	objects that come in lengths
<i>yam</i>	kinds, classes

**Table 7.** Some common classifiers in White Hmong. (quoting Jarkey 1991:35-37)

Noun classifiers generally appear when numerals, demonstratives, or some possessives are used (see Fuller 1988:19). With numerals, the word order is Numeral Classifier Noun (Fuller 1988:13; Jarkey 1991:32). With demonstratives, the order is Classifier Noun Demonstrative (see Jarkey 1991:32). Examples of classifiers with a numeral and a demonstrative appear in (4) and (5), respectively.

- (4) *ib lub teb chaws*  
 one CLF country  
 ‘one country’

Here, the numeral *ib* ‘one’ is followed by the classifier *lub* ‘round objects/abstract CLF’, which in turn is followed by the noun *teb chaws* ‘country’ to produce the meaning ‘one country’.

- (5) *lub ntiaj teb no*  
 CLF world this  
 ‘this world’

In (5), the classifier *lub* ‘round objects/abstract CLF’ appears first, followed by the noun *ntiaj teb* ‘world’, followed by the demonstrative *no* ‘this’.

There are three varieties of possessive constructions: 1) construction with a classifier; 2) a comparatively rare construction made up of possessor noun followed by possessed; 3) construction with the *li* possessive marker. The construction with a

classifier takes the form of ‘Possessor Classifier Possessed’ (see Fuller 1988:19), as shown in (6) below.

- (6) *peb lub hom phiaj*  
 1PL CLF purpose  
 ‘our purpose’

In (6), the possessor *peb* ‘1PL’ appears first, followed by the relevant classifier for the possessed noun, in this case *lub* ‘round objects/abstract CLF’, followed by the possessed noun *hom phiaj* ‘purpose’.

A construction made up of the possessor noun followed by the possessed noun is occasionally seen, though this is restricted to specific possessed nouns (Mottin 1978:30). One example is *kuv txiv* ‘my father’, where *kuv* is ‘1SG’ and *txiv* is ‘father’; adding the relevant classifier, *tus* ‘animate CLF’, results in the meaning changing to ‘my husband’ (Fuller 1988:19; Mottin 1978:30). Another rare construction is one which uses the particle *li* in the pattern ‘Possessor *li*’ and tends to be used with the copula in a predicative sense (Heimbach 1979:111; Mottin 1978:46), as shown in (7).

- (7) *tej no<sup>31</sup> yog kuv li*  
 these CLF 1SG POSS<sup>32</sup>  
 ‘These are mine.’<sup>33</sup>

Here, the phrase *kuv li* ‘mine’ is made up of *kuv* ‘1SG’ and the particle *li*, and appears after the copula *yog*, serving a predicative purpose.

Relative clauses are one of three types: 1) a clause headed by *uas* ‘that’ after the head noun; 2) a clause headed by the pronoun/classifier *qhov* ‘thing’,<sup>34</sup> and 3) a verbal phrase headed by a classifier. The first type is a clause comprised of a head noun, the

<sup>31</sup> Word grouping and gloss based on Heimbach (1979:313).

<sup>32</sup> Gloss following Heimbach (1979:111).

<sup>33</sup> Translation modified from Jay Yang’s original to make grammatical in English; follows Heimbach (1969:111)’s treatment of *kuv li* as ‘mine.’

<sup>34</sup> Gloss following Mottin (1978:35).

subordinating conjunction *uas*, and the phrase that is relativized. This is shown in (8) below.

- (8) *lub hom phiaj uas peb los nyob rau hauv ntiaj teb no*  
 CLF purpose REL 1PL come live<sup>35</sup> to in world this  
 ‘...the purpose that we live in this world...’<sup>36</sup>

In (8), the head noun is *hom phiaj* ‘purpose’, which is followed by the relative clause *uas peb los nyob rau hauv ntiaj teb no* ‘that we live in this world’.

The second type of relative clause is comprised of a classifier such as *qhov* ‘thing’ or *tus* ‘animate CLF’ followed by the clause, and functions as a nominalized entity (following Mottin 1978:25). An example appears in (9).

- (9) *Tiam sis qhov kuv koj tuaj qhuab qhia peb hmo no...*  
 but CLF 1SG take come preach 1PL night this  
 ‘But what I bring to preach to us tonight...’

In this case, the relative clause is formed from the classifier *qhov* ‘thing’ combined with the clause *kuv koj tuaj qhuab qhia peb hmo no...* ‘I bring to preach to us tonight’, where *qhov* fills the slot of the otherwise missing argument.

Pronouns in White Hmong are split into singular, dual, and plural varieties, with one additional ‘impersonal pronoun’<sup>37</sup> (Mottin 1978:44), as shown in Table 8 below.

	Singular	Dual	Plural
First Person	<i>kuv</i> ‘1SG’	<i>wb</i> ‘1DU’	<i>peb</i> ‘1PL’
Second Person	<i>koj</i> ‘2SG’	<i>neb</i> ‘2DU’	<i>nej</i> ‘2PL’
Third Person	<i>nws</i> ‘3SG’	<i>nkawd</i> ‘3DU’	<i>lawv</i> ‘3PL’
Impersonal	<i>yus</i> ‘one’		

**Table 8.** Pronouns in White Hmong. (Adapted from Mottin 1978:44)

<sup>35</sup> It should be noted that the word *nyob* ‘live, stay’ also has a grammaticalized use as a coverb meaning ‘in’; both uses appear extensively below.

<sup>36</sup> A more idiomatic English translation would be ‘the purpose for which we live in this world,’ though the translation provided above, while somewhat awkward in English, accurately represents the structure of the phrase in White Hmong.

<sup>37</sup> English terminology here following Jarkey (1991).

Verb phrases in White Hmong represent one of the most complex aspects of the language. This includes word order and morphological phenomena. First, the basic word order is the following:

(Adverb) (Modal) (Negative) Verb(s) (Adverb) *lawm*

where *lawm* is a marker signaling one variety of perfect.<sup>38</sup> Verb phrases also exhibit a number of important phenomena, including grammaticalized markers of aspect, modals, serial verb constructions, the use of adverbs, and complementation constructions. Grammaticalized markers of aspect and modals will be dealt with in detail in the discussion on Non-spatial Setting, as they are an integral part of the system. The others will be briefly discussed in turn below.

Serial Verb Constructions (SVCs)<sup>39</sup> are extremely common in White Hmong. These can take any one of a large number of forms. Important construction types include “Cotemporal,” “Causative,” “Accomplishment,”<sup>40</sup> and “Disposal” serial verb constructions (Jarkey 1991). Accomplishment SVCs are important to Non-spatial Setting, and will be discussed in detail below. For specific information on the other SVCs, the reader is directed to Jarkey (1991).

Adverbs and adverbial phrases generally occur in one of three places: 1) at the beginning of the clause; 2) at the very beginning of the verb phrase, after the subject; or 3) near or at the end of the clause, immediately before the final perfect marker *lawm* if it is

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<sup>38</sup> See the discussion on Non-spatial Setting below for arguments and examples that show this.

<sup>39</sup> Abbreviation in line with the usage found in Jarkey (1991).

<sup>40</sup> Also known as “Attainment” in Jarkey (2004).

present.<sup>41,42</sup> Examples of each of these sentence patterns are shown in (10), (11), and (12), respectively.

- (10) *Hnub no kuv coj Vaj Tswv txoj lus tuaj...*  
 day this 1SG take God word come  
 ‘Today I will preach God’s word...’

Here, the adverbial phrase *hnub no* ‘today’ precedes the subject pronoun *kuv* ‘1SG’, demonstrating the use of an adverbial at the beginning of the sentence.

- (11) *Tej zaum peb twb muaj coob tug sim tas lawm.*  
 maybe 1PL already have many CLF try finish CP  
 ‘Maybe we have many people who have tried it already.’

In (11), the adverb *twb* ‘already’ appears between the subject pronoun *peb* ‘1PL’ and the verb *muaj* ‘have’, showing that this kind of adverb can occur between the subject and the rest of the verb phrase of which the adverb is a part.

- (12) *Peb twb nrhiav tau peb lub hom phiaj nag hmo lawm.*  
 1PL already search ATT 1PL CLF purpose yesterday CP  
 ‘We already found our purpose yesterday.’

In this case, the adverb *nag hmo* ‘yesterday’ appears after the object *peb lub hom phiaj* ‘our purpose’ but before *lawm* ‘CP’, showing the possibility of adverbs in this position.

Though adverbials can occur in each of these positions, there are restrictions on the positioning of certain adverbs and adverbial phrases. While such consideration is generally beyond the scope of this thesis, one restriction is important to Non-spatial Setting: the position immediately after the subject is the location where grammaticalized adverbials regularly appear, such as the Imperfect *tab tom* ‘currently’, or the Modality

<sup>41</sup> One example that appears in the data from Jay Yang suggests that there may be a fourth option, where the adverbial phrases appear after the verb but before content indicating the direct object, all inside a larger nominalized verb phrase. More research is necessary to determine why this one example stands out from the others and whether it is indeed indicative of a fourth possibility for adverbial placement.

<sup>42</sup> See below for the discussions on adverbs and *lawm*.

marker *mam li* ‘will’. Please see section 3.2 below for the discussion on such adverbials in the post-subject, pre-modal position.

Complementation is widely attested in White Hmong, of which there are several different types. These are: 1) a “Serial-like complementation strategy,” where the complement content immediately follows the head verb without an explicit marker but does not function as a full complement syntactically; 2) a “Potential” complement that begins with the conjunction *kom* ‘PC’<sup>43</sup>; 3) a “Fact” complement beginning with (*hais*) *tias* ‘that’; 4) “Topic” complement beginning with *txog (hais) tias* ‘about’; 5) “Indirect Will” beginning with *tias kom* ‘that’; and 6) “Activity,” which lacks an explicit marker and functions as an argument of the head verb (Jarkey 2006:123, 124, 126, 127, 132-133). Each of these six complementation patterns is shown below in turn.<sup>44</sup>

- (13) (a) *Yog li ces peb thiaj li txiav txim siab xam phaj tuaj rau*  
 so then 1PL consequently<sup>45,46</sup> decide interview come to  
 ‘So then we made the decision to interview to come here to...’

<sup>43</sup> Gloss based on Jarkey (2006:124). In line with Jaisser (1984), Jarkey (2006:124) points out three distinct uses of the word *kom* as a distinct entity. In addition to its use as a “Potential complementizer,” it can be used as a conjunction meaning ‘so that, in order that’ as well as a verb meaning ‘order’ (or ‘tell’ in Jaisser 1984). *Kom* is also glossed by Heimbach (1979:85) as ‘cause’, suggesting a fourth option. Throughout this thesis, identification of *kom* as a Potential complementizer, as opposed to these other uses, is generally based on Jarkey (2006:132-133).

<sup>44</sup> The classification of verbs found in Jarkey (2006:132-133) is relied upon in part for the examples found below.

<sup>45</sup> The language consultant, Jay Yang, at times consulted outside sources in the course of glossing certain words, especially function words. These have generally been replaced with glosses and/or accompanied by citations from appropriate academic works when they appear in this thesis. The citations will be provided where the word in question first appears. At the same time, some of these glosses from outside sources ultimately influenced a number of his free translations; most of these free translations have been left as is, along with the understanding that the language consultant formulated the ultimate translation based on his intuition, and incorporated any glosses that he found agreeable as a native speaker idiomatically into the translation. The outside sources included a Green Hmong dictionary named *English-Mong-English Dictionary*, written by Lang Xiong, William J Xiong & Nao Leng Xiong, Bing Translator, and several Hmong community websites.

<sup>46</sup> *Thiaj* and *thiaj li* function generally in the same manner and can be translated as ‘so,’ ‘consequently,’ ‘thereby,’ or ‘then’ (Heimbach 1969:340). Heimbach’s glosses are used throughout for these two words.

- (b) *teb chaws A mi kas no.*  
 country America here  
 ‘...America.’

Here, the verbal phrase *txiav txim siab* ‘make a decision to’ is accompanied by the phrase *xam phaj tuaj rau teb chaws A mi kas no* ‘to interview to come here to America’, without an explicit marker serving as introduction.<sup>47</sup>

- (14) (a) *...ces nws thiaj tau hais kom lawv los coj kuv*  
 then 3SG consequently ATT say PC 3PL come take 1SG  
 ‘...then he told them to take me...’
- (b) *thiab kuv tus muam wb mus rau Thaib Teb.*  
 and 1SG CLF sister 2DU go to Thailand  
 ‘...and my sister—us—(and) go to Thailand.’

In this case, the Potential, or ‘Intention/Will’ complement (Jarkey 2006:124) *kom lawv los coj kuv thiab kuv tus muam wb mus rau Thaib Teb* ‘to take me and my sister—us—(and) go to Thailand’ accompanies the verb *hais* ‘say’ and begins with the word *kom* ‘PC’.

- (15) *...los sis tsis paub hais tias Vaj Tswv tsim ib puas tsav yam...*  
 or NEG know that God create everything  
 ‘...or do not know that God created all things...’

Here, the head verb *paub* ‘know’ is followed by the complementizer *hais tias* ‘that’ and the rest of the complement clause *Vaj Tswv tsim ib puas tsav yam* ‘God created all things’, which signifies the “asserting” of “a fact” (Jarkey 2006:120).

- (16) *Yog peb xav paub txog hais tias yog vim li cas peb ho*  
 if 1PL want know about COP because what 1PL so<sup>48</sup>  
 ‘If we want to know why we...’

<sup>47</sup> Following Jarkey (2006:133), the verb *txiav txim* ‘decide’ takes a “serial-like strategy” when the subject is the same for both main and complement verbs.

<sup>48</sup> *Ho* is a “connective particle indicating sequence and carrying forward the action of the verb” and can be translated as ‘and,’ ‘but,’ ‘and then,’ ‘again,’ or ‘so’ (Heimbach 1969:53). Heimbach’s glosses are used throughout.

*los nyob rau hauv lub ntiaj teb no...*  
 come live to in CLF world this  
 ‘...came to live in this world...’

In this case, the verb *paub* ‘know’ is followed by the complementizer *txog hais tias* ‘about’ and the rest of the complement phrase *yog vim li cas peb ho los nyob rau hauv lub ntiaj teb no* ‘why we came to live in this world’, which indicates the Topic connected with the verb *paub*.

(17) *Yog li kuv txiv hlob thiaj li tau hais tias kom peb*  
 then 1SG uncle consequently ATT say that 1PL  
 ‘Then my uncle said that...’

*cov uas peb hos me los sis cov laus uas mus*  
 PL.CLF REL 1PL and.then little or PL.CLF old REL go  
 ‘...those who are little and the old people who...’

*tsis tau ces rov qab los mus thawj nyab laj nyob*  
 NEG can then return come go surrender Vietnamese in  
 ‘...cannot walk should go back and surrender to the Vietnamese...’

*rau tom zos.*  
 to at town  
 ‘...in town.’

In the example above, the long complement clause *tias kom peb...rau tom zos* ‘that we...in town’ is introduced by *tias kom* ‘that’ serves as a complement to the verb *hais* ‘say’ and expresses the Indirect Will of *kuv txiv hlob* ‘my uncle’.

(18) *...peb lub hwj chim uas peb niaj hnub ua npaav suav xav*  
 1PL CLF glory REL 1PL every<sup>49</sup> day do dream think  
 ‘...our glory that we dream of...’

*yuav xav tau nyob rau yav pem ntej*  
 want think get in to in.the.future  
 ‘...having in our lives in the future.’

Here, the Activity complement *xav yuav xav tay nyob rau yav pem ntej* ‘of having in our lives in the future’ immediately follows the predicate *ua npaav suav* ‘dream’ without the

<sup>49</sup> Gloss confirmed by Heimbach (1979:140).

use of a distinct complementizer (following Jarkey 2006:132). The reader is directed to Jaisser (1984) and Jarkey (2006) for more details on complementation in White Hmong.

One important discourse-related entity is the topic-comment construction in White Hmong. This takes the form:

Topic (*mas*) Comment

where *mas* is a topic marker (Fuller 1988:65 ff.). An example appears below in (19).

- (19) *Lub teb chaws Sam-Neua mas peb cia koj saib xyuas*  
 CLF country Sam-Neua TOP 1PL let 2SG look visit  
 ‘The Sam-Neua area, we let you rule over...’

*cov Hmoob* (Fuller 1988:37)  
 PL.CLF Hmong  
 ‘...the Hmong.’

Here, the topic, *lub teb chaws Sam-Neua* ‘the Sam-Neua area’ is followed by the topic marker *mas*. This is then followed by the comment *peb cia koj saib xyuas cov Hmoob* ‘we let you rule over the Hmong’, which refers to a situation involving the location mentioned in the topic.

There are also a large number of markers associated with exclamations and other similar effects on the sentence. The reader is directed to Mottin (1978) for examples of these.

### 3. Grammatical elements marking Non-spatial Setting in White Hmong

White Hmong has a large number of words and phrases that belong to Non-spatial Setting.

These grammatical markers are shown in their proper category in Table 9 below.

Category	Examples
Tense: Lexical Time Words	Specific Time Words: <i>nyuam qhuav</i> ‘moment’, <i>hnuab</i> ‘day’, <i>vas nthiv</i> ‘week’, <i>hli</i> ‘month’, <i>xyoo</i> ‘year’, <i>sauv ntxov</i> ‘morning’, <i>hnuab tseg</i> ‘noontime’, <i>hnuab qaij</i> ‘afternoon’, <i>tsaus ntuj</i> ‘night’ With Respect to Expectation: <i>twb</i> ‘already’, <i>yeej</i> ‘already’, <i>tseem</i> ‘still’ Temporal Shifters: <i>tag kis</i> ‘tomorrow’, <i>neeg kis</i> ‘the day after tomorrow’, <i>puag nraus</i> ‘three days from now’, <i>puag nag nraus</i> ‘four days from now’, <i>nag hmo</i> ‘yesterday’, <i>hnuab hmo</i> ‘the day before yesterday’, <i>hnoob hnuab</i> ‘three days ago’, <i>puag hnoob hnuab</i> ‘four days ago’, <i>ntua</i> ‘just’, <i>nyuam qhuav</i> ‘just, a moment ago’, <i>maj mam</i> ‘after a while’
Irrealis: Positive	<i>yuav</i> ‘POS.IRR, intend’, <i>mam (li)</i> ‘will’ (adverbial)
Irrealis: Negative	<i>txhob</i> ‘NEG.IRR, should not’
Irrealis: Modality	<i>yuav</i> ‘will, intend’, <i>txhob</i> ‘should not’ <i>yuav tsum</i> ‘should, have to, must’ <i>yuav tau</i> ‘must, have to’ <i>tsum</i> ‘can, have to’ <i>tau</i> ‘can’ <i>taus</i> ‘be physically/materially able to’ <i>txawj</i> ‘know how to’ ( <i>tsis</i> ) <i>yeej</i> ‘can(not)’
Level of Certainty: Absolute	<i>kiag (li)</i> <sup>50</sup> ‘really’ <i>tiag</i> ‘really’ <i>twb</i> ‘indeed’ <i>yeej</i> ‘certainly, definitely’ <i>xwb</i> ‘indeed’
Level of Certainty: Moderate	<i>ntshai</i> ‘maybe’ <i>tej zaum</i> ‘maybe’
Phase of Activity: Beginning	<i>pib</i> ‘begin to’, <i>tab tom</i> ‘begin to’, <i>chiv</i> ‘begin to’
Phase of Activity: Continuing	<i>pheej/pej</i> ‘continue to V, keep Ving’, <i>nyim</i> ‘keep Ving’, <i>rau siab ntso</i> ‘keep Ving, commit oneself to V’
Phase of Activity: Finishing	<i>tas</i> ‘finish Ving, be done Ving’ <i>tiav</i> ‘finish Ving’

<sup>50</sup> In some ways, *kiag* behaves like a particle, and in others like an adverb, as discussed above.

Category	Examples
Completion: Perfect	<i>tau</i> ‘have Ved (ATT)’, <i>lawm</i> ‘have Ved (CP)’, <i>tau...dua</i> , <i>dua...lawm</i> ‘have Ved (EXP)’, Attainment Serial Verb Construction <sup>51</sup>
Completion: Imperfect	<i>tab tom</i> ‘IMPERFECT’, <i>sij</i> ‘continually, repeatedly’, Reduplication
Speed and Ease: Slowness	<i>maj mam</i> ‘slowly, progressively, gradually’

**Table 9.** Grammatical markers of Non-spatial Setting in White Hmong.

These markers fit into the basic clause structure as follows:

PreS NP PreMOD MOD NEGP<sup>52</sup> PreV Verb PostV NP PF ADP *lawm xwb*<sup>53</sup>

Each of the markers of Non-spatial Setting below is presented in order based on the earliest possible slot in which they appear in a typical clause.<sup>54</sup> This presentation is followed by a section on those forms that are treated as grammatical markers in other sources but for various reasons do not fulfill Dixon (2012)’s criteria for the relevant category of Non-spatial Setting.

<sup>51</sup> Each of these forms, while marking the Perfect as part of Non-spatial Setting, represents a distinct category of Perfect—at least some of which are able to co-occur both semantically and in actual sentences. As a result, these should not be regarded as forming a natural paradigm, but as constituting unique categories of Perfect. At the same time, it should be noted that *tau* ‘ATT’ can take part in the Attainment Serial Verb Construction, as mentioned in section 3.5.1 below.

<sup>52</sup> Note that this is the location for sentence-level negation; negation of individual verbs, subordinate clauses, and some elements of Non-spatial Setting such as *tau* ‘be able’ is done through the use of negation markers immediately before the verb or grammatical marker.

<sup>53</sup> The ordering presented here is the most general for purposes of clause-level marking of Non-spatial Setting. It should be noted, however, that at least some of the markers can appear in other positions, usually later in the clause, due likely to emphasis, local scope, or clausal subordination. Considerations of this nature, however, are generally outside the scope of this thesis.

<sup>54</sup> Note also that a small subset of Non-spatial Setting markers, namely *tau* ‘ATT,’ *tas* ‘finish,’ and *lawm* ‘CP,’ can also combine with Lexical Time Words and a grammaticalized version of the verb *los* at the beginning or end of a sentence in unusual configurations to indicate time since (following Mottin 1978:106). Please see section 3.1.1 where this is discussed. Nevertheless, for purposes of this thesis, the various morphemes are generally considered in relation to how they mark Non-spatial Setting on verbs directly.

### 3.1 Pre-Subject Position

Grammatical items in this position include Lexical Time Words of the “Temporal shifter” variety<sup>55</sup> and the markers of moderate Degree of Certainty, *ntshai* ‘maybe’ and *tej zaum* ‘maybe’.

#### 3.1.1 Temporal shifters and other time markers

White Hmong has a class of adverbs that do the work of Dixon (2012:20)’s “Temporal shifters.” As stated above, Temporal shifters are a category of Lexical Time Words in the larger category of Tense in Non-spatial Setting. These adverbs include *nag hmo* ‘yesterday’, *hnub hmo* ‘the day before yesterday’, *tag kis* ‘tomorrow’, *neeg kis* ‘the day after tomorrow’, and *puag nraus* ‘three days from now’. Mottin (1978:104)<sup>56</sup> provides a list of these that also includes *hnoob hnub* ‘three days ago’, *puag hnoob hnub* ‘four days ago’, and *puag nag nraus* ‘in four days’. More specific periods of a day can be added after these, such as *sauv ntxov* ‘morning’, *hnub tseg* ‘noontime’, *hnub qaij* ‘afternoon’, and *tsaus ntuj* ‘night’. These adverbs generally appear in one of two specific places: at the very beginning of a clause, or in the “final adverbs and particles” position. First, they can appear at the very beginning of a sentence, as in (20).

- (20) *Tag kis      peb      yeej      nrhiav      tau      peb      lub      hom phiaj.*  
 tomorrow 1PL certainly search can 1PL CLF<sup>57</sup> purpose  
 ‘Tomorrow we will be able to search for our purpose.’

Here, *tag kis* ‘tomorrow’ appears at the very beginning of the sentence.

<sup>55</sup> Note that two special Temporal shifters, namely, *nyuam qhuav* ‘just, a moment ago’ and *ntua* ‘just, immediately,’ canonically appear in positions other than the pre-subject position, and they are addressed at length in sections 3.2.3 and 3.5.3, respectively.

<sup>56</sup> Several of the terms that Mottin (1978:104) provides differ from the forms given by my language consultant, Jay Yang. These are *hnub hmos* ‘the day before yesterday,’ *nag kis* ‘the day after tomorrow,’ and *nag nraus* ‘three days from now.’

<sup>57</sup> Please see Mottin (1978) or Jarkey (1991) for a discussion on classifiers in White Hmong. The gloss CLF found throughout this thesis is in alignment with their work.

Second, time adverbs can appear in the “final adverbs and particles” position. Typically, this will be at the end of the clause unless the perfect marker *lawm* also appears in the sentence, which will then follow the time adverb. Examples include (21) and (22) below.

- (21) *Peb yeej yuav nrhiav tau peb lub hom phiaj tag kis.*  
 1PL certainly POS.IRR search can/ATT 1PL CLF purpose tomorrow  
 ‘We will be able to find our purpose tomorrow.’

In this case, *tag kis* appears at the end of the sentence, without any clear difference in terms of time or scope when compared with (20).

- (22) *Peb nrhiav tau peb lub hom phiaj nag hmo lawm.*  
 1PL search ATT 1PL CLF purpose yesterday CP  
 ‘We have found our purpose yesterday.’

Here, *nag hmo* ‘yesterday’ appears, followed by the perfect marker *lawm*.

These time adverbs behave similarly to full adverbial phrases indicating other periods of time in terms of their sentence position. This is shown by (23) and (24) below.

- (23) *Tam sim no peb nrhiav tau peb lub hom phiaj.*  
 right.now 1PL search can 1PL CLF purpose  
 ‘Right now we can look for our purpose.’

In (23), the phrase *tam sim no* ‘right now’ appears sentence-initially like *tag kis* does in (20).

- (24) *Koj noj tau hmo tam sim no lawm.*  
 2SG eat can dinner now CP  
 ‘You can eat dinner now.’

Here, *tam sim no* appears near the end of the sentence and immediately before *lawm*, paralleling *nag hmo* in (22) above. Thus, time adverbs and their phrasal counterparts behave in the same manner, appearing in the same positions in the sentence.

Adverbial phrases of time also present an interesting feature: they often take the same markers as verbs. These include *tau* ‘ATTAINMENT’<sup>58</sup> and *lawm* ‘COMPLETIVE PARTICLE’ (following Mottin 1978:106). Verbs such as *tas* ‘finish’ or *los* ‘come’ may also appear (following Mottin 1978:106). Some examples appear below.

- (25) *Kuv nyob Thaib Teb tau peb xyoos* (Mottin 1978:106)  
 1SG live Thailand ATT three year  
 ‘I lived in Thailand for three years.’

Here, the perfect marker *tau* appears with the phrase *peb xyoos* ‘three years’ to indicate elapsed time.

- (26) *Kuv twb yuav ua kws kho mob tsib xyoo tas los lawm.*  
 1SG almost POS.IRR do doctor five year finish come CP  
 ‘I almost became a doctor five years ago.’

In this case, the time phrase *tsib xyoo* ‘five years’ is followed by the phrase *tas los lawm*, made up of the verb *tas* ‘finish’, the verb *los* ‘come’, and the perfect marker *lawm*, representing the meaning of the English ‘ago’. This combination can also be found in the sentence topic, as in (27) below.

- (27) (a) *Tau peb<sup>59</sup> xyoos tas los lawm kuv nyob*  
 ATT three year finish come CP 1SG in  
 ‘Three years ago<sup>60</sup>, I was in...’
- (b) *Thaib Teb* (Mottin 1978:106)  
 Thailand  
 ‘...Thailand.’

Here, *tau* ‘ATT’, *tas* ‘finish’, and *lawm* ‘CP’ appear with the time phrase *3 xyoos* ‘three years’ in the topic to place the comment at a point in time. Thus, the markers *tau* and

<sup>58</sup> Mottin (1978) gives the French equivalent for the English ‘for’ with a time phrase in his treatment of this use of *tau*. For purposes of this thesis, this use of *tau* is also treated as ‘ATTAINMENT’, to show the connected relationship in meaning between attainment of an event and attainment of time.

<sup>59</sup> This was the numeral “3” in Mottin (1978)’s original example. It has been replaced here with the actual Hmong word for “three” written out.

<sup>60</sup> Mottin (1978)’s work is written in French, and I at times have relied on outside sources to assist in translating the French. Here, the translation for *il y a* in reference to years is drawn from Kellogg (2014).

*lawm* as well as the verbs *tas* ‘finish’ and *los* ‘come’ may appear with phrases to place an event in time in both sentence topic and comment.

As part of a full system of Lexical Time Words, Temporal shifters can combine with some words belonging to the Specific time span category, as in (28) below.

- (28) *nag hmo hnuv qaij*  
 yesterday afternoon  
 ‘yesterday afternoon’

Here, the Temporal shifter *nag hmo* ‘yesterday’ is combined with the Specific time span word *hnuv qaij* ‘afternoon’ to produce the time phrase ‘yesterday afternoon’. Temporal shifters can also co-occur with With Respect to Expectation adverbs, as in (29) below.

- (29) *Peb twb nrhiav tau peb lub hom phiaj tas nag hmo lawm.*  
 1PL already search ATT 1PL CLF purpose finish yesterday CP  
 ‘We have already found our purpose yesterday.’

In this case, the With Respect to Expectation morpheme *twb* ‘already’ appears in the same sentence as the Temporal shifter *nag hmo* ‘yesterday’. As a result, it is clear that the different classes of adverbs in the Lexical Time Words category can co-occur.

### 3.1.2 *ntshai* ‘maybe’

The morpheme *ntshai* ‘maybe’<sup>61</sup> expresses a moderate level of certainty (following Mottin 1978:115) as part of Degree of Certainty. It is identical in form to the verb *ntshai* ‘be afraid’,<sup>62</sup> and is placed at the beginning of its clause, before the subject. An example appears in (30).

- (30) *Ntshai nws yuav tuaj xyuas kuv* (Mottin 1978:115)  
 maybe 3SG POS.IRR come visit 1SG  
 ‘Maybe he will come to visit me.’

Here, *ntshai* ‘maybe’ appears at the beginning of the clause, before the subject *nws* ‘3SG’.

<sup>61</sup> Gloss following Mottin (1978:115).

<sup>62</sup> Gloss following Fuller (1988:20).

This form of *ntshai* is a grammaticalized item since its meaning has undergone semantic bleaching to become a Degree of Certainty marker. To be sure, examples such as (30) above could be interpreted as ‘(I) fear he will come to visit me’, though Mottin (1978:115) points out that this form can be used “with or without [the] idea of fear<sup>63</sup>.” Since the ‘fear’ meaning has been lost in sentences such as (30) above, and the ‘maybe’ sense is the result, it is clear that semantic bleaching has occurred. On the basis of this and the resulting semantics, it is certain that *ntshai* ‘maybe’ marks Degree of Certainty.

As for the larger system of which *ntshai* ‘maybe’ is a part, Mottin (1978:115) demonstrates that words at this level of certainty can often be used with others, such as *tej zaum* ‘maybe’. As a result of this, it is clear that at least some markers of Degree of Certainty can co-occur and are thus not part of a paradigm that requires the use of only one marker at a time.

### 3.1.3 *tej zaum* ‘maybe’

*Tej zaum* ‘maybe’<sup>64</sup> is a Degree of Certainty marker that indicates a moderate level of certainty (following Mottin 1978:115). It appears in clause-initial position. An example appears in (31) below.

- (31) *Tej zaum nws yuav tuaj* (Mottin 1978:115)  
 maybe 3SG POS.IRR come  
 ‘Maybe he is going to come.’

Here, *tej zaum* ‘maybe’ appears before the subject pronoun *nws* ‘3SG’, demonstrating its meaning and its placement at the beginning of the clause before the subject pronoun.

*Tej zaum* is clearly a grammatical marker because its semantics have undergone a shift from its literal part-by-part meaning, showing signs of semantic bleaching. This is

<sup>63</sup> Translation of French *crainte* from Kellogg (2014).

<sup>64</sup> Gloss following Mottin (1978:115).

evidenced by the fact that its individual parts are ‘some’,<sup>65</sup> and ‘time’,<sup>66</sup> which does not have an immediate relation to ‘maybe’,<sup>67</sup> showing a change in meaning towards one with a more grammatical function. Altogether, since *tej zaum* indicates a medium level of certainty with the meaning ‘maybe’ and is known to be a grammaticalized element, it belongs to Non-spatial Setting as a marker of Degree of Certainty.

In terms of the larger system of Degree of Certainty, Mottin (1978:115) mentions that certain multiple forms of Degree of Certainty can be used together. This may also be true even with greater Degrees of Certainty, such as *yeej* ‘certainly’.<sup>68</sup>

### 3.2 Pre-modal position

Grammatical items in this position include a wide range of adverb-like morphemes, namely, the With Respect to Expectation adverbs *tseem* ‘still’ and *twb* ‘already’, the Temporal Shifter *nyuam qhuav* ‘just, a moment ago’, the Irrealis adverb *mam (li)*, the Continuing action marker *sij* ‘continue to’, the Degree of Certainty markers *kiag (li)* ‘really’, *tiag* ‘really’, and *yeej* ‘certainly’, the Imperfect marker *tab tom* ‘IMPERFECT’, and the Speed and Ease marker *maj mam* ‘slowly, progressively, gradually’.

#### 3.2.1 *tseem* ‘still’

The word *tseem* is glossed as ‘still’ by Jarkey (1991:75) and is often regarded by scholars to be a type of grammatical marker, indicating “imperfective aspect” (Jarkey 1991:75), a “temporal/aspectual distinction” (Fuller 1988:20), or “action still in progress” (Heimbach

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<sup>65</sup> This is the gloss that Jay Yang generally provided, and is corroborated by Mottin (1978:54). It is notable, however, that Mottin gives the relevant construction as *tej* CLF (NOUN), while *zaum* ‘time’ appears without a classifier in *tej zaum*. However, the texts obtained from Jay Yang have several examples where the construction is *tej* + noun.

<sup>66</sup> Gloss in line with Heimbach (1969:435).

<sup>67</sup> *Tej zaum* can also mean ‘sometimes’ (Mottin 1978:115), which suggests that it has undergone mild grammaticalization (in this case decategorialization from a noun phrase to an adverbial phrase) in other directions as well.

<sup>68</sup> Please see example (70) in section 3.2.8 below for a case where *tej zaum* co-occurs with *yeej* ‘certainly.’

1969:350). The semantics of *tseem* as ‘still’ suggest that this morpheme is a Lexical Time Word of the With Respect to Expectation variety.

Examples of *tseem* in use appear in (32) and (33) below.

- (32) *Kuv tseem khiav.* (Fuller 1988:20)  
 1SG still run  
 ‘I still run.’

In (32), *tseem* appears with *khiav* to indicate the ongoing situation translated as ‘still run’.

- (33) *Lawv haj tseem noj mov.* (Heimbach 1969:350)  
 3PL still eat rice  
 ‘They are still eating.’

Here, *tseem* appears with *noj mov* ‘eat rice’ to produce ‘still eating’, that is, the ongoing situation where the agents *lawv* ‘3PL’ continue to eat. Note here the additional element *haj*, which, Heimbach (1969:350) suggests can optionally appear with *tseem*, without a noticeable change in meaning.

*Tseem* is often used in negative contexts in conjunction with *tau* ‘ATTAINMENT’ to express unrealized situations. Mottin (1978:102) even asserts that whenever *tsis tau* ‘have not’ is used, *tseem* also appears. This usage is shown below in (34) and (35).

- (34) (a) *...rau qhov tshuav peb cov nplej nyob rau tom teb*  
 because have 1PL CLF rice in to there farm  
 ‘...because we still had unhulled rice in the farm that...’
- (b) *tseem ua tsis tau tiav*  
 still do NEG ATT finish  
 ‘...still needed to be done.’

Here, the phrase *ua tsis tau tiav* ‘is not done’ is accompanied by *tseem* ‘still’ to indicate an ongoing lack of realization, in this case, of the completed action of threshing rice.

- (35) *Nws tseem tsis tau mus.* (Heimbach 1969:350)  
 3SG still NEG ATT go  
 ‘He still has not gone.’

In this example, *tseem* appears with *tsis tau* and the verb *mus* ‘go’ to express the meaning ‘still has not gone’—that is, the ongoing lack of realization of the agent’s going.

Grammatically, *tseem* behaves similarly to *tab tom* ‘Imperfect’ and *twb* ‘already’ as a morpheme that is placed between the sentence subject and the negative (following Jarkey 1991:75) or a Modal.<sup>69</sup> This is demonstrated by the four examples below.

- (36) *Peb tseem tab tom nrhiav peb lub tsheb.*  
 1PL still IPRF search 1PL CLF car  
 ‘We are still looking for our car.’

In (36), *tseem* is placed after the subject *peb* ‘1PL’ and before *tab tom* ‘IMPERFECT’ and the verb *nrhiav* ‘search, look for’, producing a well-formed sentence.

- (37) \**Tseem peb tab tom nrhiav peb lub tsheb.*  
 still 1PL IPRF search 1PL CLF car  
 ‘Still we are looking for our car.’

In (37), *tseem* has been placed at the beginning of the sentence, where other classes of adverbs can appear. However, this results in an ungrammatical sentence.

- (38) \**Peb tab tom nrhiav peb lub tsheb tseem.*  
 1PL IPRF search 1PL CLF car still  
 ‘We are looking for our car still.’

Here, *tseem* appears at the end of the sentence—a possible place for other varieties of adverbs—but this renders the sentence ungrammatical. Thus, *tseem* must be placed between the subject and the verb.

<sup>69</sup> Note that one instance of *tab tom* following *yuav* was elicited, though this ordering is not preferred by Jay Yang.

- (39) *Nws tseem tsis tau mus.* (Heimbach 1969:350)  
 3SG still NEG ATT go  
 ‘He still has not gone.’

In this case, *tseem* appears before *tsis tau mus* ‘has not gone’, showing that *tseem* is placed before the negative.

- (40) *Peb tseem yuav mus peb txoj kev.*  
 1PL still POS.IRR go 1PL CLF way  
 ‘We will go our own way (but we haven’t left yet).’

In (40), *tseem* appears before the Modal-type word *yuav* ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS, intend’. As it has been seen, *tseem* must be placed between the subject and either the first verb, the negative marker *tsis*, or a Modal-type word such as *yuav*, whichever occurs first. This suggests that *tseem* is in the same class of words syntactically as *tab tom* ‘IMPERFECT’ and *twb* ‘already’. However, since *tseem* can co-occur with *tab tom*, the two do not form part of a single grammatical paradigm. In addition, while *tab tom* fills the role of Imperfect, *tseem* fits naturally into the With Respect to Expectation subcategory of adverbs in Dixon (2012)’s Tense category, along with *twb*, with which it shares at least some of its grammatical tendencies.<sup>70</sup>

### 3.2.2 *twb* ‘already, indeed’

The morpheme *twb* is an adverb meaning ‘already’, though it serves several other functions, with possible meanings such as ‘indeed, even, really’ (Heimbach 1969:330).

With the meaning ‘already’, *twb* is a Lexical Time Word, of the With Respect to Expectation variety. In its extended meaning as ‘indeed’, it is a Degree of Certainty marker indicating strong certainty.

An example of *twb* in use with the meaning ‘already’ appears in (41) below.

<sup>70</sup> It is notable here that there is a syntactic unity in White Hmong between markers of Imperfect as part of Completion and Lexical Time Words of the With Respect to Expectation variety, such that the distinction is blurred, at least syntactically.

- (41) *Tej zaum peb twb muaj coob tug sim tas lawm.*  
 maybe 1PL already have many CLF try finish CP  
 ‘Maybe we have many people who have tried it already.’

Here, *twb* appears before the verb *muaj* ‘have’ and after the subject pronoun *peb* ‘1PL’, producing ‘we have...already’.

My language consultant, Jay Yang, suggested that *twb* has two meanings: one being ‘already’, and the other providing a nuance with a range that includes ‘already’ but could mean ‘indeed’ as well. An example of each of these uses is found below in (42) and (43), respectively.

- (42) *Peb twb tab tom nrhiav peb lub tsheb.*  
 1PL already IPRF search 1PL CLF car  
 ‘We are currently looking for our car already.’

In (42), *twb* appears after the subject pronoun *peb* ‘1PL’ and before *tab tom* ‘Imperfect’ and the verb *nrhiav* ‘search’, forming the phrase ‘we are currently looking...already’.

- (43) *Peb tab tom twb nrhiav peb lub tsheb.*  
 1PL IPRF indeed search 1PL CLF car  
 ‘We are currently looking for our car.’ or ‘We have been looking for our car.’

In (43), *twb* appears in a different position—after the Imperfect marker *tab tom* and immediately before the verb *nrhiav* ‘search’, and the ongoing process of the search is reflected in ‘we are currently looking’ or ‘we have been looking’, whereas the notion of ‘already’ is not represented in the language consultant’s translation.<sup>71</sup> In addition, Jay Yang’s initial intuition is that *twb* does not mean ‘already’ in this case, though he confirmed that ‘already’ could be a component; he confirmed that it could mean ‘indeed’, and suggested that this example is referring to the confirmation that the action is *already* happening as a confirmation to the hearer. In the literature, Heimbach (1969:330) defines

<sup>71</sup> The language consultant later said that *twb* here gives the nuance ‘already’ in that the event expressed by the sentence is *already* in progress, rather than that it has already happened.

*twb* as a “preverbal particle drawing attention to the state of affairs at the time,” while Jarkey (1991:68) calls it a “status morpheme” that “is used when the speaker wishes to indicate certainty concerning the truth of the proposition.” This confirms the secondary reading for *twb* as ‘indeed’, showing that it functions in an extended use to indicate a high Degree of Certainty. It is clear, then, that *twb*’s semantics, while canonically centered around ‘already’, can also serve to indicate a sort of emphatic confirmation that an event is actively occurring.

Syntactically, *twb* can only appear in pre-modal position, using the ordering scheme presented above. Attempting to place it in pre-subject position or “final adverbs and particles” position results in an ungrammatical sentence. This is shown in (44) and (45) below.

- (44) \**Twb*    *peb*    *nrhiav*    *peb*    *lub*    *tsheb*.  
 already    1PL    search    1PL    CLF    car  
 ‘Already we are searching for our car.’

Here, *twb* has been placed in clause-initial position, before the first subject, resulting in an ungrammatical sentence.

- (45) \**Peb*    *nrhiav*    *peb*    *lub*    *tsheb*    *twb*.  
 1PL    search    1PL    CLF    car    already  
 ‘We are searching for our car already.’

In this case, *twb* has been placed at the end of the clause, again resulting in an ungrammatical utterance. Thus, *twb* needs to be placed in the attested position, that is, between the subject noun and the verb.

The semantics of *twb* suggest that it is a Lexical Time Word belonging to the category With Respect to Expectation, per Dixon (2012:20). As such, with the meaning ‘already’, it indicates that an event has taken place at a time other than what is expected. From this, the notion of an emphatic ‘indeed’ is a secondary extension. Its syntactic

distribution, however, is similar to that of *tab tom* ‘IPRF’ or *tseem* ‘still’ in that it only appears after the subject and before the first verb. Drawing on its semantics and its status as an adverb, *twb* should be treated as 1) a Lexical Time Word within the Tense category of Dixon (2012) meaning ‘already’ and 2) a Degree of Certainty marker indicating strong certainty with the meaning ‘indeed’, while noting that *twb* generally forms a natural class syntactically with *tab tom* ‘IMPERFECT’ and *tseem* ‘still’.

### 3.2.3 *nyuam qhuav* ‘just, a moment ago’

The phrase *nyuam qhuav*<sup>72</sup> generally means ‘moment, short time’ (Heimbach 1969:222). As a grammaticalized element<sup>73</sup>, it appears before the verb and means ‘just’ or ‘a moment ago’ (gloss following Heimbach 1969:222), and is considered a marker of “‘immediate past’” by Mottin (1978:84). As such, *nyuam qhuav* is a Lexical Time Word of the Temporal shifters type as part of Dixon (2012)’s category of Tense.

Examples of the grammaticalized form of *nyuam qhuav* appear below.

- (46) *Nws nyuam qhuav tuaj txog.* (Mottin 1978:84)  
 3SG just come arrive  
 ‘He just arrived.’

In (46), *nyuam qhuav* appears after the subject pronoun *nws* ‘3SG’ and before the verb complex *tuaj txog* ‘arrive’, providing here the meaning ‘just’.

- (47) *nyuam qhuav mus* (Heimbach 1969:222)  
 just/a.moment.ago go  
 ‘Just went, went just a moment ago.’

In (47), *nyuam qhuav* is placed before the verb *mus* to give the meaning ‘just went’. In both cases, *nyuam qhuav* marks a recent event.

<sup>72</sup> *Nyuam* can appear in a number of time phrases, such as *ob peb nyuag hnuv* ‘a few days’ or *ib nyuag qhov* ‘a little bit, a little place’ (Heimbach 1969:222), where *nyuam* is undergoing a standard White Hmong tone sandhi change. Its usage with numerals here and with *no* ‘this’ in example (48) suggest that it sometimes serves as some sort of time classifier. Such considerations, however, are outside the scope of this paper.

<sup>73</sup> Note that this analysis as a grammaticalized element is based on the available limited data. It was not attested in the data elicited from my language consultant, Jay Yang.

*Nyuam qhuav* is grammaticalized, because 1) it does not appear in its normal location as a noun phrase (deategorialization), and 2) its meaning has been weakened to that of a grammatical entity (semantic bleaching). First, *nyuam qhuav* does not appear in its usual location. A full noun phrase with non-grammaticalized *nyuam qhuav* ‘moment’ (following Heimbach 1969:222) can appear sentence initially as a sort of topic, as in (48) below.

- (48) *Nyuam qhuav no, nws tuaj txog.* (Mottin 1978:84)  
 moment this 3SG come arrive  
 ‘He just arrived.’<sup>74</sup>

Here, *nyuam qhuav* appears with the demonstrative *no* ‘this’, and the whole phrase has been placed as a topic for the sentence *nws tuaj txog* ‘he arrived’. With the natural English translation providing the meaning ‘just’, it would appear that *nyuam qhuav no* ‘this moment’ is being used adverbially in this context as well, though it is otherwise behaving as a normal noun phrase in a normal location. On the other hand, the more grammaticalized equivalent in (46) and (47) is placed in an unusual location for a normal noun phrase, that is, between the subject and the verb. Thus, *nyuam qhuav*’s unusual syntactic behavior in cases like (46) and (47) above suggests that it has been grammaticalized.

Second, the meaning of *nyuam qhuav* in this grammatical usage has been weakened from its literal meaning. In a typical noun phrase, *nyuam qhuav* means ‘moment’ or ‘short time’, as shown in (49) below.

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<sup>74</sup> Here, note that while the noun phrase *nyuam qhuav no* appears in a normal position for noun phrases, showing no signs of deategorialization, the English gloss suggests that the phrase has still undergone semantic bleaching even in this position.

- (49) *ib nyuam qhuav* (Heimbach 1969:222)  
 one moment/short.time  
 ‘A moment, a short time.’

Here, *nyuam qhuav* is used with the numeral *ib* ‘one’, to produce the meaning ‘a moment’ or ‘a short time’, presenting itself as a noun phrase. However, in the examples above, each was rendered into English with the words ‘just’ or ‘a moment ago’, suggesting a shift and possibly weakening in meaning, and so it is clear that semantic bleaching has occurred. As a result, there is clear evidence that this phrase has undergone grammaticalization, where it is a noun phrase operating as an adverbial with a slightly weakened meaning. In sum, *nyuam qhuav*, when it appears alone, is a slightly grammaticalized adverbial that ultimately functions as a Lexical Time Word for purposes of Non-spatial Setting.

### 3.2.4 *mam (li)* ‘will’

The morpheme *mam*<sup>75</sup> or its phrasal equivalent *mam li* is an adverb that can denote a range of modalities. These modalities include future actions,<sup>76,77</sup> Necessity, and Permission in Dixon (2012)’s system of Modality. Examples of each of these three uses are given below.

- (50) *Kuv mam (li) mus.*  
 1SG will go  
 ‘I will go’

In (50), *mam* appears with the verb *mus* ‘go’, together meaning ‘will go’. This clearly indicates future action (or possibly intent).

<sup>75</sup> The existing scholarly literature only treats *mam* as a form meaning ‘then,’ which is attested in the data I collected but is beyond the scope of this paper. Please see Mottin (1978) and Heimbach (1969) for this use of *mam*.

<sup>76</sup> My language consultant, Jay Yang, used Bing Translator in order to gloss *mam*, which provided the translation ‘will’; it does not appear, however, that his free translations necessarily took this gloss into account, since he provides his own translations of several varieties.

<sup>77</sup> I double-checked this with two online Hmong-authored dictionaries, Xiong (2012) and Xiong (2014).

- (51) (a) *Ces koj mam (li) muab do rau kom*  
 then 2SG need take.hold.of<sup>78</sup> stir to so.that  
 ‘Then, you need to stir until...’
- (b) *zoo zoo tib si tas.*  
 really.good together complete  
 ‘...it is mixed really well.’

In (51), *mam li* appears with *muab do* ‘stir’ to make ‘will need to stir’. This use of ‘need’ shows that *mam li* here expresses Necessity.

- (52) *...ces koj mam (li) noj mas zoo nkaus li qab kawg li*  
 then 2SG may eat IP<sup>79</sup> good look.like tasty very<sup>80</sup>  
 ‘...and you may eat, it looks really good.’

In (52), *mam li* combines with *noj* ‘eat’ and the resulting form is translated ‘may eat’—a form of permission. Thus, *mam* and *mam li* can express a range of Modal meanings.

Though *mam (li)* has some range of meaning, the canonical meaning of the morpheme is that of marking general future action. This is evidenced by the intuitions and translations provided<sup>81</sup> by my language consultant, Jay Yang, as well as online Hmong dictionaries made by members of the Hmong community<sup>82</sup>, which, more often than not, translate *mam (li)* as ‘will’.<sup>83</sup>

Syntactically, *mam (li)* is an adverb, rather than a Modal or Semi-modal. Modals, like *yuav*, typically appear before the first verb or the negative marker *tsis*, though they can never be followed by an adverb. Semi-modals, such as *tau*, behave to some extent like regular verbs (following Dixon 2012:26), in that they appear after the negative marker *tsis* and cannot under normal circumstances be followed by an adverb. *Mam*,

<sup>78</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1969:132).

<sup>79</sup> Gloss following Fuller (1988).

<sup>80</sup> Gloss following Mottin (1978:110).

<sup>81</sup> Note that Jay Yang relied on outside sources for this, but chose ‘will’ as his gloss of choice.

<sup>82</sup> These include Xiong (2012) and Xiong (2014), both of which define *mam* as ‘will.’

<sup>83</sup> It should be noted here that Jay Yang also gave data for *mam (li)* that gave it the nuance ‘you are the one to V.’ While this usage does not appear to belong to Non-spatial Setting, but rather marking exclusivity, it is worth mentioning in reference to this morpheme.

however, must be placed in pre-modal position, in a pattern identical to a number of other morphemes that belong to Non-spatial Setting such as *yeej* ‘certainly’, *tab tom*

‘Imperfect’, and *tseem* ‘still’. This is shown in (53) and (54) below.

- (53) *Kuv mam yuav tso koj tseg.*  
 1SG will POS.IRR permit 2SG leave<sup>84</sup>  
 ‘I will be letting you go.’

Here, *mam* ‘will’ appears before the Modal-type word *yuav* ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS’ and follows the subject pronoun *kuv* ‘1SG’. This shows that *mam* is placed after the subject and before *yuav*, like the other adverbs mentioned above.

- (54) \**Koj yuav mam muab ob lub qe tsoo tso rau hauv.*  
 2SG POS.IRR will get two CLF egg break put to in  
 ‘You will get two eggs and break them and put them in there.’

In this case, *mam* ‘will’ is placed after *yuav* ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS’, rendering the sentence ungrammatical. Thus, *mam* must precede *yuav*, similar to adverbs such as *tseem* ‘still’ and *twb* ‘already’.<sup>85</sup>

Furthermore, *mam* can both precede and follow other adverbs, much like the adverbs *tseem* and *twb*. This is shown in (55) and (56) below.

- (55) *Kuv niaj hnuv mam li<sup>86</sup> muab koj tso tseg.*  
 1SG everyday will CVB<sup>87</sup> 2SG permit leave  
 ‘I will let you go everyday.’

In (55), *niaj hnuv* ‘everyday’ precedes *mam li*, showing that *mam li* can follow another adverb.

<sup>84</sup> Glosses for *tso* and *tseg* are from Heimbach (1979:354). Also in (55) and (56).

<sup>85</sup> Note that the Imperfect marker *tab tom* also belongs to this class of words, though grammatically it signals the Imperfect; please see below for the larger discussion.

<sup>86</sup> Note that in this context, *mam li* is preferred to *mam* by the language consultant Jay Yang. In contrast, in (50), either can occur. On the other hand, when it appears with the adverb *yeej*, *mam* can appear both before and after *yeej* without any issue grammatically. The reason for these co-occurrence restrictions is unknown, but since such nuances involve aspects of the language other than Non-spatial Setting, this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

<sup>87</sup> Gloss following Jarkey (1991). Also found in following examples. Note that *muab* can be either a coverb, as in this example, or a full verb meaning ‘get,’ as in the previous example above.

- (56) *Kuv mam (li) niaj hnuab muab koj tso tseg.*  
 1SG will everyday CVB 2SG permit leave  
 ‘Everyday, I will let you go.’

In (56), *mam (li)* precedes *niaj hnuab*, demonstrating that *mam (li)* can also precede another adverb. Thus, *mam li* can appear both before and after other pre-verbal elements, like *tseem* and *twb* can. As a result, the word order also suggests that *mam*, like *tseem* and *twb*, is an adverb.

In terms of distribution, *mam* does not act like a Modal. Jaisser (1984) provides an excellent set of seven tests to determine whether a certain word belongs to the class of verbs. In general, true verbs can co-occur with each of seven grammatical items—one in each test—while words belonging to other classes will either fail some of these tests or a different meaning may emerge when the tests are applied (following Jaisser 1984:50). These tests can be extended to compare words of similar classes, such as adverbs and Modals. The basic idea here is that if two words are the same kind of adverb, for example, then they should have more or less the same results with these seven tests. The seven tests are the following: 1) the negative *tsis*; 2) the question particle *puas*; 3) the “past tense marker” *tau*; 4) the “future tense marker” *yuav*; 5) the negative imperative with *txhob*; 6) the post-verbal ‘can, be able to’ “modality” *tau*; and 7) the question construction with *los tsis V* at the end, where *V* is a repetition of the word under consideration (Jaisser 1984:48-50).

Applying the tests from Jaisser (1984), *mam* fails the tests in ways that are distinct from the Modal-type word *yuav* ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS, intend.’ The test results for *mam* in comparison with *yuav* are shown in Table 10 below.

Test Type	<i>mam</i>	<i>yuav</i>
negative <i>tsis</i>	yes	no
question particle <i>puas</i>	yes	yes
“past tense” <i>tau</i>	no	no
“future tense” <i>yuav</i>	no	no (illogical)
negative imperative <i>txhob</i>	no	questionable
post-verbal ability <i>tau</i>	questionable	yes* <sup>88</sup>
question construction with <i>los tsis V</i>	questionable	yes*

**Table 10.** Comparison of verbal test results with *mam* and *yuav*.

In test 1, *mam* and *yuav* clearly behave differently, where *mam* is allowed after the negative *tsis* while *yuav* is not. In addition, in test 7, *mam* produces a questionable result, while *yuav* produces a grammatical sentence. Thus, on the basis of the verbal tests, *mam* behaves in some ways that are different from *yuav*. This shows that, on the basis of restrictions on distribution, *mam* is not a modal, nor is it a regular verb, since it would otherwise pass all seven tests, as Jaisser (1984:48-50) explains. Altogether, from these two strands of evidence, the syntactic and the distributional, it can be concluded that *mam* is an adverb.

The fact that *mam* is an adverb presents interesting implications for Non-spatial Setting in White Hmong, in that while *mam* is semantically a type of Modality, grammatically it is not a verb or Modal in Dixon (2006, 2012)’s frameworks as would be expected. This suggests that, for purposes of analyzing the system of Modality in White Hmong, grammatical elements other than verbs should be considered. As it will be seen below, the inclusion of non-Modal, non-verbal elements in the analysis of Modality in Non-spatial Setting will prove fruitful. In either case, the analysis that *mam* is an adverb that marks semantic Modality is explicitly adopted here.

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<sup>88</sup> Asterisks mark cases where more explanation is needed to fully reflect the effects of the test. This explanation is provided in prose immediately following the table in each case. This method of marking such instances is found throughout this thesis.



Additional corroborating evidence that *sij* is an adverb is found in Jarkey (1991:75), where she considers that “imperfective aspect” is marked<sup>91</sup> with adverbs<sup>92</sup> in White Hmong, of which *sij* is one, and she considers that these markers appear in one location: “after the subject but before the negative.”

In terms of Non-spatial Setting, *sij* should be treated as an adverb of the same class as *tab tom* ‘IMPERFECT’—in line with Jarkey (1991:75)—for two reasons: 1) it appears syntactically in the same position as *tab tom*, and 2) it possesses the same semantic property of unfinished, ongoing action as *tab tom*. In regard to the category of Non-spatial Setting, while *sij* does have aspects of the notion of ongoing action as other adverbs of its class, its semantics also spread into Phase of Activity with the meaning ‘continue to’ and Frequency and Degree with the meaning ‘repeatedly’. However, since this semantic spread is similar to that of reduplication, another form of the imperfect, as well as the fact that it forms a natural class, semantically and syntactically, with *tab tom* ‘IMPERFECT’, its canonical meaning and use is that of an Imperfect marker as part of Completion. As part of the larger system, however, no examples from the data are known that provide any examples where *sij* and *tab tom* co-occur, suggesting a potential paradigmatic relationship; however, further research is necessary to determine this with certainty.

### 3.2.6 *kiag* ‘really’

The word *kiag*, and its variant form *kiag li* (Heimbach 1969:84), is an adverb supplying the notion ‘really’ or ‘completely’ (glosses following Heimbach 1969:84, Mottin

<sup>91</sup> A number of the morphemes Jarkey (1991) lists as “imperfective aspect,” such as *tab tom* ‘currently,’ tend to primarily perform the function of the Imperfect in the data I obtained from Tzerge Yang.

<sup>92</sup> *Tab tom*, *tseem*, *pheej*, and *yeej* are also treated as members of this class of adverbial “imperfective” markers (Jarkey 1991:75). As seen above, at least *tab tom*, *pheej*, and *yeej* do not function like other adverbs. However, it is notable that in Jarkey (2006), *pheej* is treated as a verb; see above for the discussion.

1978:114).<sup>93</sup> It belongs to Degree of Certainty in Dixon (2012)'s Non-spatial Setting, and can occur in one of several places in the clause, namely, pre-modal, post-verbal, and “final adverbs and particles” positions, as well as between verbs.

An example of *kiag* (*li*) in context is (59) below.

- (59) *Tsis tau kev mus qhov twg kiag li.* (Mottin 1978:114)  
 NEG can road go where really  
 ‘I couldn’t really go anywhere.’

In (59), *kiag li* follows the phrase *tsis tau kev mus qhov twg* ‘couldn’t go anywhere’, and supplies the meaning ‘really’.

*Kiag*, like *tiag* (*tiag*), has been treated in the literature as a grammatical element of sorts that can express a level of certainty. Heimbach (1969:84) calls *kiag* a “post verbal intensive indicating decisiveness and completeness,” while Mottin (1978:109,114) regards it as an adverb that “expresses certainty.” Mottin’s assessment seems to be correct at first, since *kiag* generally behaves like an adverb syntactically: when it is used with the meaning “really,” it appears in the “final adverbs and particles” position, just before *lawm*. An example of this appears in (60) below.

- (60) *...kom cov roj ntawd kub kiag lawm.*  
 so.that CLF oil there hot really CP  
 ‘...until the oil is hot.’

In (60), *kiag* appears at the end of the sentence immediately before *lawm*, like other adverbs.

Two unusual syntactic traits that distinguish *kiag* from normal adverbs do appear, however: 1) *kiag* can be placed immediately after the copula verb in a sentence

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<sup>93</sup> *Kiag* also serves a second purpose as a marker that apparently expresses emphasis, which came up a small number of times in the secondary data obtained from Jay Yang. This second meaning may be more salient in the examples given below.

containing a nominalized verb phrase, and 2) *kiag* can occur between verbs. This is shown in (61) and (62) below, respectively.

- (61) *Qhov nov yog kiag qhov kuv xav tau.*  
 CLF this COP the.one NMLZ 1SG want get  
 ‘This is the one that I want.’

In this case, *kiag* is placed immediately after the copula *yog* and before the noun phrase complement *qhov kuv xav tau* ‘the one that I want’. Thus, unlike other adverbs, it can occur in post-verbal position, before the object.

- (62) *nqos kiag mus* (Heimbach 1969:84)  
 swallow whole/right.down go  
 ‘To swallow whole’ or ‘To swallow right down.’

Here, *kiag* appears after the verb *nqos* ‘swallow’ and before the verb *mus* ‘go’. Thus, *kiag* can occur between two verbs. From these two examples, it is clear that *kiag* has a wider distribution than that of normal adverbs—showing that it has undergone an even greater level of grammaticalization than its adverbial counterparts.

Since *kiag* behaves as something other than a typical adverb, and since its meaning in a number of contexts contributes a high level of certainty to what is being said, the morpheme belongs to the Degree of Certainty category in Dixon (2012)’s framework. As part of the system of Degree of Certainty in White Hmong, the data shows that *kiag* generally does not co-occur with other members of the set, and seems to be functionally very similar to *tiag* ‘really’. However, further research may prove beneficial.

### 3.2.7 *tiag* ‘really’

The word *tiag* and its reduplicated version *tiag tiag* means ‘really’<sup>94</sup> and is an adverb that is placed either before the verb or at the end of a sentence. *Tiag* belongs to Degree of Certainty, as expressing a high level of certainty.

Examples appear in (63) and (64) below.

- (63) *Peb lub hom phiaj yog dab tsi tiag tiag?*  
 1PL CLF purpose COP what really  
 ‘What is really our purpose?’

Here, *tiag tiag* occurs at the end of the sentence, adding the meaning ‘really’.

- (64) *Peb lub hom phiaj tiag tiag yog dab tsi?*  
 1PL CLF purpose really COP what  
 ‘What, really, is our purpose?’

In this case, *tiag tiag* ‘really’ appears after the subject phrase *peb lub hom phiaj* ‘our purpose’ and before the copula verb *yog* ‘be’, with the same resulting meaning. Thus, *tiag tiag* can occur in two different positions, both of which are typical for adverbs. It should be noted however that *tiag tiag* most often appears at the end of the sentence; in every case of *tiag tiag* in the three texts I collected, *tiag tiag* always occurred near the end of the sentence.

*Tiag tiag* is relevant to the discussion of Non-spatial setting since some authors, have treated it as a particle of emphasis meaning ‘really, truly’ (Heimbach 1969:319), or of certainty (Mottin 1978:114). Heimbach (1969)’s treatment is especially notable, since in this usage he regards it as a “final emphatic particle,” suggesting a grammaticalized status. However, since examples such as (64) are possible, it is clear that *tiag tiag* has the

<sup>94</sup> It should be noted here that in the Hmong-community dictionary “Hmong Dictionary Online” (Xiong 2014), this is glossed as the adjective ‘real.’ Whether this operates as an adjective as well as an adverb is unknown, since all academic sources consulted treat *tiag* as a grammatical entity of some sort.

syntactic distribution properties of an adverb.<sup>95</sup> At the same time, the fact that *tiag* is similar in function—as well as to a significant extent, distribution—to *kiag* (*li*), combined with the fact that *tiag* can be reduplicated as *tiag tiag* with no change in meaning (suggesting semantic bleaching to some extent), suggests that *tiag* is a function word, though admittedly with the syntactic distribution of an adverb.

As part of the larger system of Degree of Certainty, *tiag* generally does not co-occur with its very similar counterpart *kiag* (*li*) ‘really’, suggesting a paradigmatic relationship of sorts. However, since these two words have basically the same function and generally occur at similar places in the sentence, it could be that their phonetic similarity, rather than the existence of a contrastive paradigmatic relationship, prevents them from co-occurring. However, considerations of how similarity in form and meaning could affect the grammar of White Hmong are outside of the scope of this thesis, and are left for further research.

### 3.2.8 *yeej* ‘already, certainly, can’

The word *yeej* is a morpheme that is likely derived from the verb *yeej* ‘to win in an encounter, have success’<sup>96</sup> and appears in grammaticalized form as either an adverb or a Semi-modal verb with limited distribution. The adverb will be dealt with first, while the Semi-modal will be discussed further below.

The adverb has functions associated with two meanings: 1) ‘already’ (Fuller 1988) or ‘originally’ (Heimbach 1969; Jarkey 1991), and 2) ‘certainly’ (following Mottin 1978:114) or ‘definitely’ (Jarkey 2006). With the second function, *yeej* denotes a high Degree of Certainty. Each of the two possibilities is shown in (65) and (66) below.

<sup>95</sup> The one unique thing about *tiag* (and *kiag*) is that it is one of a very small number of adverbs that can appear both at the beginning of the verb phrase and at the end of the sentence.

<sup>96</sup> Gloss per Heimbach (1969:424).

- (65) *Nws yeej tuaj.* (Fuller 1988:20)  
 3SG already come  
 ‘S/he already came.’

In (65), the word *yeej* supplies the meaning of ‘already’ and appears between the subject *nws* ‘he, she’ and the verb *tuaj* ‘come’.

- (66) (a) *(tias-)kom Lis mus mas, kuv yeej tau yuam*  
 (that-)PC Li go TOP 1SG definitely ATT force  
 ‘To have Lee go, I definitely forced them.’
- (b) *lawv mas* (Jarkey 2006:127)  
 3PL IP  
 ‘...them.’

In (66), *yeej* supplies the meaning of ‘definitely’ (per Jarkey 2006:127), and appears after the subject pronoun *kuv* ‘1SG’ and before the rest of the verb phrase *tau yuam* ‘forced’.

As a marker of certainty, *yeej* patterns in two ways depending on the point in time relative to the present: if in past situations, it is commonly used for certainty regarding one’s own actions (following Jarkey 2006:127), while in non-past situations, it can express certainty in relation to existence, ability, or outcome. An example of certainty in the past is found above in (66). There, *yeej* appears with *tau yuav* ‘forced’ to express the speaker’s absolute certainty over his/her past action, in effect assuring the listener that this was in fact the case.

When used as an indicator of high certainty for non-past events, *yeej* is often used in one of three contexts: certainty of existence, certainty of ability, and certainty of outcome. Examples of each of these three are shown below.

- (67) *Nws yeej muaj lub hom.phiaj zoo rau koj thiab kuv...*  
 3SG certainly have CLF purpose good for 2SG and 1SG  
 ‘He has a good purpose for you and me...’

In (67) above, *yeej* is used with *muaj* ‘exist, have’ to express certainty over the existence of the *hom.phiaj* ‘purpose’.

- (68) *Peb yeej yuav nrhiav tau peb lub hom phiaj tag kis.*  
 1PL certainly POS.IRR search can 1PL CLF purpose tomorrow  
 ‘We will be able to find our purpose tomorrow.’

In (68), *yeej* appears with the sequence *yuav nrhiav tau* ‘will be able to find’, expressing certainty over the ability.

- (69) (a) *...ces peb yuav tsum rau siab ntso mus khwv tiag tiag...*  
 then 1PL must commit.to go work really  
 ‘...then we must commit ourselves to working really hard...’
- (b) *...ces peb yeej yuav tsum muaj nyiaj xwb<sup>97</sup>*  
 then 1PL certainly must have money indeed  
 ‘...then we will have money.’

In (69), *yeej* appears with *yuav tsum muaj nyiaj* ‘will have money’ to express the certain outcome of the action expressed in the previous clause by *yuav tsum rau siab ntso mus khwv* ‘must commit ourselves to work’. Thus, in non-past contexts, there are three main uses for the degree of certainty variety of *yeej*.

A final interesting trait about *yeej* when marking expectation of outcome is that it occasionally can be used with lesser degrees of certainty, with the notion of outcome left intact. This is exemplified in (70) below.

- (70) (a) *...tej zaum nws yeej pab tau yus kom yus*  
 maybe 3SG certainly help can INDF.PRON so.that INDF.PRON  
 ‘...maybe it will be able to help you...’
- (b) *ua tau lub neej vas meej yog hais tias yus*  
 do get CLF life successful if that INDF.PRON  
 ‘...to become successful if you’re...’

<sup>97</sup> Gloss following Strecker & Vang (1986:5); please see section 3.9 below for the discussion on this morpheme.



However, in the positive, *yeej* often simply means ‘win’ or, as Heimbach (1979:424) defines it, ‘to win in an encounter’, as in (72) below.

(72) *ntaus yeej* (Heimbach 1979:185)  
 fight win  
 ‘To win a fight.’

Here, the verb *ntaus* ‘hit’ is followed by *yeej*, resulting in the meaning ‘win a fight’. Thus, it would appear that *yeej* can serve as a full verb meaning ‘win’.

However, there are three reasons why *yeej* should be treated as a grammaticalized element when used as in example (71) above: 1) it follows another verb when it signals Ability, and 2) the Ability meaning surfaces clearly only when the sentence is negated, and 3) the notion of Ability expressed when *yeej* is used can refer to an unrealized situation.

First, *yeej* always follows another verb in the data when it indicates Ability.<sup>100</sup> While this pattern is seen in example (71) above, Heimbach (1969) provides three other examples where *yeej* indicates ability, in all of which *yeej* follows another verb. Thus, in the available data, *yeej* always follows another verb when it indicates Ability.

Second, the Ability meaning appears with *yeej* only when the sentence is negated. As shown in (72) above, where *yeej* follows *ntaus* ‘hit’ to produce ‘win in a fist fight’, the meaning ‘win’ is prevalent when the sentence is not negated; this is also true of the other positive example Heimbach (1969) provides. However, all four of the negative examples Heimbach provides indicate a lack of ability. Thus, there is a correlation between negation and the Ability meaning with *yeej*.

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<sup>100</sup> Note, however, that while all attested instances of *yeej* signaling ability are when it appears after a verb, not all instances of post-verbal *yeej* signal Ability, as in example (72) above.

Third, the idea of Ability with *yeej* can refer to a hypothetical situation. This is shown in (71) above, where the presence of some ‘hindrance’ prevents the action represented by *yuav* ‘obtain’ from being realized—in fact, there is no indication that it is even attempted. This contrasts with the usage of *yeej* as a normal verb, in that the ‘Accomplishment Serial Verb Construction’ (following Jarkey 1991), which would be made up of the normal verb *yeej* preceded by another verb, would be expected to refer to an attempted action that did not succeed. Since this is not what is found with *tsis yeej*, which indicates general inability rather than a lack of success, it appears that its usage with the negative *tsis* produces a somewhat different nuance, in line with what is observed with *tau* when it marks Ability. Altogether, it is seen that while *yeej* when it indicates Ability appears to be identical to *yeej* with the full verbal meaning of ‘win, have success’, the two usages differ slightly on syntactic and semantic grounds. As a grammatical marker, this places *yeej* ‘can(not)’ in the system of Modality as being associated with negative Ability. In terms of a paradigm, however, there is no clear evidence that *yeej* can co-occur with other Modality markers, but since co-occurrences are possible elsewhere in the system, this cannot be ruled out, and this possibility is left to further research.

### 3.2.9 *tab tom* ‘begin to, IMPERFECT’

The word *tab tom* ‘begin to<sup>101</sup>, IMPERFECT’ has two significant functions relevant to Non-Spatial Setting: it can 1) express beginning of an action, and 2) it can express a current or ongoing action. The first use of *tab tom* belongs to Phase of Activity as Beginning action, while the second use marks Imperfect as part of Completion.

Examples of the two uses appear in examples (73) and (74) below.

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<sup>101</sup> Gloss based on Heimbach (1979:303).

- (73) (a) *Kuv tab tom hais lus nws txawm*  
 1SG begin.to say word 3SG thereupon<sup>102</sup>  
 ‘I had no sooner begun to speak than he...’
- (b) *khiav lawm* (Heimbach 1969:303)  
 run CP  
 ‘...ran off.’

In (73), *tab tom* expresses that the action *hais* ‘speak’ had recently begun.

- (74) *...lub sij hawm uas nyab laj tab tom nrhiav cov neeg...*  
 CLF time that Vietnam IPRF search PL.CLF people  
 ‘...the time that the Vietnamese were searching for those...’

In (74), *tab tom* is used with *nrhiav* ‘search’ in a way equivalent to the English progressive ‘were searching’.

An example where both uses of *tab tom* are possible appears in (75) below.

- (75) *Peb tab tom nrhiav peb lub hom phiaj*  
 1PL begin.to/IPRF search 1PL CLF purpose  
 ‘We begin to search for our purpose.’  
 or ‘We currently are looking for our purpose.’

In this case, *tab tom* is ambiguous—it can either signal the beginning of the action of *nrhiav* ‘search’, producing ‘begin to search’, or it can signal that *nrhiav* refers to a current, ongoing affair, resulting in the meaning ‘currently are looking’. Thus, both meanings can be possible in at least some circumstances.

In addition to activities, *tab tom* can be used with current states, as in (76) below.

- (76) *Tab tom muaj ntau phau ntawv...*  
 IPRF have many book  
 ‘Currently, there are many books...’

Here, *tab tom* is expressed in English as ‘currently’,<sup>103</sup> and combines with *muaj* to express a current state.

<sup>102</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:375).

<sup>103</sup> My language consultant, Jay Yang, only sometimes used this gloss to bring out the nuance of *tab tom*.

*Tab tom* can also serve a role that extends from its use as an Imperfect marker to indicate a nuance of Imperfective with a state (following Jarkey 1991:75), in Dixon (2012)'s system. An example of this appears in (77) below.

- (77) (a) *Nws tab tom mob thaum nws kwv tij tuaj...*  
 3SG IPFV be.sick time 3SG relative come  
 'He was sick when his relatives came...'
- (b) *...xyuas nws* (Jarkey 1991:75)  
 visit 3SG  
 '...to visit him.'

In this case, *tab tom* 'IMPV' appears with *mob* 'be sick' to indicate the ongoing state at the time when the other event, *nws kwv tij tuaj xyuas nws* 'his relatives came to visit him', occurred, showing that at least with the state *mob* 'be sick', *tab tom* can be used with an extended meaning to indicate an ongoing state as a backdrop to a second event. For purposes of Non-spatial Setting, however, this usage, when compared with the rest of the data, forms a sort of 'secondary' usage for this form, where the primary use is the Imperfect sense of an ongoing event or action, and the secondary use is the mere juxtaposition of a single event with the Imperfect form to create an Imperfective sense. Thus, this Imperfective form should be considered a subtype of the Imperfect use of *tab tom*.

As it has been shown, *tab tom* can serve one of two uses, of which the first is marking the beginning of an action and the second signaling that an action is currently in progress. As such, as a part of Non-spatial Setting, the first belongs to Phase of Activity as a marker of Beginning, and the second belongs to Completion as an Imperfect marker. As part of the larger system of Phase of Activity, there is no known evidence in the data showing that *tab tom* could co-occur with other markers of Phase of Activity, suggesting a paradigmatic relationship with other members such as *pheej* 'continue to' or *tiaiv*

‘finish’. Likewise, as part of Completion, there are no known examples from the data where *tab tom* can co-occur with other Completion markers such as *lawm* ‘COMPLETIVE PARTICLE’, though this possibility should not be ruled out.

### 3.2.10 *maj mam* ‘slowly’

The word *maj mam* is an adverb that conveys one of several meanings, including ‘progressively’, ‘slowly’ (Mottin 1978:119), and ‘gradually’ (Heimbach 1969:124).

Examples appear in (78) and (79) below.

- (78) *Maj mam*     *ua*            (Mottin 1978:119)  
       progressively do  
       ‘Do progressively.’

Here, *maj mam* conveys the idea of ‘progressively’, qualifying the verb *ua* ‘do’.

- (79) *Maj mam*   *mus.*        (Heimbach 1969:124)  
       slowly            go  
       ‘Go slowly.’

In this case, *maj mam* contributes the idea of ‘slowly’ to the verb *mus* ‘go’.

*Maj mam* also can serve as a Temporal Shifter (Dixon 2012:5-6) meaning ‘after a while’ (Heimbach 1969:124). An example appears in (80) below.

- (80) *Maj mam*<sup>104</sup>   *kuv*   *yuav*   *mus*   *thiab.*    (Heimbach 1969:124)  
       after.a.while   1SG   POS.IRR   go        too  
       ‘After a while I’ll go too.’

In (80), *maj mam* expresses the notion ‘after a while’. Altogether, *maj mam* can serve two purposes: expressing ‘progressively, gradually, slowly’, and operating as a Temporal shifter with the meaning ‘after a while’.

Syntactically, though the available evidence from scholarly sources is scant, *maj mam* seems to appear in different locations when it provides a different function: it

<sup>104</sup> It should be noted that *maj mam* here could be appearing in either a topic slot or the pre-subject slot. As other Temporal shifters often appear in the topic slot, this is assumed here as well.

appears between the subject noun and the verb when it expresses ‘progressively, gradually’ and before the subject noun when it appears as ‘after a while’. The positioning with the meaning ‘progressively, gradually’ is demonstrated by (81) below.

- (81) *Nws maj mam tuaj ze me ntsis.* (Heimbach 1969:124)  
 3SG gradually come close<sup>105</sup> a.little.bit<sup>106</sup>  
 ‘He gradually came closer.’

Here, *maj mam* appears after the subject pronoun *nws* ‘3SG’ and before the verb *tuaj* ‘come’, and expresses the notion of ‘gradually’. The positioning of *maj mam* at the beginning of the sentence with the meaning ‘after a while’ appears in (80) above, where *maj mam* precedes the subject noun *kuv* ‘1SG’. Thus, the use of *maj mam* with the meaning ‘progressively, gradually’ is associated with the position in between the subject noun and the verb, similarly to morphemes such as *tab tom* ‘imperfect’ and *tseem* ‘still’,<sup>107</sup> while the use as ‘after a while’ is associated with sentence-initial position, much like many other adverbs.

In terms of Non-spatial Setting, *maj mam*, when it indicates ‘progressively, gradually’, appears to belong to the class of adverbs represented by *tab tom* ‘IMPERFECT’ and *tseem* ‘still’. At the same time, it is not a Lexical Time Word, nor a clear indicator of the Imperfect, since some of the actions, such as in examples (78) and (81) above, are not good examples of ongoing action. However, in all of the examples, there is an element of slow or gradual continuing action toward a goal, which is corroborated by Mottin (1978:119)’s treatment of this morpheme as indicating “progression,” along with another

<sup>105</sup> Gloss following Heimbach (1969:435).

<sup>106</sup> Gloss following Heimbach (1969:125).

<sup>107</sup> Please see the discussion below concerning these two words.

adverb indicating slowness.<sup>108</sup> As such, this first use of *maj mam* properly belongs to the category of Speed and Ease as a marker of slow action. The second use of *maj mam* with the meaning ‘after a while’ is clearly a Lexical Time Word, fitting specifically into the category of Temporal shifters provided by Dixon (2012:20).

### 3.3 Modal position

The modal position is the location where the positive irrealis marker and true modals in Dixon (2012)’s Modality framework are found. The three markers in this position are *yuav* ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS, intend’, *yuav tau* ‘must, have to’, and *yuav tsum* ‘must, have to’.

#### 3.3.1 *yuav* ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS, intend’

As a grammaticalized morpheme, the word *yuav* ‘will, intend’<sup>109</sup> is a positive Irrealis marker with an extended function as a Modal signifying Intent, with a strong preference for referring to future action. An example appears in (82) below.

- (82) ...*wb*    *yuav*    *sib*    *tham*    *me ntsis*    *txog*    *kev ua noj*  
 2DU<sup>110</sup>    POS.IRR    RECP    talk<sup>111</sup>    a.little.bit    about    cooking  
 ‘...we will talk a little bit about cooking.’

Here, *yuav* precedes the phrase *sib tham me ntsis* ‘talk a little bit’, indicating a future action and translated by the English ‘will’.

Though at first glance the word *yuav* seems to simply mark future time, in line with the position taken by a number of authors, including Jaisser (1984) and Fuller (1988), the word *yuav* actually expresses Modality as well as broader Irrealis. This is

<sup>108</sup> The other adverb in question is *qeeb qeeb* ‘slowly’ (Mottin 1978:119), which does not appear to be the product of grammaticalization, but rather a grammatically productive form in the language based on *qeeb* ‘slow, slowly’ (Heimbach 1979:262).

<sup>109</sup> Gloss based on Jarkey (2006:130).

<sup>110</sup> Gloss following Mottin (1978:44).

<sup>111</sup> The glossing and treatment here of the phrase *sib tham* relies on Jarkey (1991:351) and Jarkey (2006:129).

known from two pieces of evidence: the fact that *yuav* can refer to situations that do not necessarily refer to future time, and that *yuav* can refer to Irrealis situations in the past.<sup>112</sup>

First, *yuav* can be used to refer to situations that do not require a future time interpretation. This can be found in (83) below.

- (83) *Yus muaj ib tug tub, yuav muab nyab* (Jarkey 1991:70)  
 INDF.PRON have one CLF boy intend take son's.wife  
 '(Suppose) one has a son, (who) intends to take a wife.'

Here, the idea expressed is one of present intent—marked by the word 'intends'—with no indication that the sentence refers strictly to future time.

Second, *yuav* can be used to refer to Irrealis situations in the past, as in (84) below.

- (84) *Kuv twb yuav ua kws kho mob tsib xyoo tas los lawm*  
 1SG almost POS.IRR do doctor five year finish come CP  
 'I almost became a doctor five years ago.'

In (84), *yuav* is used to express an unrealized, but possibly intended event, a context where a notion of irrealis is prevalent.

Though the above evidence shows that *yuav* is not a future tense marker (following Clark 1982, Jarkey 1991, etc.), many authors have treated it as such (including Jaisser 1984 and Fuller 1988, for example). However, Li (1991) suggests this kind of misanalysis is due to data-gathering methodologies that focus on translating English phrases, line by line, that have resulted in *yuav* being used as an approximation for the English word *will* in reference to the future.<sup>113</sup>

Since the word *yuav* is not a tense marker, it must be something else. Dixon (2012) provides two possibilities for future time: Tense marking and Modality. *Yuav* is a Modal, since it conveys the "Secondary" concept of Intent (following Jarkey 1991:71, Jarkey

<sup>112</sup> The argument presented here generally follows Jarkey (1991:69-71).

<sup>113</sup> It is notable here, however, that while Li (1991) argues against this kind of methodology, he still concludes that *yuav* is a future tense marker, probably due to a relative lack of evidence to the contrary.

2006:130), fulfilling Dixon’s expectation that Modality be expressed through ‘Secondary’ verbs (2012:25-26).

An example of this “Intent” status appears in (83) above, repeated as (85) below.

- (85) *Yus muaj ib tug tub, yuav muab nyab* (Jarkey 1991:70)  
 INDF.PRON have one CLF boy intend take son’s.wife  
 ‘(Suppose) one has a son, (who) intends to take a wife’

Here, the notion of Intent is clearly expressed in the translation of *yuav* as ‘intends’.

Another example of *yuav* expressing Intent is found in (86).

- (86) *Kuv yuav ua kws kho mob tiam sis tsis muaj nyiaj*  
 1SG POS.IRR do doctor but NEG have money  
 ‘I would become a doctor, but I don’t have money.’

In (86), *yuav* refers to a stated intent, though current circumstances (‘but I don’t have money’) may prevent this intent from being realized. The consultant, Jay Yang, suggested that (86) expresses a situation where if there is no money, then the idea expressed by ‘become a doctor’ will not be possible in the future. Thus, *yuav* expresses a speaker’s *intent* for the future.

Dixon provides two morphosyntactic categories for Modality: Modals and Semi-modals, where the former is required to be VP-initial and is limited morphologically, while the latter can behave as a typical verb (2012:26). The word *yuav* is a Modal, rather than a Semi-modal, since: 1) it must occur in initial position in a verbal phrase; 2) it must appear in an unusual position—before the negative marker *tsis* ‘not’; and 3) it does not function as a regular verb.<sup>114</sup> First, when it affects the main verb of a clause, it can appear only in initial position of a verb phrase<sup>115</sup>, as shown by (87), (88), and (89) below.

<sup>114</sup> In line with the expectations for a Modal in Dixon (2012:26).

<sup>115</sup> Counterexamples are possible, such as *Koj ua yuav tas* ‘You’re almost done’; cases such as this are likely the result of *yuav* operating directly on *tas* ‘finish,’ and *yuav tas* is perhaps subordinated in some sort of complement construction to *ua*.

- (87) *Peb yuav tau ua kws kho mob*  
 1PL POS.IRR ATT do doctor  
 ‘We will become a doctor.’
- (88) \**Peb tau yuav ua kws kho mob*  
 1PL ATT POS.IRR do doctor
- (89) \**Peb tau ua yuav kws kho mob*  
 1PL ATT do POS.IRR doctor

Here, (87) is grammatical when *yuav* occurs at the beginning of the verbal phrase.

However, in (88) and (89), the sentence is ungrammatical when *yuav* appears in a position other than at the beginning of the verbal phrase. Thus, *yuav* must occur in first position, consistent with Dixon’s modal category.

Second, *yuav* must appear in an unusual position compared to regular verbs: it must always come before the negative marker *tsis* ‘not’. This is shown in (90) and (91) below.

- (90) *...peb yuav tsis paub hlub...*  
 1PL POS.IRR NEG know love  
 ‘...we will not know how to love...’

Here, *yuav* precedes the negative marker *tsis*, resulting in a grammatical sentence.

- (91) \**Kuv tsis yuav ua kws kho mob.*  
 1SG NEG POS.IRR do doctor  
 ‘I will not become a doctor.’

In this case, the sentence is ungrammatical due to the fact that *tsis* precedes *yuav*; the language consultant, Jay Yang, suggested the ordering *yuav tsis* to fix the sentence. This shows that *yuav* must precede *tsis*, unlike regular verbs, which allow *tsis* to precede them.

Third, *yuav* does not function as a regular verb. When the seven tests for verbhood proposed by Jaisser (1984) are applied to *yuav* (expanding on the discussion on the placement of *tsis* above), this word fails on several points, as shown in Table 11.

Test Type	<i>yuav</i>	typical verb
negative <i>tsis</i>	no	yes
question particle <i>puas</i>	yes	yes
“past tense” <i>tau</i>	no	yes
“future tense” <i>yuav</i>	no (illogical)	yes
negative imperative <i>txhob</i>	questionable	yes
post-verbal ability <i>tau</i>	yes*	yes
question construction with <i>los tsis V</i>	yes*	yes

**Table 11.** Test results for verbhood of *yuav*.

As seen in Table 11, tests 1, 3, and 4, i.e., preverbal negation, *tau* perfect (or “past tense” in Jaisser 1984), and *yuav* Positive Irrealis/Modality (or “future tense” in Jaisser 1984) all fail, while for 5, the language consultant, Jay Yang, suggests that it could be used, though he never would. Test 6 works, though whether the ability marker *tau* is being applied to *yuav* or what follows is not completely certain, and test 7 is allowable though not preferred. As a result, since only test 2 passes without further issue, it is clear that *yuav* is not a normal verb since it is subject to a number of restrictions. Thus, since *yuav* must occur first in a series of verbs and it does not behave as a normal verb, it is a Modal in Dixon (2012)’s sense of the term.

*Yuav* can also be used in an irrealis sense, where “the speaker seems to be asserting his/her belief in the likelihood of the truth of the proposition” (Jarkey 1991:70), in an unrealized context, as in (92) below.

- (92) (a) *Ib yam li qhov peb hais tias “nws de tau*  
 one kind as thing 1PL say COMP 3SG pick get  
 ‘For example, if we say “he picked...”’
- (b) *ib lub taub” yuav tsis meej npaum li qhov*  
 one CLF pumpkin POS.IRR NEG clear equal as thing  
 ‘...a pumpkin” it would not be as clear as...’

- (c) “*nws de tau ib lub taub dag.*” (Jarkey 1991:70)  
 3SG pick get one CLF punpkin yellow  
 ‘...“he picked a yellow pumpkin.”’

Here, *yuav* is placed in front of the phrase *tsis meej npaum li* ‘not be as clear as’ and supplies the meaning ‘would’, in a sentence signaling a hypothetical situation. Thus, it takes on a general irrealis notion, marking the fact that the sentence does not refer to a realized situation.

In sum, *yuav* is a positive Irrealis marker that has an associated function as a Modal expressing Intent. As part of the fuller system of Modality in White Hmong, *yuav* can co-occur freely with other forms such as *tau* ‘can’ in its positive-irrealis-as-future sense,<sup>116</sup> which allows it to appear with such markers of Modality.

### 3.3.2 *yuav tau* ‘must, have to’

The Modality marker *yuav* ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS, intend’ and the Perfect marker *tau* ‘ATT’<sup>117</sup> can combine into a single unit to signal Obligation, for at least some speakers (Clark 1982:130).<sup>118</sup> Examples of this usage appear in (93) and (94) below.

- (93) *Koj yuav tau ua.* (Heimbach 1969:431)  
 2SG must do  
 ‘You must do (it).’

In (93), *yuav tau* appears after the subject *koj* ‘2SG’ and before the verb *ua* ‘do’ to form the phrase ‘you must do’, signaling obligation for the hearer.

<sup>116</sup> Please see section 3.33 below for further details.

<sup>117</sup> It should be noted here that Clark (1982:130) treats this morpheme in her work as an auxiliary version of the verb *tau* ‘get,’ rather than referring to this grammaticalized form as an Attainment marker.

<sup>118</sup> Clark (1982:130) states it thus: “Some dialects or individuals allow yuav-tau as a compound auxiliary verb to denote obligation.”

- (94) *Kuv yuav tau kawm lus no.* (Clark 1982:130)  
 1SG have.to study word this  
 ‘I have to study these words.’

In (94), *yuav tau* follows the subject *kuv* ‘1SG’ and precedes the verb *kawm* ‘study’ to express the meaning ‘I have to study’, here marking obligation for the speaker. Thus, as a unit, *yuav tau* signals Obligation.

However, the series *yuav tau* can also function as the sum of its parts, namely that *yuav* signals its normal Modal function of ‘will, intend’ and *tau* as either the Semi-modal meaning ‘get to’, or the regular verb ‘get’. Examples for each of these appear in (95) and (96) below, respectively.

- (95) *...peb yeej yuav tau los ua xwb.*  
 1PL certainly POS.IRR can/ATT come do indeed  
 ‘...we will become one.’ or ‘...we will be able to become one.’

In (95), *yuav tau* appears with the verb series *los ua* ‘become’ to form the phrase meaning ‘will become’ or ‘able to become’. In the former interpretation, *tau* is serving in its role as a Perfect marker, while in the latter case, *tau* marks the Modality notion of Ability.

*Yuav* refers to a future event.

- (96) *Nyab laj luag yuav tau txhom txhua leej...* (Fuller 1988:20)  
 Vietnamese others POS.IRR get capture all people  
 ‘The Vietnamese will capture all the people...’

In (96), *yuav* and *tau* appear together before the verb *txhom* ‘capture’. Here, *yuav* and *tau* are distinct elements: *yuav* is a Modal indicating the future here, while *tau* is likely the general verb ‘get’ that is associated with the verb *txhom*, where *tau txhom* indicates an idea of ‘getting’ and ‘capturing’. Thus, *yuav* and *tau* can also appear together while maintaining their own distinct meanings. As a whole, *yuav tau* can either operate as a single unit signaling Obligation or appear together with their distinct meanings and functions intact. As a Modality morpheme indicating Obligation, *yuav tau* generally does

not co-occur with other Modality markers nor with either the general irrealis or the more specific Modality nuance of *yuav* ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS, intend’. This suggests a paradigmatic distinction on the part of morphemes indicating Modality, and a prohibition against like forms co-occurring in the case of *yuav*, roughly similar to the restriction against *yuav* ‘will’ co-occurring with *yuav* ‘buy’ in Laotian Green Hmong (Li 1991:52).

### 3.3.3 *yuav tsum* ‘must, have to’

The morpheme *yuav tsum* is a Modal of Necessity and Obligation meaning ‘must, have to’. An example appears below in (97).

- (97) (a) ..*peb* *yuav tsum* *los* *pib* *nhriav* *peb* *tus* *kheej* *nyob*...  
 1PL must come start search 1PL CLF self in  
 ‘...we must start searching for ourselves...’
- (b) ...*rau* *ntawm* *Vaj Tswv*.  
 to there<sup>119</sup> God  
 ‘...in God.’

Here, *yuav tsum* ‘must’ appears with the phrase beginning with *los pib nrhiav*... ‘come start looking...’ to indicate Necessity.

*Yuav tsum* is a Modal on the basis of its position before the negative marker *tsis*, and as such, before other verbs—a required trait of Modals (Dixon 2012:26). An example of the placement of *yuav tsum* appears in (98).

- (98) ...*yam* *uas* *peb* *yuav tsum* *tsis* *txhob* *ua*...  
 type<sup>120</sup> REL 1PL must NEG IRR.NEG do  
 ‘...the one that we must not do...’

Here, *yuav tsum* ‘must’ precedes the phrase *tsis txhob ua* ‘not do’, showing that *yuav tsum* must appear before the negative marker and other verbs, and is thus a Modal.

<sup>119</sup> Gloss based on “there-nearby” found in Jarkey (1991:42). Note that this word is technically a “spatial deictic,” a variety of word in White Hmong that plays the role of a demonstrative while sometimes serving a function of spatial indication similar to some prepositions (Jarkey 1991:42-43).

<sup>120</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:419).

As part of the greater system of Modality marking, *yuav tsum* generally does not co-occur with other markers of Modality in the data nor with the irrealis marker *yuav* ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS’, likely for the same reasons as with *yuav tau* ‘must, have to’ in section 3.3.2 above. This suggests a paradigmatic relationship with the other Modality categories. In comparison with other markers of Obligation and Necessity such as *yuav tau* ‘must, have to’ or *tsum* ‘can, have to’, there is no evidence that *yuav tsum* belongs to a distinct category, suggesting that it is another option with more or less the same function as the other markers of its category.

### 3.4 Pre-main-verb position

The “Pre-main-verb position” is the location where many Secondary-A verbs in Dixon (2006)’s verbal classification scheme are found. These include the Irrealis and Modality markers *tau* ‘can, be able to’, *tsum* ‘can, have to’, *txawj* ‘know how to’, and *txhob* ‘should not, NEGATIVE IRREALIS’, as well as the Phase of Activity markers *chiv* ‘begin to’, *pib* ‘begin to’, *nyim* ‘continue to’, *pheej* ‘keep, continue to’, and *rau siab ntso* ‘continue to, commit oneself to’.

#### 3.4.1 *tau* ‘ATTAINMENT, can’

The word *tau* ‘ATTAINMENT, can’ as a grammatical morpheme indicates one of two things:

1) Attainment as a type of Perfect, belonging to the category of Completion, and 2)

Ability as an indicator of Modality.<sup>121</sup>

However, *tau* has been typically considered in the scholarly literature to serve four different functions: 1) before a verb, as a marker of the perfect (following Jarkey 1991:76, 2006:116-117<sup>122</sup>); 2) before a main verb, as a modal expressing ‘get to, manage

<sup>121</sup> It should also be noted here that *tau* is also a full verb meaning ‘get’ (Clark 1982:133).

<sup>122</sup> Specifically as ‘perfective aspect,’ which corresponds more or less to the ‘perfect’ of Dixon (2012).

to' (Jarkey 1991:74); 3) after a verb, as a marker of 'Attainment' in a serial verb construction (Jarkey 1991:73); and 4) after a verb, expressing ability or "potential (mood)" (Heimbach 1979:307; Jarkey 1991:72).<sup>123</sup> Each of these roles considered in the literature will be presented in turn, followed by a more cohesive analysis of *tau*.

First, *tau* appears pre-verbally to indicate the perfect. This assessment is based on Jarkey (1991:76), who calls this "perfective aspect." However, Jarkey's defines this variety of 'perfective aspect' by stating that "tau indicates that the event or state described by the verb is completed or realised, or will be completed or realised, at the time referred to" (1991:76). Thus, this "perfective" is the Perfect of Dixon, which is defined as expressing "an action which is completed before the present time" (2012:31). Thus, *tau* is treated as a Perfect marker here. Examples of the use of *tau* in this pre-verbal role are given below in (99), (100), and (101).

(99) *Ces nws kuj tau hais rau kuv txiv...*  
 then 3SG consequently<sup>124</sup> ATT say to 1SG father  
 'Then he said to my dad...'

In (99), *tau* is applied to *hais* 'say, tell', producing the translation 'told'.

(100) *Vaj Tswv tau qhia tseeb tseeb txog tsib yam hom phiaj...*  
 God ATT teach the.truth<sup>125</sup> about five type purpose  
 'God has taught us the truth about five types of purpose...'

In (100), *tau* appears with *qhia* 'teach', resulting in the translation 'has taught'.

(101) (a) *Vaj Tswv yeej tsis tau tso peb nyob tsaus ntuj nti*  
 God certainly NEG ATT let.go 1PL live darkness  
 'God does not/won't let us stay in the dark...'

(b) *paub dab tsi hlo li...*  
 know what at.all

<sup>123</sup> It is notable here that Jarkey (1991:228-229) considers that both uses of post-verbal *tau* stem from the same notion of achievement.

<sup>124</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1969:88).

<sup>125</sup> Gloss corroborated by Heimbach (1969:350), who gives "spoken truth."

‘...knowing nothing at all.’

In (101), *tau* appears in a negative clause with *tso* ‘let go’, leading to the translation of *tsis tau tso* as ‘does not let us’ or ‘won’t let us’. This variability in translation is found in multiple sources, suggesting that either *tau* can mean multiple things, or it has no direct equivalent in English.

Jarkey (1991)’s definition above can shed light on the situation: the completion of the event is in focus in regard to *some* time. In addition, unlike with other perfect forms in White Hmong, such as *lawm*, the optional ‘present relevance’<sup>126</sup> portion of the notion of the perfect may be absent. As a result, this construction with *tau* can freely be placed in any time period as seen in the above examples, as long as the action is completed before a certain, even implied, time. This is manifested in the past tense translation in (99), with a probable reference time in the present, the present perfect in (100), again with a probable reference time in the present, and the negated present/future form in (101), with a probable reference time either in the present or at some point in the future. Thus, this usage of *tau* can be treated as a Perfect marker of Completion, in connection with some other moment in time.

A large number of authors, most notably Mottin (1978), Heimbach (1969), Jaisser (1984) and Fuller (1988)<sup>127</sup>, treat this usage of *tau* as a past tense marker. However, as shown in example (101) above, *tau* can be used in reference to events in non-past time. Thus, while *tau* in this role more often than not appears with events that took place in the past, it does not actually mark the past tense, but rather the Perfect.

<sup>126</sup> Note that for Comrie (1976:56), this “continuing relevance” idea is central to the notion of the perfect.

<sup>127</sup> See Li (1991:26) for a more complete list of authors taking this position.

Second, *tau* can appear before a main verb as a type of modality expressing ‘get to, manage to’ (Jarkey 1991:74). An example of this is (102) below.

- (102) *Yog li ntawd sawv daws kuj tau rov qab mus tsev*  
 so there everyone also get.to going.back go home  
 ‘And also we got to go back home.’

Here, *tau* appears with the phrase *rov qab mus tsev* ‘go back home’ to express ‘got to go back home, where *tau* means ‘got to’.

Third, when it appears after a verb, *tau* serves as a marker of ‘Attainment’ in a serial verb construction (Jarkey 1991:73). Jarkey (1991:229) describes this usage as follows: “a verb such as tau ‘get’ in the V2 slot in this construction indicates that some goal is achieved, but is extremely imprecise regarding exactly what kind of goal that is. The only possible interpretation is that this “goal” is the performance of the activity itself.” An example of this usage of *tau* as accomplishing a goal is shown in (103) below.

- (103) *...peb thiaj li nrhiav tau peb lub hom phiaj.*  
 1PL consequently search ATT 1PL CLF purpose  
 ‘...in order for us to find our purpose.’

Here, *tau* follows the verb *nrhiav* ‘search’ to produce the meaning ‘find’. In this case, the combined use of *nrhiav tau* marks the successful completion of the action associated with *nrhiav* (following Jarkey 1991, 2004).<sup>128</sup>

Fourth, *tau* can appear after a verb to express ability. This is shown in (104) and (105).

<sup>128</sup> It is notable here that it is exactly this verb, *nrhiav* ‘search,’ that Jarkey (1991, 2004) uses to support her points for this use of *tau*. As a result, the point made with this example is basically the same as what is found in her works.

- (104) *Tus nai hais tias koj noj tau hmo tam sim no.*  
 CLF boss say that 2SG eat can dinner now  
 ‘The boss said that you can eat dinner now.’

In (104), *tau* appears after the verb *noj* ‘eat’ to express ‘can eat’, in the context of a boss giving permission.<sup>129</sup>

- (105) *Tej lus pab no tej zaum nws yeej pab tau yus...*  
 these word help this maybe it certainly help can INDF.PRON  
 ‘All these teachings, maybe it will be able to help you...’

In (105), *tau* follows the verb *pab* ‘help’ to produce ‘be able to help’, where the phrase expresses the speaker’s expectation about the ability of the ‘teachings’ to be of benefit.

Thus, *tau* can serve to mark ability in post-verbal position.

Jarkey (1991) takes the third and fourth usage above and appears to combine them, where the ‘attainment’ definition above is the basic meaning for post-verbal *tau*, with “permission” and “ability” as “follow[ing]” from it (Jarkey 1991:73). In this case, achievement is in focus, with ability implied (Jarkey 1991:228). At the same time, alternations showing both a distinction and an overlap are found in the data, shown in (106), (107), and (108) below.

- (106) *Nws hais tias tag kis peb mam li<sup>130</sup> nrhiav tau peb lub hom phiaj*  
 3SG say that tomorrow 1PL will search can 1PL CLF purpose  
 ‘He said that tomorrow we can search for our purpose.’

In (106), the combination *nrhiav tau* appears, with the resulting meaning ‘can search for’.

- (107) *...peb thiaj li nrhiav tau peb lub hom phiaj.*  
 1PL consequently search ATT 1PL CLF purpose  
 ‘...in order for us to find our purpose.’

Here, the same phrase appears with the meaning ‘find’.

<sup>129</sup> Jarkey (1991:73) notes the possible use of pre-verbal *tau* as indicating permission.

<sup>130</sup> See section 3.2.4 above for the meaning and use of *mam li*. It does not appear to affect the meaning here, as other examples, such as *Tag kis peb yeej nrhiav tau peb lub hom phiaj* ‘Tomorrow we will be able to search for our purpose,’ without *mam li*, were found.

- (108) ...*peb thiaj li*                    *yuav nrhiav tau*                    *peb tus kheej...*  
 1PL    consequently    POS.IRR    search    can/ATT    1PL    CLF    self  
 ‘...we can find ourselves...’

In (108), *nrhiav tau* appears again, but with the meaning ‘can find’. This can be treated as ability with ‘search for’ in (106), Jarkey (1991)’s ‘attainment’ with ‘search for’ in (107), and ability *and* ‘attainment’ with ‘search for’ in (108). As a result, *tau* post-verbally can express ability and attainment, either one or the other or both. This suggests a complicated relationship, one that fits somewhat within Jarkey (1991)’s explanation described above, though at the same time, one that presents an enigma when it comes to discerning when ability is actually implied.<sup>131</sup>

This possibility of alternation can even be found in the same environment, as shown in (109) below.

- (109) *Nws hais tias peb nrhiav tau*                    *peb lub hom phiaj lawm*  
 3SG    say    that    1PL    search    can/ATT    1PL    CLF    purpose    CP  
 ‘He said that we can search for our purpose.’  
 or ‘He said that we have found our purpose.’

In this case, both ability and attainment interpretations are possible with *nrhiav tau*, where the phrase can mean ‘can search for’ or ‘have found’, apparently depending on whether the search took place in past time or if it is yet to be realized. As a result, an interpretation where two distinct forms are being considered is preferable for post-verbal *tau*, though with the concession that both meanings could be intended at the same time or even that the attainment meaning implies ability in at least some cases.

Altogether, past scholarly works have typically suggested four different uses for *tau*. However, one significant aspect of *tau* not previously considered in the literature is a

<sup>131</sup> It should be noted here that Li (1991:32-34) presents several instances for Laotian Green Hmong where *tau* in preverbal position can only mean ‘get to’ and other examples where it can mean both ‘get to’ and ‘Attainment aspect,’ with the defining difference being the presence of additional content in the sentence that “serve[s] to bound the event.”

profound one: the position of *tau* in the sentence is not actually related to its basic meaning. This can be concluded from two factors: 1) pre-verbal and post-verbal *tau* function as signaling ‘Attainment’, as described in the literature by different sources, and 2) pre-verbal and post-verbal *tau* can both signal Ability. Each of these factors is discussed below.

First, *tau* can function as signaling ‘Attainment’ either before or after a verb. This is demonstrated in the scholarly literature, where Li (1991) treats pre-verbal *tau* as “Attainment,”<sup>132</sup> while Jarkey (1991) treats post-verbal *tau* as the same. Since both appear to make valid points in regard to the use of *tau*, it seems that a unified treatment is merited. Consider (110) and (111) below.

- (110) *Kuv tau kawm los ua kws kho mob.*  
 ISG ATT learn come do doctor  
 ‘I have/had learned to become a doctor.’

Here, *tau* precedes the verb *kawm* ‘study, learn’ to signal the completion of the action and the attainment of the goal of becoming a doctor.

- (111) *Nag hmo peb nrhiav tau peb lub hom phiaj lawm.*  
 yesterday 1PL search ATT 1SG CLF purpose CP  
 ‘We found our purpose yesterday.’

In this case, the verb *nrhiav* ‘search, look for’ is followed by *tau*, where *tau* provides a notion of completion and ‘attainment’, that is, the action has achieved the desired goal (following Jarkey 2004). Thus, *tau* in the ‘Attainment’ sense provides the same meaning both before and after the main verb, while there is a perceived distinction in nuance that may be related to either the relationship of *tau* to the main verb or the construction used.

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<sup>132</sup> It is notable that Li (1991) calls pre-verbal *tau* ‘Attainment’ in reference to Green Hmong, though the demonstrated function of *tau* in his work is identical to that of White Hmong as described above.

Second, *tau* can signal Ability both before and after a verb. This is shown in (112) and 113) below.

- (112) *Yog koj tuaj no peb tau noj hmo ua ke.*  
 if 2SG come this 1PL can eat dinner together  
 ‘If you come, we will be able to eat dinner together.’

Here, *tau* precedes the verb *noj* ‘eat’ and contributes the idea of ‘will be able to’, showing that *tau* can signal ability before the main verb.

- (113) *Txhua txoj kev... puav leej pab tsis tau peb...*  
 every CLF road all<sup>133</sup> help NEG can 1PL  
 ‘All the roads...won’t be able to help us...’

In this case, *tau* follows *pab* ‘help’ and the negative *tsis* to signal a lack of ability. Thus, it is clear that *tau* can appear on either side of the main verb to indicate a notion of ability.

It is significant here that the language consultant, Jay Yang, pointed out that the difference in translation into English between ‘can/be able to’ and ‘get/manage to’—typical translations in the literature for postverbal and preverbal *tau*, respectively—is one of personal preference.

In addition to the above data, Mottin clearly defines one sense of both preverbal and postverbal *tau* as being one of signaling ‘possibility’ (1978:102). At the same time, Mottin suggests that preverbal *tau* also signals ‘have the opportunity’ and postverbal *tau* signals ‘have permission’ or ‘have the right to’. Thus, while both preverbal and postverbal *tau* share a common meaning, that of indicating possibility, different nuances are possible depending on where *tau* appears. In either case, it is clear that *tau* can signal Ability both before and after a verb.

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<sup>133</sup> Gloss and parsing of *puav leej* from rest of sentence here deviates slightly from the original obtained from Jay Yang, and is confirmed by Heimbach (1969:238).

Thus, it is seen that the inherent meaning of *tau*, whether it is used in the sense of Ability or Attainment/Completion is not affected by whether it precedes or follows a given verb, though a distinction in nuance can be detected. Considering that *tau* in post-verbal position takes part in an Accomplishment Serial Verb Construction, regardless of the meaning realized (per Jarkey 1991:73), the semantics of this type of construction may be a major contributing factor that affects the nuance of *tau* in this position. In contrast to this, constructions that involve pre-verbal *tau* can be taken to be a different type of construction altogether.<sup>134</sup> Thus, the distinction made by many scholars between pre-verbal and post-verbal *tau* is likely due to the semantics provided by the relationship established by a certain class of Serial Verb Construction rather than a genuine morphological distinction between the two syntactic varieties of *tau*. Altogether, it is concluded here that, regardless of where it appears in relation to the main verb, *tau* serves two functions: marking 1) Attainment and 2) Ability.<sup>135</sup> The first of these serves as a Perfect as part of Completion, while the second is a Semi-modal marking Ability; the Semi-modal status here is drawn from the fact that *tau* effectively acts like a verb in Serial Verb Constructions, following Dixon (2012:26). As part of the larger system of Perfect markers in White Hmong, *tau* can co-occur with other types of Perfect marking, suggesting that these belong to slightly different categories but are related by both meaning and usage, as discussed in reference to *lawm* ‘CP’ in section 3.8 below.

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<sup>134</sup> It is possible that this may be a distinct Serial Verb Construction of its own, or a special class of an Accomplishment Serial Verb Construction. However, it is notable that Jarkey (1991) found four types of Serial Verb Constructions in White Hmong, and it is questionable whether a fifth type exists specifically for pre-verbal *tau*, and so treating this as a special type of Accomplishment Serial Verb Construction would be the preferable option, where *tau* is the initial verb marking Attainment, and the second verb indicates the outcome of that attainment, namely, the action itself.

<sup>135</sup> It should be reiterated here that Jarkey (1991) considers the postverbal usage of *tau* to be one of achievement, and ability as a form of that achievement; this interpretation could potentially hold preverbally as well. Nevertheless, for purposes of Non-spatial Setting, the two nuances of *tau* are separated out here for simplicity, while it is explicitly noted that the two functions of *tau* are indeed related.

### 3.4.2 *tsum* ‘can, have to’

The morpheme *tsum*, when used alone, is a Semi-modal that often appears with the negative *tsis*. It can be used for Ability or Necessity<sup>136</sup> (following Heimbach 1969:357, Clark 1982:130), as in (114) and (115), respectively.

- (114) *Muab tsis tsum.* (Heimbach 1969:357)  
 get NEG can  
 ‘(I) cannot get (reach) it.’

In (114), *tsum* appears after the verb *muab* ‘get’ and the negative *tsis*, producing ‘cannot get’—denoting inability.

- (115) ...*tsis tsum nrhiav lev pua chaw.* (Clark 1982:130)  
 NEG have.to search mat spread place  
 ‘...don’t have to search for a mat to spread out.’

In (115), *tsum* again appears after *tsis*, but before the verb *nrhiav* ‘search’, resulting in the meaning ‘don’t have to search’ and marking the lack of obligation or necessity. In either case, *tsum* clearly marks Modality of some sort.

Syntactically, *tsum* is a Semi-modal, as opposed to a Modal, because of two factors: 1) it can be directly preceded by the negative, and 2) it is not always the first verb in the series. First, the negative can appear before it, unlike with true Modals such as *yuav* ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS, intend’. Both examples (114) and (115) above show that the negative *tsis* consistently appears before it. In addition, sentences containing both *yuav* and the negation marker *tsis* consistently display the ordering *yuav tsis*, as shown above in section 3.3.1. This shows a contrast between the Modal-type word *yuav* and other words such as *tsum*, suggesting that these belong to different classes.

<sup>136</sup> For Necessity, Clark (1982:130) notes that this usage is attested in a variety of White Hmong spoken in Thailand, and that in Xieng Khouang, Laos, the compound form *yuav tsum* is more widely attested.

Second, *tsum* is not always the first verb in the series. In (114) above, the verb *muab* ‘get’ precedes the negative *tsis* and *tsum*, showing that *tsum* is not always the first verb in the series. Since Dixon’s categories for Modal and Semi-modal are distinguished in part by whether the verb always comes first (2012:26), as is the case for modals, *tsum* is a Semi-modal. Thus, since *tsum* regularly appears in syntactic positions unsuitable for modals, it must be a Semi-modal in Dixon (2012)’s framework.

In terms of the relationship of *tsum* ‘can, have to’ to other Modality morphemes, the available data suggests that it does not co-occur with other Modality morphemes, except when combined with *yuav* ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS, intend’ to make the compound Modal *yuav tsum* meaning ‘must, have to’. In terms of the meaning of *tsum*, it appears to overlap somewhat with other Modality items such as *yuav tsum* ‘must, have to’, and *tau* ‘can’. However, the rarity of the data for *tsum* limits what can be known about its relationship to these other forms, and further research is necessary.<sup>137</sup>

### 3.4.3 *txawj* ‘know how to’

The morpheme *txawj* is a Modal that denotes ability that results from past learning, translated as ‘know how to’ (Heimbach 1969:375, Jarkey 1991:74). It fits into Dixon (2012)’s framework as a Semi-modal marking Ability. Examples appear in (116) and (117) below.

- (116) *Koj puas txawj hais lus Hmoob?* (Jarkey 1991:74)  
 2SG Q know.how.to speak word Hmong  
 ‘Do you know how to speak Hmong?’

In (116), *txawj* precedes the verb *hais* ‘speak’ to produce ‘know how to speak’, expressing ability based on knowledge.

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<sup>137</sup> My language consultant, Jay Yang, never used *tsum* ‘can, have to’ as a morpheme distinct from *yuav tsum* ‘must, have to’ in any of the data obtained.

- (117) (a) *Kuv yuav tsum saib seb kuv*  
 1SG must look.at whatever 1SG  
 ‘I need to see...’
- (b) *txawj ua yam twg.*  
 know.how.to do kind which<sup>138</sup>  
 ‘...what I know how to do.’

In (117), *txawj* appears with *ua* ‘do’, and in this case *txawj* was rendered as the English ‘skill, talent’, again expressing ability from knowledge. Thus, *txawj* marks Ability Modality, of especially the knowledge variety.

*Txawj* patterns with regular verbs in some ways and with modals in others.

*Txawj* is similar to regular verbs in that it is placed after the negative marker *tsis*, like regular verbs, as shown in (118).

- (118) *Kuv tsis txawj kho mob.*  
 1SG NEG know.how.to heal patient  
 ‘I don’t know how to heal patients.’

Here, *txawj* follows the negative particle *tsis*, like regular verbs, rather than before it, as with the Modal-type word *yuav*. However, *txawj* does not pattern like verbs in other ways. First, it is helpful to compare *txawj* with the semantically similar verb *paub*, ‘know (how to)’. *Paub* generally serves the same purpose as *txawj* in that it expresses ability deriving from knowledge. An example of this verb being used this way appears below.

- (119) *Kuv tsis paub kho mob.*  
 1SG TSIS know heal patient  
 ‘I don’t know how to heal patients.’

In this case, *paub* serves the same role as *txawj* in (118), and the resulting translation is also the same in both examples. This shows that, at least in this context, *txawj* and *paub* mean effectively the same thing.

<sup>138</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1969:330).

However, the two semantically differ in several significant ways. The results of the seven tests from Jaisser (1984) with *txawj* ‘know how to’ and *paub* ‘know (how to)’ appear in Table 12.

Test Type	<i>txawj</i>	<i>paub</i>
negative <i>tsis</i>	yes	yes
question particle <i>puas</i>	yes	yes
“past tense” <i>tau</i>	no	yes*
“future tense” <i>yuav</i>	no	yes*
negative imperative <i>txhob</i>	no*	yes, but strange*
post-verbal ability <i>tau</i>	yes, but strange	yes, but strange
question construction with <i>los tsis V</i>	yes	yes

**Table 12.** Results of grammatical tests for *txawj* and *paub*.

Tests 1, 2, 6, and 7 produced identical results—that is, 1, 2, and 7 resulted in perfectly grammatical sentences while 6 resulted in an acceptable sentence that sounded somewhat strange to the consultant. 3 and 4 were not acceptable with *txawj*, but acceptable though somewhat strange with *paub*; with slight modifications, such as the addition of *los lawm* with 3 and *yeej* with 4, the sentences were perfectly fine with *paub*. With 5, *txawj* could not co-occur with *txhob* alone, whereas with *paub*, it could, though it sounded strange. If the sentence is changed to the negative imperative with *tsis txhob*, both *txawj* and *paub* could be used. As a result, in at least some cases, while *paub* can be used even if the result sounded strange, *txawj* cannot be used. Thus *txawj* does not behave consistently as a regular verb, and thus must be some variety of Modal.

Since *txawj* cannot be a regular verb, it must be something else. However, it does not behave exactly like a true Modal-type word such as *yuav* ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS, intend’, either. Jaisser (1984)’s tests for verbhood for *txawj* and *yuav* demonstrate small differences, and these are shown together in Table 13 below.

Test Type	<i>txawj</i>	<i>yuav</i>
negative <i>tsis</i>	yes	no
question particle <i>puas</i>	yes	yes
“past tense” <i>tau</i>	no	no
“future tense” <i>yuav</i>	no	no (illogical)
negative imperative <i>txhob</i>	no*	questionable
post-verbal ability <i>tau</i>	yes, but strange	yes* <sup>139</sup>
question construction with <i>los tsis V</i>	yes	yes*

**Table 13.** Tests for verbhood for *txawj* and *yuav*.

In this case, test 1 has a different result, likely due to the order of the negative: *yuav* must precede the negative, while *txawj* follows it. Also, while *txawj* cannot be preceded by *txhob* alone, it can be preceded by *tsis txhob*, while *yuav* produces questionable results in either case. Finally, *txawj* can be used comfortably in the case of test 7, while *yuav* is not the preferable form. Thus, while the results are similar for *txawj* and *yuav*, they are not exactly the same syntactically. As a result, *txawj* can be treated as a special variety of Modal, distinct from *yuav*. In sum, *txawj* is a special Modal marking Ability.

As part of the system of Ability Modality, *txawj* marks acquired ability or skill, as opposed to *tau*, which marks general ability, and *taus*, which marks physical or material ability, *tsum*, which marks some form of physical ability (based on the scant evidence available), and *yeej* ‘can(not)’, which is associated with negative ability. As such, *txawj* generally does not co-occur with these other types of Ability, but rather forms a distinct category to specifically distinguish acquired ability from other types.

#### **3.4.4 *txhob* ‘NEGATIVE IRREALIS, should not’**

The morpheme *txhob* ‘do not, should not’ marks negative irrealis (following Jarkey 2006:125), placing it as a type of irrealis marker in the Reality category of Dixon (2012)’s framework. As such, it serves as a negation particle that often occurs in irrealis

<sup>139</sup> See the discussion on *yuav* above for the special situations associated with tests 6 and 7 here.

contexts, such as the imperative, expressing a purpose or desire (following Jaisser 1984:60-61), negating the subordinate clause of a modal, or marking negation in the protasis of counterfactual statements. It can also sometimes mark negative modality. Examples of each of these five uses appears in (120), (121), (122), (123), and (124), respectively.

(120) *Txhob txhawj* (Jaisser 1984:59)  
 NEG.IRR worry  
 ‘Don’t worry.’

In (120), the negation of the imperative *txawj* ‘worry’ is achieved with the presence of *txhob*, producing the meaning ‘don’t worry’.

(121) *Nws pab kom tus tsov txhob tom kuv* (Jaisser 1984:59)  
 3SG help so.that CLF tiger NEG.IRR bite 1SG  
 ‘He helped me so that the tiger wouldn’t bite me.’<sup>140</sup>

In (121), the potential event *tus tsov txhob tom kuv* ‘the tiger wouldn’t bite me’ is marked by *txhob* to show the actor’s goal of the event not happening.

(122) ...*yam uas peb yuav tsum tsis txhob ua...*  
 type REL 1PL must NEG NEG.IRR do  
 ‘...the one that we must not do...’

In (122), *txhob*, with the regular negative marker *tsis*, negates the verb *ua* ‘do’, and the whole phrase, *tsis txhob ua*, is subordinate to the Modal *yuav tsum* ‘must’.

(123) (a) *Yog kuv (tsis)<sup>141</sup> txhob lem, peb twb*  
 if 1SG (NEG) NEG.IRR turn 1PL sure  
 ‘If I hadn’t turned, we...’

<sup>140</sup> Note that the translation provided here by Jaisser (1984) includes ‘me’ twice, while *kuv* ‘1SG’ appears explicitly in the Hmong sentence only once.

<sup>141</sup> Parentheses here and following in an example indicate that the word can be optionally included with no effect on the grammaticality of the sentence.

- (b) *tsis sib tsoo.* (Jarkey 1991:68)  
 NEG RECP smash  
 ‘...wouldn’t have had the accident.’

In (123), *txhob* marks the negation the counterfactual if-then statement’s protasis *yog kuv lem* ‘if I had turned’ to express an idea of what could have been.

- (124) *Nws txhob ua kws kho mob.*  
 3SG NEG.IRR do doctor  
 ‘He shouldn’t be(come) a doctor.’

In (124), *txhob* is placed before *ua kws kho mob* ‘be(come) a doctor’ to signal a negative modality translated as ‘shouldn’t’.

One important semantic context where *txhob* is often used where the regular negative marker *tsis* sometimes cannot appear alone is in purpose complements introduced by *kom* (Jaisser 1984). An example of this is (125) below.

- (125) *Kuv kho lub rutsev kom nag (tsis) txhob xau* (Jaisser 1984:60)  
 1SG fix CLF roof so.that rain NEG NEG.IRR leak  
 ‘I fix the roof so that the water doesn’t come in.’

In this case, the presence of *txhob* in the *kom* clause—with or without the negative marker *tsis*—ensures that the sentence is grammatical. Compare this with (126) below.

- (126) \**Kuv kho lub rutsev kom nag tsis xau* (Jaisser 1984:60)  
 1SG fix CLF roof so.that rain NEG leak

In this case, the presence of *tsis* alone in the *kom* clause renders the sentence ungrammatical. Thus, in at least some contexts, *txhob* often must appear as the negative marker in purpose clauses, further suggesting that it marks negative irrealis.

*Txhob* can also be accompanied by the normal negative marker *tsis* without affecting the meaning (Jarkey 1991:68). Compare example (120) above with (127):

- (127) *Tsis txhob txhawj* (Jaisser 1984:59)  
 NEG NEG.IRR worry  
 ‘Don’t worry.’

In (127), the same sentence appears as in (120) above, though with the addition of the negative *tsis* ‘not’, without any change in meaning. This optional usage of *tsis* is also manifested in (123) above, where *tsis* is placed in parentheses to show that it is optional, again without any clear effect on the meaning. This same possibility exists for many of the other examples above, such as the optional *tsis* in (125) above, and (124) as in (128) below.

- (128) *Nws tsis txhob ua kws kho mob.*  
 3SG NEG NEG.IRR do doctor  
 ‘He should not become a doctor.’

Here, *tsis* can appear before *txhob*, again with no change in meaning. Altogether, in many cases, *tsis* can optionally accompany *txhob* without impacting the semantics of the sentence, suggesting that *txhob* has an additional role outside of simply marking the negative, that of irrealis.

While the above treatment as an Irrealis marker with a possible modal use satisfactorily characterizes the use of *txhob*, Jarkey (1991:68), on the other hand, argues that this particle marks a level of certainty in which “the falsity of the proposition is not certain.” She further suggests that it could be a “subject of speculation” or a matter of ‘hope’ (Jarkey 1991:68). However, her example expressing this “speculation” is the counterfactual if-then example in (123) above, and her example representing ‘hope’ is a negative imperative. Both of these uses are irrealis in nature, and neither necessarily expresses an inherent lack of certainty: in the case of (123), certainty does not appear to be a salient aspect of the meaning of the counterfactual, and in the case of the negative

imperative, certainty over the event's happening is not relevant. Thus, *txhob* should be treated as a negative irrealis marker.

Syntactically, *txhob* shares features with regular verbs such as following the negative marker *tsis*, as in example (128), and appearing in first position of a verbal sequence, as in all of the examples above. However, when considering the seven tests for verbal status in White Hmong proposed by Jaisser (1984), some differences emerge.

Table 14 shows the results of the seven tests with *txhob*.

Test Type	<i>txhob</i>	<i>kom</i> 'tell' (Jaisser 1984)
negative <i>tsis</i>	yes*	yes
question particle <i>puas</i>	questionable	yes
"past tense" <i>tau</i>	yes, but strange	yes
"future tense" <i>yuav</i>	questionable	yes
negative imperative <i>txhob</i>	no	yes
post-verbal ability <i>tau</i>	yes*	yes
question construction with <i>los tsis V</i>	yes, but strange	yes

**Table 14.** A comparison of verbal status test results for *txhob* and the regular verb *kom*.

The tests with *txhob* generally showed different results compared to normal verbs such as *kom* 'tell'. In the case of test 1, in which *tsis* 'not' is placed before the element to test, *tsis txhob* produces effectively the same meaning as *txhob* alone, since *txhob* is inherently negative; in the case of test 6, while the sequence *txhob tau V* is possible, it seems that *tau* actually patterns with the following verb, with 'shouldn't have V' as the most salient meaning, where *tau* does apply to the following verb, not to *txhob*. The translation 'shouldn't be able to V', the expected outcome of test 6, is an ambiguous case, since *tau* can either precede or follow the verb to express ability of differing varieties.<sup>142</sup> All of the other tests produced either allowable but strange results, genuinely questionable results,

<sup>142</sup> See above for the discussion on the uses of *tau*.

or unacceptable results.

Thus, *txhob* is not functioning in the same way as a verb like *kom*, and must therefore not be a regular verb. Syntactically, it can either be considered a Modal, though not of the same class as *yuav*, which precedes the negative, or merely an Irrealis marker that can express Modality. Since Dixon (2012)'s Modality markers are all considered irrealis markers, *txhob* should be treated as a Modality marker for purposes of Non-spatial Setting, and this analysis is adopted here. The fact that *txhob* is inherently negative, and when used as a Modal it expresses a possibility that should not come to be, however, seems very unusual for Modals, and provides an interesting insight into what is possible for categories of Modality.

As part of the larger system of Reality and its subcategory of Modality in White Hmong, *txhob* can generally co-occur with morphemes marking Modality, with the pattern in the data being that *txhob* 'NEGATIVE IRREALIS' modifies the verb found in the complement of the Modal or Semi-modal, as discussed above. Another possible pattern is for *txhob* to precede the special Modal *txawj* 'know how to' in order to produce a negative imperative, as in (129) below.

- (129) *Tsis txhob txawj kho mob.*  
 NEG NEG.IRR know.how.to heal patient  
 'Do not know how to heal patients!'

In this case, *tsis* 'not' and *txhob* 'NEGATIVE IRREALIS' precede the special Modal *txawj* 'know how to', resulting in a negative imperative. Whether this pattern can be extended to Semi-modals is unknown, and is left for further research.

### 3.4.5 *chiv* ‘begin’

The morpheme *chiv* expresses the meaning ‘to begin, originate, start’ and is regarded by Heimbach to be comparable to the verb *pib* ‘start’ (1969:24, 229). This morpheme belongs to the Beginning action category of Phase of Activity.

An example of the use of *chiv* appears in (130).

- (130) *chiv ua* (Heimbach 1969:24)  
 begin do  
 ‘To begin to do.’

Here, *chiv* appears with the verb *ua* ‘do’, providing the ‘to begin to’ part of the translation.

Note that in the data Heimbach (1969) provides, *chiv* only appears before verbs.<sup>143</sup> With nouns, *chiv* is used in a compound form *chivkeeb* ‘begin’,<sup>144</sup> as in (131) below.

- (131) *Chiv keeb mob li cas?* (Heimbach 1969:24)  
 begin<sup>145</sup> ailment how  
 ‘How did the ailment begin?’

In this case, the compound *chivkeeb* is followed by the noun *mob* ‘ailment’ and the interrogative phrase *li cas* ‘how?’ and has the meaning ‘begin’. Thus, it seems that on the basis of the scant data available, *chiv* can only appear with verbal complements, and *chivkeeb* appears in other contexts.

This apparent limitation suggests that *chiv* has some sort of grammatical restriction compared to normal verbs, and, when considering its meaning, it falls naturally into the Secondary-A verb category to which other Phase of Activity verbs belong (following Dixon 2006:13). As such, it is clear that *chiv* itself belongs to the Phase of Activity category. As part of the larger system of Phase of Activity, the

<sup>143</sup> The morpheme *chiv* did not appear in the data I obtained from my language consultant, Jay Yang.

<sup>144</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1969:24).

<sup>145</sup> Heimbach (1969) did not provide a clear gloss for the morpheme *keeb* here; it may be connected with the meaning ‘basis, basic fact, the root of things’ (Heimbach 1979:82).

available data shows *chiv* ‘begin to’ occurring by itself without other Phase of Activity morphemes present, suggesting that these form part of a paradigm; however, due to the scarcity of data for this morpheme, further research is necessary.

### 3.4.6 *pib* ‘begin’

The verb *pib* signals the beginning of an event (following Jarkey 2006:133). It appears before the verb expressing the event that is beginning, as a Secondary-A verb of Beginning (Jarkey 2006:133). This morpheme belongs to the category Phase of Activity as an indicator of Beginning action.

An example of *pib* appears in (132) below.

- (132) *Peb pib nrhiav peb lub hom phiaj li no...*  
 1PL start search 1PL CLF purpose like this  
 ‘This is how we start searching for our purpose...’

Here, *pib* accompanies the verb *nrhiav* ‘search’ to express ‘start searching’.

Jarkey (1991:74) regards *pib* to be a variety of deontic modality, where such modals are accompanied by an unmarked complement, that is, no complementizer is present. This is the case in example (132) above, where *pib* is immediately followed by the rest of the verb phrase without anything in between. Jarkey further argues that *pib* with a following verb do not compose a serial verb construction because they have no arguments in common; rather, the verb phrase following serves as a second argument for *pib* (1991:350). Her research is notable in that *pib* does take the same variety of complement common to modals (1991:74).

Nevertheless, the semantic notion of ‘start’ hardly fits into a natural category marking deontic modality, considering Dixon (2012)’s treatment of it as a type of Irrealis, in spite of Jarkey (1991:350)’s observation that *pib* is similar syntactically to *txawj* ‘know

how to'.<sup>146</sup> This issue is solved by Jarkey (2006), where she treats *pib* as belonging to a category other than deontic modality. There, she treats *pib* as a 'Secondary verb' of 'Beginning type' in the verbal framework provided by Dixon (2006) (Jarkey 2006:133). As such, *pib* is syntactically restricted in that it must be accompanied by another verb (Dixon 2006:30).

In addition to this restriction, Jarkey (1991:351-352) also points out that time adverbs associated with the complement verb that appears with *pib* cannot differ from those that have sentence scope. This suggests that *pib* and the verb that follows are associated more closely together than a normal verb-verb sequence, further reinforcing the understanding that *pib* is grammatically less than a full verb.

Since *pib* 'begin to' manifests these grammatical restrictions that suggest that it is not a full verb, and since 'Secondary verbs' are often associated with grammatical functions in certain languages (following Dixon 2012:26), *pib* should be understood to be a grammatical element. From its semantics, it is clear that it naturally belongs to Phase of Activity, since it marks the beginning of an action. The morpheme *pib* is therefore a Phase of Activity marker indicating Beginning action as part of Non-spatial Setting. As part of the larger paradigm of Phase of Activity in White Hmong, it is unclear what relationships or restrictions exist between *pib* 'begin to' and the other members of the category, apart from the fact that *pib* generally does not co-occur with other members such as *chiv* 'begin to', *pheej* 'keep, continue to', or *tas* 'finish' in the data.

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<sup>146</sup> See above for the discussion that places *txawj* into the category of Modal, though with a special syntactic status, a verb that Jarkey (1991:350) includes with *pib* as a syntactic category. It is notable here that in Jarkey (2006:133), she places *pib* and *txawj* in differing categories based on their semantics, following Dixon (2006).

### 3.4.7 *nyim* ‘keep -ing’

The word *nyim* appears before the verb and contributes a sense of “continuous action,” often translated as ‘keep’ (Heimbach 1969:219). It belongs to the Phase of Activity category of Non-spatial Setting as an indicator of Continuing action.

An example of *nyim* appears in (133) below.

- (133) *Nws nyim quaj.* (Heimbach 1969:219)  
 3SG keep cry  
 ‘He kept crying.’

Here, the verb *quaj* ‘cry’ is preceded by *nyim*, contributing the idea of continuing action indicated by the word ‘kept’ in English.

Syntactically, Heimbach (1969:219) calls *nyim* a “preverbal intensifying particle,” which suggests that it is a grammatical element. However, since no other data is known to be available, it is assumed here that Heimbach’s analysis is correct, and so *nyim* is treated below as a grammatical element for purposes of Non-spatial Setting. As part of the larger system, no data is known to be available to determine whether *nyim* participates in a paradigmatic relationship with other morphemes in the Phase of Activity category, and thus further research is needed.

### 3.4.8 *pheej/pej* ‘keep, continue to’

The morpheme *pheej* (or *pej*) ‘keep, continue to’ supplies a notion of continuing action to the main verb (following Heimbach 1969, Jarkey 1991, and Jarkey 2006). This idea of continuing can also take on an iterative meaning such as ‘repeatedly’ (Heimbach 1969:242). In terms of word class, according to Jarkey (2006:133), *pheej* (or *pej*) is a

Beginning type Secondary-A verb, following Dixon (2006)'s verbal categories.<sup>147</sup> As such, it has a limited distribution as it must occur with a second verb (Dixon 2006:11). As a grammaticalized morpheme, it belongs to the Continuing action class of morphemes of the Phase of Activity category of Non-spatial Setting.

An example demonstrating the two nuances associated with *pheej*—continuation and repetition— appears in (134) below.

- (134) *Nws pheej noj tshuaj pheej tsis zoo.* (Heimbach 1969:242)  
 3SG keep eat medicine keep NEG good  
 'He keeps taking medicine but gets no better.'

Here, the first instance of *pheej* appears with *noj tshuaj* 'take medicine' to signify that the person represented by *nws* 'he/she' takes medicine 'repeatedly', while in the second instance, *pheej* implies that the state expressed by *tsis zoo* is ongoing, without change. As a result, it is clear that *pheej* covers notions of continuing states as well as repeated actions.

A possible variant pronunciation of *pheej* is *pej*<sup>148</sup>, as shown in (135) below.

- (135) *Nws pej do tsis paub tsum.*  
 3SG continue.to stir NEG know stop  
 'He continued to stir without stopping.'

Here, *pej* supplies the notion of 'continued to' for the verb *do* 'stir'. In this case, the word indicates a continuing action.

Altogether, *pheej/pej* marks continuing action, and thus naturally belongs to the Phase of Activity category within Non-spatial Setting. As part of the larger paradigmatic system of Phase of Activity in White Hmong, it is unknown whether *pheej/pej* can co-

<sup>147</sup> A discussion on Dixon's verbal categories is beyond the scope of this paper, though it can be noted that virtually all verbs that fit within Dixon (2012)'s Non-spatial Setting appear to be Secondary verbs of some sort.

<sup>148</sup> This appears to be either dialectal or idiolectal variation: the language consultant, Jay Yang, rejected *pheej* as a possible form, and consistently used *pej*. However, I was unable to find another source in the literature that attests *pej* as an independent form.

occur with other Phase of Activity items, though the semantics involved suggest otherwise; in either case, further research is needed.

### 3.4.9 *rau siab ntso* ‘continue to, commit oneself to’

The phrase *rau siab ntso* serves to mark Continuing action as part of the Phase of Activity category of Non-spatial Setting. Examples appear in (136), (137), and (138) below.

- (136) ...*kuv yeej yuav tsum ua tau xwb ces rau siab ntso ua...*  
 1SG certainly must do can indeed then continue.to do  
 ‘...I will be able to do this, then, continue to do this...’

In (136), *rau siab ntso* appears with *ua* ‘do’, producing ‘continue to do’.

- (137) *Kuv rau siab ntso noj mov.*  
 1SG continue eat rice  
 ‘I continued eating.’

In (137), *rau siab ntso* appears with *noj* ‘eat’, resulting in the meaning ‘continued eating’.

- (138) ...*yog hais tias yus rau siab ntso ua tiag tiag*  
 if that INDF.PRON<sup>149</sup> commit.to do really  
 ‘...if you’re willing to commit yourself to doing it.’

In (138), *rau siab ntso* again appears with *ua*, though a new nuance appears: ‘commit yourself to doing’, also having a notion of continuity, though of a markedly volitional nature. Thus, *rau siab ntso* expresses an idea of continuing action with a connotation of intentional willfulness.

Jarkey (2006:133) provides a gloss for *rau siab ntso*, “put (one’s) heart into it,” or more exactly, “put in liver steadily,” that reveals an idiomatic quality, providing support for its existence as a unit as well as the degree of volition found in example (138) above. In contrast to the treatment above as continuity, however, Jarkey (2006:133) treats *rau siab ntso* as a verb of Trying type, rather than Beginning type like *pheej*. This suggests

<sup>149</sup> Gloss following Jarkey (1991:70). Also in another example below.

that *rau siab ntso* expresses a degree of effort. While example (138) would agree with this (as well as at least one other example in my data), examples (136) and (137) are not completely explained. If the idea of continuing action salient in (136) and (137) is combined with the degree of effort found in Jarkey (2006) and example (138), a solution is found: treat *rau siab ntso* as continuing action with a high degree of effort. This would then naturally contrast with *pheej/pej* ‘keep, continue to’, which expresses simple continuing action. Adopting this analysis, White Hmong has two varieties of continuing action, where *rau siab ntso* expresses continuing action with willful effort.<sup>150</sup>

### 3.5 Post-main-verb position

The “Post-main-verb position” represents the placement of Attainment SVC markers, the second element in reduplication, the Temporal shifter *ntua* ‘immediately, just (now)’, the Semi-modal *taus* ‘be physically/materially able to’, and the Perfect marker *dua* ‘EXP’.<sup>151</sup> Other elements already mentioned, such as *tau* ‘ATT, be able’ can be placed in this position as part of an Attainment SVC.

#### 3.5.1 Attainment Serial Verb Constructions

The Accomplishment (Jarkey 1991) or Attainment Serial Verb Construction (Jarkey 2004) is a construction that is characterized by having multiple verbs where “the final verb in the series serves to describe the successful accomplishment or achievement of the action or event depicted by the preceding verb” (Jarkey 1991:214). In other words, this type of

<sup>150</sup> It is notable here that in at least some contexts, the language consultant, Jay Yang, rejected *pej* but accepted *rau siab ntso* unless a clause stating a reason for continuing was provided.

<sup>151</sup> The exact placement of *dua* in the larger sentence is ambiguous, due to a lack of clear data demonstrating the exact ordering of *dua* with other post-verbal elements. It is placed in the “post-main-verb position” provisionally, as the other non-grammaticalized morphemes that have the form *dua* are all verbs—one of which means ‘to pass on, to go’ (Heimbach 1979:38)—and the post-main-verb position is a very common position for other verbs to appear. This analysis is corroborated by the fact that the experiential perfect marker in Mandarin, *-guo*, is grammaticalized from a verb meaning ‘to pass,’ suggesting a link through the typological generality aspect of grammaticalization.

construction serves as a form of indicating the Perfect, since it signals “successful” completed action. While postverbal *tau* ‘ATT, be able’<sup>152</sup> often occurs in this construction, other verbs, such as *cuag* ‘reach’ or *txog* ‘arrive’ can serve in this role as well (Jarkey 1991:214, 229). An example of this construction with one of these other verbs appears in (139) below.

- (139) *Kuv mus raws cuag lawv.* (Jarkey 1991:214)  
 1SG go pursue reach 3PL  
 ‘I caught up with them.’

In this example, the verb *raws* ‘pursue’ is followed by the second verb *cuag* ‘reach’ to signal the idea of ‘catch up’, that is, expressing the successful completion of the action indicated by *raws*.

As an indicator of completed action, this Attainment Serial Verb Construction (SVC) belongs to Completion as an indicator of the Perfect, along with the more general marker *tau* ‘ATT, be able’, which participates in the construction. As for its relationship with other Completion markers, the Attainment SVC can co-occur with the marker *lawm* ‘CP’, as in (140) below.

- (140) *Nws mus txog tom khw lawm.* (Jarkey 1991:214)  
 3SG go arrive over.there market CP  
 ‘She has arrived at the market.’

Here, *mus* ‘go’ and *txog* ‘arrive’ are combined to produce the meaning ‘arrive’, and appear along with the Perfect marker *lawm* ‘CP’, showing that these can co-occur. As a result, it is clear that the Attainment SVC can occur with at least one other Perfect marker,

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<sup>152</sup> *Tau* ‘ATT, be able’ is distinctive because of both its semantic and syntactic complexity and the fact that the function of *tau* in this construction is such that the “goal” indicated by *tau* “is the performance of the activity itself,” that is, the activity indicated by the main verb (Jarkey 1991:229). In other words, *tau* is much more semantically bleached than other verbs used in this construction, which generally “[express] a fairly precise goal” (Jarkey 1991:229). For a detailed discussion on *tau*, please see section 3.4.1 above.

though further research is necessary to determine the relationship of the Attainment SVC to other Completion markers.

### 3.5.2 Reduplication

Reduplication of verbs generally reflects ongoing action in White Hmong, and as such, marks Imperfect as part of Completion in Non-spatial Setting. More specifically, reduplication of verbs produces several distinct nuances, including the imperfective, habitual action, repetitive action, or action lasting for a period of time (Jarkey 1991:75; Owensby 1986:237-239). Each of the functions is discussed in turn below.

First, reduplication can signal the imperfective, as in (141) below.

- (141) *Nws txham nws noj~noj* (Owensby 1986:239)  
 3SG choke 3SG eat~REDUP  
 ‘He choked while he was eating.’

Here, the verb *txham* ‘choke’ signals an action that takes place momentarily while the event signaled by the reduplicated verb *noj* ‘eat’ is happening. This usage matches Dixon (2012:35)’s description of the imperfective, in that the “temporal make-up of the event”—namely, that of eating in this case—is in view, and the act of choking is placed as a single event within the larger time frame of eating.

Second, reduplication can mark habitual action, as in (142) and (143) below.

- (142) (a) *Tus lw zaj mas nws da~da dej tau ob peb*  
 CLF lake TOP 3SG immerse~REDUP water ATT two three  
 ‘That lake, he’s been taking his bath (in it) for several...’
- (b) *xyoo no...* (Jarkey 1991:75)  
 year this  
 ...years now...’

Here, the verb *da* ‘immerse’ has been reduplicated to signal a habitual action, ‘taking his bath’, over a period of time, i.e. *ob peb xyoo no* ‘for several years now’.

- (143) *Nws ua~ua paj ntaub.* (Owensby 1986:239)  
 3SG do~REDUP pa.ndau  
 ‘She makes pa ndau<sup>153</sup> (more than she does anything else).’

Here, *ua* ‘do’ has been reduplicated to indicate that the making of *paj ntaub* is a habitual, common activity on the part of *nws* ‘3SG’.

Third, reduplication can signal a non-habitual, repetitive action. This is shown in (144) below.

- (144) *dhia~dhia* (Owensby 1986:238)  
 jump~REDUP  
 ‘jumped many times’

Here, *dhia* ‘jump’ has been reduplicated to signal the notion of ‘many times’.

Fourth, reduplication can indicate an event’s taking place for an amount of time. Examples appear in (145) and (146).

- (145) *Txiv Nraug Ntsuag pw~pw ib tsam ov,...* (Jarkey 1991:75)  
 the.Orphan.Boy rest~REDUP little.while IP  
 ‘(After) the Orphan Boy slept for a while,...’

In this case, the verb *pw* ‘rest, sleep’ is reduplicated and appears with the phrase *ib tsam* ‘a while’, signaling an event that took place for a period of time.

- (146) *tau qw~qw* (Owensby 1986:238)  
 ATT shout~REDUP  
 ‘shouted (for a long time)’

Here, the verb *qw* ‘shout’ has been reduplicated to indicate that it was an ongoing event ‘for a long time’, perhaps as a series of shouts over an extended period of time. Note also the particle *tau* here indicating the repetitive action’s completion. Thus, reduplication can serve to mark the imperfective, habitual action, repetitive action, and an action that lasted for a certain amount of time.

<sup>153</sup> Heimbach (1979:223) defines *paj ntaub* as ‘embroidery.’

In regard to the placement of reduplication into Non-spatial Setting, the four uses, when considered separately, would fall into several different categories, namely, Composition (Imperfective), Frequency and Degree (habitual, repetitive), and Completion (Imperfect marking duration). However, all of the four uses can be treated as different aspects of a single notion: ongoing action. In fact, for several of the above categories, Owensby (1986:238) notes that “the function of reduplication of verbs may vary according to semantic classes of verbs,” and so it should be expected that, while on the surface there are several different functions, underlyingly there is a common element. In this case, the imperfective meaning is drawn from the notion that the action is ongoing rather than representing a single point in time, in contrast to its unmarked perfective counterpart. The habitual and repetitive meanings would stem from an action that is repeated on an ongoing basis through a longer period of time. The use associated with duration is ongoing action for an unspecified amount of time, with no further specialization in meaning. Thus, all of the common meanings associated with reduplication can be connected to ongoing action. As such, it is an Imperfect as part of Completion, in the sense that the action is ongoing and therefore incomplete. This is the analysis adopted for purposes of Non-spatial Setting below.

### **3.5.3 *ntua* ‘just, immediately’**

The word *ntua* “adds the idea of immediacy to the action of the verb” (Heimbach 1969:193). Heimbach (1969) treats it as a ‘restricted post verbal intensifier’, and provides glosses such as ‘just’, ‘straight’, or ‘right’, with a nuance that the event takes place in immediate proximity to something else, whether physical or temporal. Thus, part of the function of this word falls into the semantic realm of Non-spatial Setting, as a Lexical

Time Word in Dixon (2012)'s category of Tense, while part of it does not. Examples of *ntua* where it provides its temporal sense appear in (147) and (148) below.

- (147) *los txog ntua* (Heimbach 1969:193)  
 come arrive just  
 'Just came, just arrived, just returned.'

In (147), *ntua* appears with the verbs *los* 'come' and *txog* 'arrive' and provides the meaning represented by the English 'just', that is, immediate proximity in time.

- (148) *Lawv teb ntua kuv* (Mottin 1978:118)  
 3PL answer immediately 1SG  
 'They answered me immediately.'<sup>154</sup>

Here, *ntua* follows *teb* 'answer' to produce the meaning 'immediately', again indicating proximity in time.

Heimbach (1969)'s treatment of *ntua* as belonging to the class of "restricted post verbal intensifier[s]" means that he regards it as a particle (1979:468) and is "restricted" in terms of which verbs with which it can appear.<sup>155</sup> Thus, it serves a grammatical role, and belongs to Non-spatial Setting.

### 3.5.4 *taus* 'be physically/materially able to'

The morpheme *taus* 'be physically/materially able to' is a post-verbal marker that signifies ability (Mottin 1978:103).<sup>156</sup> As such, it marks one type of Ability Modality in Non-spatial Setting.

<sup>154</sup> The gloss and translation of the French *aussitôt* here and in the prose following relies in part on Kellogg (2014).

<sup>155</sup> It should be noted here, however, that many of Heimbach (1979)'s "restricted post verbal intensifiers" may actually be morphemes belonging to a class of onomatopoeia-like words (following Ratliff 1986), rather than genuine grammatical elements.

<sup>156</sup> It is notable here that, after consulting with a relative, the language consultant, Jay Yang, suggested that the difference between *taus* and *tau* is one of euphony rather than function. Nevertheless, *taus* is given its own section here as it is treated by scholarly works as a separate word. Further research is necessary to determine this morpheme's exact status.

Examples of *taus* marking physical ability and material ability appear in (149) and (150) below, respectively.

(149) *Ces cov uas muaj zos thiab mus taus kev ces*  
 then CLF REL have strong and go able.to road then  
 ‘Then, those that had strength and were able to walk, then,...’

*lawv thiaj li los mus rau Thaib Teb lawm.*  
 3PL consequently<sup>157</sup> come go to Thailand CP  
 ‘...they went to Thailand.’

In (150), *taus* accompanies *mus kev* ‘walk’ to signify ‘were able to walk’, denoting physical ability in this case.

(150) *Kuv pab tsis taus koj* (Mottin 1978:103)  
 1SG help NEG able.to 2SG  
 ‘I don’t have the means to help you.’

In (149), *taus* is negated with *tsis*, and the resulting phrase *tsis taus* ‘don’t have the means’ qualifies *pab* ‘help’ to express the idea that the speaker lacks the material ability to help.

Syntactically, *taus* generally behaves like post-verbal *tau* ‘can’ in that it follows the verb it modifies and can take the negative marker *tsis*. Thus, on the basis of limited evidence, it is likely a verb of the same class as *tau*, indicating Ability Modality. As part of the larger system of Modality marking in White Hmong, there is no evidence that would suggest that *taus* can co-occur with other Modality markers, suggesting a paradigmatic relationship with these others; however, more research is necessary to prove this.

### 3.5.5 *dua* ‘EXPERIENTIAL MARKER’

The morpheme *dua* generally means ‘again’, though in conjunction with *tau* or *lawm* indicates past experience (Heimbach 1969:38, Mottin 1978:85). This latter construction

<sup>157</sup> Gloss per Heimbach (1969:340).

marks a distinct variety of Perfect as part of Dixon (2012)'s Completion category, namely, the Experiential Perfect (following the terminology of Comrie 1976:58).

Examples of this construction with *dua* combined with *tau* or *lawm* appear in (151), (152), and (153) below.

- (151) *Kuv tau mus dua lawm.* (Mottin 1978:85)  
 1SG ATT go EXP CP  
 'I've already been there.'

In (151), *tau* and *dua* are placed on either side of the verb *mus* 'go' and this phrase is followed by the perfect marker *lawm*. This results in the meaning 'have already been there'.

- (152) *Kuv tsis tau mus dua (ib zaug).* (Mottin 1978:108)  
 1SG NEG ATT go EXP (one time)<sup>158</sup>  
 'I've never been there.'

In (152), *tau* and *dua* are again placed on either side of *mus*, though the negative marker *tsis* appears in front of this phrase, producing the meaning 'have never been'. The phrase *ib zaug* 'one time' can also appear with this example, with no apparent change in meaning.

- (153) *ua dua lawm* (Heimbach 1969:38)  
 do EXP CP  
 'To have done before.'

In (153), *dua* and *lawm* appear together with *ua* 'do', though without *tau*, yet still giving the meaning 'have done before'. In each of these cases, the use of *dua* with another marker expresses past experience.

Comrie (1976:58) considers constructions marking past experience to be a form of perfect within his 'experiential perfect' category. He defines this category as "indicat[ing] that a given situation has held at least once during some time in the past

<sup>158</sup> Gloss following Heimbach (1969:38).

leading up to the present” (1976:58). This falls within Dixon (2012:31)’s broader definition of the perfect, namely, that “‘perfect’ is taken to mean ‘an action which is completed before the present time’, to which is often added ‘and which has present relevance’,<sup>159</sup> in that the situation in the past is relevant to the present situation in terms of one’s personal experience. Thus, this construction with *dua* and *tau* or *lawm* (or both) should be considered as a variety of perfect.

In addition, this construction is slightly different in meaning from those without *dua* in that they do not treat as salient this notion of experience, whereas the construction with *dua* does. In conclusion, the *dua* construction should be treated as distinct for purposes of the various forms of the perfect in relation to Non-spatial Setting.

One final interesting trait of *dua* is the unity in its use between Comrie’s experiential perfect and its use with the meaning ‘again’,<sup>160</sup> shown in (154) below.

(154) *ua dua ib zaug* (Heimbach 1969:38)  
do again one time  
‘To do a second time.’

Here, *dua* appears with the verb *ua* ‘do’ and is accompanied by the phrase *ib zaug* ‘one time’. In (152) above, *ib zaug* could appear with the experiential perfect with no apparent change in meaning compared to its absence. In both cases, the full phrase *dua ib zaug* can be used, showing a distinct unity in form between the two meanings, with the difference stemming from the presence of *tau* or *lawm*, as is the case in (152) and (153).

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<sup>159</sup> It should also be noted that Dixon (2012)’s broader definition here is remarkably similar to the general definition of the perfect in Comrie (1976:52), which states that “the perfect indicates the continuing present relevance of a past situation,” where the ‘present relevance’ is a primary element in focus.

<sup>160</sup> Gloss following Heimbach (1969:38).

### 3.6 Phase of activity—Finishing position

This is the position where Finishing action is indicated by the verbal items *tas* ‘finish’ and *tia*v ‘finish’.<sup>161</sup>

#### 3.6.1 *tas* ‘finish’

The morpheme *tas* ‘finish’<sup>162</sup> is a verb that functions as a marker denoting the finishing of an action (following Heimbach 1969:304). This fits into Non-spatial Setting as a Phase of Activity morpheme denoting Finishing action.

An example of this notion of finishing appears below.

- (155) (a) ...*ces thaum koj muab do tas lau ces koj tos*  
 then when 2SG get stir finish EP<sup>163</sup> then 2SG wait  
 ‘Then, when you are done stirring, then you wait...’
- (b) *li... [about] ib na thi li tej ntawd*  
 for one minute around those there  
 ‘...for about a minute or so.’

In this example, *tas* expresses the idea of ‘done’ in relation to the phrase *muab do* ‘stir’.

In this case, it conveys the idea that one event needs to finish before the next one begins,

in this case *koj tos* ‘you wait’.

*Tas* regularly appears with *lawm* ‘CP’ (in line with Jaisser 1984:15, Mottin 1978:85), as in (156) below.

<sup>161</sup> It should be noted here that this position is more or less the same as the post-main-verb position, with the exception that *tas* ‘finish’ and *tia*v ‘finish, complete’ are likely part of a distinct serial verb construction, perhaps the Disposal SVC, where the object noun appears before the second verb (Jarkey 1991:240).

<sup>162</sup> Gloss following Fuller (1988). It should be noted that *tas* can also very occasionally appear by itself without an object as a regular verb. The only case of this in the data I obtained from Jay Yang may actually be a set phrase. Further research is needed.

<sup>163</sup> The treatment of this particle as an ‘exclamatory particle’ is based in part on Jay Yang’s description of it. Mottin (1978:146) provides a description of a particle *lauj*, for which he describes its range of meaning as including “very great joy, surprise.” These are likely the same particle.

- (156) *Kuv noj mov tas lawm.*  
 1SG eat rice finish CP  
 ‘I’m finished eating.’

Here, the phrase *noj mov* ‘eat (rice)’ is followed by the complex *tas lawm*, producing the idea of both ‘finishing’, supplied by *tas*, and a notion of current relevance, supplied by *lawm*.<sup>164</sup>

*Tas* can also indicate when an event is not finished as part of the phrase *tsis tau tas* ‘not done’. An example of this appears in (157) below.

- (157) *Tam sim no kuv tab tom ua tsis tau tas*  
 right.now 1SG IPRF do NEG ATT finish  
 ‘Right now, I’m not done working on it yet.’

In this case, the event expressed by *ua* ‘do’ is ongoing, and the phrase *tsis tau* is accompanied by *tas* to mean that completion has not occurred. Thus, *tas* can be used with the negative to indicate the lack of completion.

As part of the larger system of Phase of Activity, the data does not provide any known instance where *tas* ‘finish’ can co-occur with other Phase of Activity morphemes such as *pib* ‘begin to’, *pheej* ‘continue to’, or *tiav* ‘finish’. As a result, it is assumed here that *tas* forms a paradigmatic relationship with the other members of this set, though further research would prove useful.

### 3.6.2 *tiav* ‘finish’

The morpheme *tiav* ‘finish’<sup>165</sup> is very similar to *tas* above in that it conveys an idea of finishing (following Heimbach 1969), and appears to function in more or less the same way. As such, it is an indicator of Finishing action as part of Phase of Activity.

<sup>164</sup> See above for the discussion of Jarkey (1991) and the meaning and function of *lawm*.

<sup>165</sup> All of the glosses from available sources, including the language consultant, make this an adjective or past participle in English, such as ‘finished’ or ‘done’ (Heimbach 1979:320), though it will be seen below that this is actually a verb in Hmong.

An example of *tiav* appears below in (158).

- (158) *Tam sim no kuv tab tom ua tsis tau tiav*  
 right.now 1SG IPRF do NEG ATT complete  
 ‘Right now, I’m still doing it, it’s not complete yet.’<sup>166</sup>

Here, *tiav* appears in place of *tas* in example (157) above, and there is no change in meaning. In this case, *tsis tau* conveys the notion of ‘not yet’ and *tiav* supplies the idea of ‘complete’.

Another example, in what appears to be a serial verb construction, is (159) below.

- (159) *Yuav ua tiav huv huv li* (Heimbach 1969:320)  
 POS.IRR do finish completely  
 ‘It must be completely done./(You) must finish it.’

In this example, the idea of ‘done’ or ‘finish’ is supplied by *tiav*, following the verb *ua* ‘do’.

In terms of word class, while *tiav* generally appears after another verb in the data, it passes the seven verbhood tests of Jaisser (1984). The results of these tests appear in Table 15.

Test Type	<i>tiav</i>	<i>kom</i> ‘tell’ (Jaisser 1984)
negative <i>tsis</i>	yes	yes
question particle <i>puas</i>	yes	yes
“past tense” <i>tau</i>	yes	yes
“future tense” <i>yuav</i>	yes	yes
negative imperative <i>txhob</i>	yes*	yes
post-verbal ability <i>tau</i>	yes	yes
question construction with <i>los tsis V</i>	yes	yes

**Table 15.** Test results for verbhood of *tiav*.

The verb *tiav* passes all of the tests. One case, test 5, provided a situation where *tiav* could be used by itself with the negative irrealis marker *txhob*, though not as the second

<sup>166</sup> This appears to be one clause in the original, though attempting to render this into English as a single clause would likely have a rather awkward result, hence Jay’s translation here.

verb in the sequence; in all other cases, *tiav* could follow another verb, such as *ua* ‘do’, as was done with these tests. Thus, it can be readily concluded that *tiav* is in fact a verb.

In contrast to this, Heimbach (1969:320) provides the definition “finished, sign of completed action” for *tiav*, which appears to suggest that *tiav* may be a grammatical marker of some sort. However, while the definition is accurate semantically, the tests above clearly conclude that *tiav* is a verb, suggesting a more complicated usage for this morpheme. Nevertheless, *tiav* is most often used as a verb after another verb, and when used after another verb, it cannot appear with *txhob* ‘NEGATIVE IRREALIS’,<sup>167</sup> suggesting altogether that in most circumstances, it is being used in a manner akin to *tas* above. As a result, it can be concluded that while *tiav* does have properties of regular verbs, it is also used to mark Phase of Activity in the same way as its counterpart *tas*, indicating Finishing action. In terms of the larger category of Phase of Activity, *tiav* generally does not appear with *tas*, nor with markers of Beginning and Continuing action, suggesting a paradigmatic relationship with these others; however, more research would be necessary to make further conclusions.

### **3.7 Final adverbs and particles position**

The previously discussed Degree of Certainty markers *kiag* (*li*) ‘really’ and possibly also *tiag* ‘really’ may appear in this position, as well as a large number of Lexical Time Words and phrases.

### **3.8 *lawm* ‘COMPLETION MARKER’**

The morpheme *lawm* is typically a clause-final marker that conveys an idea of ‘completion’ (following Heimbach 1969). In this sense, *lawm* can serve the role of a

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<sup>167</sup> There is the possibility that this restriction is due to a prohibition on *txhob* ‘do not, should not’ appearing in certain positions of the construction in which *tiav* ‘finish, complete’ generally takes part.

perfect marker, where the action is finished, and may also be optionally connected to relevance to another time (following Jarkey 1991, Dixon 2012).<sup>168</sup> It can also function as a marker of finishing, where an action is signified to be completed before another begins. In either case, it performs the role of a Perfect of completed action as part of Dixon's Completion category, similarly to its cognate counterpart *lawm* 'Completion aspect marker' in Laotian Green Hmong.

The role of *lawm* as a Completion marker is shown below in (160).

- (160) ...*ces lawv thiaj li los mus rau Thaib Teb lawm*  
 then 3PL consequently come go to Thailand CP  
 '...then they went to Thailand.'

In (160) above, *lawm* is used with a past event, namely, *los mus rau Thaib Teb* 'go to Thailand', to signify that the action was completed (with potential continuing relevance). It is clear that the primary meaning of *lawm* is to mark completion.

An extended use of *lawm* is when it is used to refer to a future event for which a decision has been made. This idea of 'already decided' was the intuition of my language consultant, Jay Yang, for this kind of usage. An example appears in (161) below.

- (161) *Kuv yuav ua lawm.*  
 1SG POS.IRR do CP  
 'I will do (this).'

Here, the future is indicated by the Modal-type word *yuav* 'POSITIVE IRREALIS' (see below), yet the completion marker *lawm* also appears, producing the meaning of 'will do' for *yuav ua lawm*. However, with the consultant's intuition that a decision already has been made, *lawm* can be taken to mean that something has in fact already occurred.

Drawing from typological considerations from the region (see above), particles like *lawm* often reflect a change of state or have ongoing relevance. In this case, the change of state

<sup>168</sup> Jaisser (1984) uses the term 'perfective' to characterize the usage of *lawm*.

would be the decision made, and the ongoing relevance would be connected with the future act. Thus, *lawm* allows for reference to time other than the past when expressing an idea of completion.

The morpheme *lawm* can also be used in conjunction with time adverbs to express completion of time (following Mottin 1978). An example of this usage appears in (162).

- (162) *Yav tag los lawm kuv yeej noj hmo tas li*  
 the.past come CP 1SG always eat dinner finish PART<sup>169</sup>  
 ‘In the past, I always ate dinner.’

In (162), the phrase *yav tag* ‘the past’ is accompanied by *los lawm*, literally, ‘came’, to signal that the period of time indicated is in the past, and has thus come to completion.

Altogether, *lawm* signals the completion of an act or of a period of time. As such, it is a Perfect marker signaling completed action in the category of Completion in the framework of Dixon (2012). In terms of the larger framework of the Perfect, however, *lawm* can co-occur with the other types of Perfect, namely, the Experiential Perfect *dua* ‘EXP’ and the Attainment Perfect *tau* ‘ATT’. This co-occurrence appears in (151), repeated in (163) below.

- (163) *Kuv tau mus dua lawm.* (Mottin 1978:85)  
 1SG ATT go EXP CP  
 ‘I’ve already been there.’

Here, *lawm* ‘COMPLETIVE PARTICLE’ appears in the same sentence as *dua* ‘EXPERIENTIAL PERFECT’ and *tau* ‘ATTAINMENT PERFECT’. As a result, it is clear that these three morphemes do not form a paradigm together, but each makes its own unique contribution to the sentence. In other words, Dixon (2012)’s Perfect as manifested in White Hmong is actually three distinct categories that can co-occur. However, the fact that *dua* in the

<sup>169</sup> Heimbach (1969:111) lists this as a particle with a meaning such as “like, as, after the manner of.” In final position in contexts like this, the meaning and function is not necessarily clear, and determining its use is outside the scope of this paper. As such, when its meaning and function are unclear, it is glossed as PART.

Perfect sense must co-occur with with one of the other Perfect markers such as *lawm* suggests that these three words are connected to one another, and each of the three should be seen as individual parts of a more cohesive system of Perfect in White Hmong.

### 3.9 *xwb* ‘indeed’

The word *xwb*, as a grammatical morpheme in Non-spatial Setting, indicates a high Degree of Certainty, and can be glossed as ‘indeed’ (Strecker & Vang 1986:5) or ‘truly, for sure’ (Mottin 1978:114).<sup>170</sup> It often co-occurs in the data from Jay Yang with *yeej* ‘certainly’, and generally appears at the end of the clause. An example appears in (n) below.

- (164) *kuv yuav tsum ntseeg hais tias kuv yeej yuav tsum ua tau xwb...*  
 1SG must believe that 1SG certainly must do can indeed  
 ‘I must believe that I will be able to do this...’

In this case, *xwb* accompanies the subordinated clause *kuv yeej yuav tsum ua tau* ‘I will be able to do this’ to indicate a high Degree of Certainty.

This use of *xwb* can also be extended to indicate emphasis, as in (n) below.

- (165) *ces tas li no lawm xwb.*  
 then finish like this CP indeed  
 ‘And this is the end.’

Here, *xwb* emphasizes the meaning signaled by the phrase *ces tas li no lawm* ‘and this is the end’ to indicate that the end has indeed been reached.

In cases such as (n) above, *xwb* clearly marks a high Degree of Certainty within Non-spatial Setting, and the emphatic use in (n) can be seen as an extension of it. As part of the larger system of Degree of Certainty, *xwb* is allowed to co-occur with at least *yeej*

<sup>170</sup> Note that *xwb* can also mean ‘only’. There are some cases in the available data where it is ambiguous whether *xwb* means ‘only’ or ‘indeed’; for the purposes of this thesis, only those cases that unambiguously mark Degree of Certainty are glossed ‘indeed’, and ‘only’ appears in all other cases.

‘certainly’, while more research is necessary to determine its relationship with other elements.

### 3.10 Morphemes not belonging to Non-spatial Setting

Several morphemes have been treated in the literature as belonging to categories that form a part of Non-spatial Setting, such as Modality, but do not fulfill the definitions and expectations put forth by Dixon (2006, 2012) for their respective category as they possess either semantic values or syntactic behavior that deviates from both the definitions and the tendencies of their Non-spatial Setting counterparts. The candidates closest to true Non-spatial Setting in terms of semantics include *kam* ‘be willing to’, *kheev* ‘be willing to’, and *xav* ‘want’, and these will be shown not to belong to Non-spatial Setting below. Others also exist such as *laj* ‘be tired of doing’, *maj* ‘be in a hurry to/be busy doing’, *nyiam* ‘like to’, and *sim* ‘try doing’ (Jarkey 1991:74), though treatment of these are outside the scope of this thesis.<sup>171</sup>

#### 3.10.1 *kam* ‘be willing to, have the habit of’

The morpheme *kam* is a verb with two uses: one with the meaning ‘be willing to’ (Jarkey 1991:74), or ‘consent, agree, allow’ (Jaisser 1984)<sup>172</sup> and precedes the main verb (Mottin 1978:97), and the other with the meaning “have the habit of” (Mottin 1978:97) or “accustomed to” (Heimbach 1979:75) when used with the negative marker *tsis* after the main verb (following Mottin 1978:97). While neither use belongs to Non-spatial Setting, the first is relevant as it is regarded by Jarkey (1991) to be a deontic modality marker.

Each of the two uses is discussed below in turn.

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<sup>171</sup> The primary reason that these are not considered here is the fact that their semantics stray far from the notion of Irrealis that Modality markers in Dixon (2012)’s framework contribute. It is notable, however, that these look like what Dixon (2006) refers to as Secondary-A verbs.

<sup>172</sup> Heimbach (1978:75) treats this as ‘willing, agreeable.’

The first usage of *kam*, which has the meaning ‘be willing to, consent, agree’, is as a Secondary-C verb (following Jarkey 2006:133) and, as such, does not mark Modality (in line with Dixon 2012:26). This first usage is demonstrated with the examples (166) and (167) below.

- (166) *Koj puas kam mus tag kis?* (Jarkey 1991:350)  
 2SG Q KAM go tomorrow  
 ‘Are you willing to go tomorrow?’

In (166), *kam* appears with the subject *koj* ‘2SG’ and the complement verb *mus* ‘go’, where *koj* is the subject of both.

- (167) *Nws kam kuv txiv ua* (Jarkey 1991:348)  
 3SG willing 1SG father do  
 ‘She is willing (for) my father (to) do (it).’

In (167), *kam* has the subject *nws* ‘3SG’, while the complement has its own subject, *kuv txiv* ‘my father’. Thus, *kam* can have a complement where the subject is the same for both *kam* and the complement verb, or a different subject for each.

As mentioned above, this verb is relevant to the discussion on Non-spatial Setting since Jarkey (1991:350) treats the ‘be willing to’ variety of *kam* as a type of deontic modality when the subject of *kam* and that of its complement refer to the same entity. However, since this variety of *kam* can also take part in constructions such as (167), this suggests that *kam* is not a Secondary-A verb in Dixon (2006)’s verbal classification framework at all, since Secondary-A verbs must have the same subject for both the verb itself and for its complement. As a result, since Dixon (2012:26) requires Modality-marking morphemes to be Secondary-A verbs, it is clear that this first use of *kam* does not mark Modality.

The second usage of *kam*, with the meaning ‘have the habit of’ or ‘accustomed to’ and following the main verb, is shown in (168) below.

- (168) *Kuv mus tsis kam* (Mottin 1978:97)  
 1SG go NEG have.the.habit.of  
 ‘I don’t have the habit of going there.’

Here, *kam* follows the main verb *mus* ‘go’ and the negative marker *tsis*, producing the meaning ‘don’t have the habit of going there’. This usage, while behaving similarly in terms of syntax to Modality markers such as *tau* ‘be able’, does not appear to have any bearing on the Non-spatial Setting of the sentence, especially when considering that an alternative translation for *kam* in this kind of context is ‘accustomed to’. As a result, this second usage should likely be treated as a grammaticalized morpheme of some sort, but not one indicating Non-spatial Setting.

### 3.10.2 *kheev* ‘be willing, be inclined to’

The morpheme *kheev* meaning ‘to be willing, to be inclined to’ (Heimbach 1969:97) also appears in the literature and is a verb similar to *kam* ‘be willing to, consent’ (following Jarkey 2006). As such, it does not operate as a member of Non-spatial Setting. Also like *kam*, it is relevant to the discussion here as at least one usage of it has been treated by Jarkey (1991:350) to indicate modality.

Examples where *kheev* appear in a modal-like context are given in (169) and (170) below.

- (169) *Kuv kheev mus.* (Heimbach 1969:97)  
 1SG be.willing.to go  
 ‘I’m willing to go.’

In (169), *kheev* appears with the single argument *kuv* ‘1SG’ and the verb *mus* ‘go’, forming the phrase ‘I’m willing to go’.

- (170) *Kuv txiv kheev kuv mus tag kis thiab* (Jarkey 2006:130)  
 1SG father consent 1SG go tomorrow also  
 ‘My father consents (for) me (to) go tomorrow too.’

In (170), *kheev* appears with the subject argument *kuv txiv* ‘my father’ and the complement *mus tag kis* ‘go tomorrow’, where the complement’s subject, *kuv* ‘1SG’, differs from the subject of the main clause. Thus, like *kam* ‘be willing to’, *kheev* allows either a single argument or both a subject and object argument, though, unlike *kam*, the two resulting meanings, namely, ‘be willing to’ and ‘consent’, are semantically much similar, suggesting that the actual difference between the use of *kheev* in (169) and (170) is merely syntactic. In this case, the primary difference between the two construction types is the use of a different variety of the “serial-like complementation strategy” (following the terminology of Jarkey 2006) that permits an additional subject in the case of (170). As a result, it is reasonable that *kheev* does not mark Modality in Dixon (2012)’s Non-spatial Setting, since, as stated earlier, morphemes that truly mark Modality must be Secondary-A verbs (Dixon 2012:26), and as such, they cannot have a complement clause with a different subject (Dixon 2006:13).

### 3.10.3 *xav* ‘want’

The word *xav* ‘want’ is a Secondary-B verb within Dixon (2006)’s verbal classification scheme (Jarkey 2006:133), and as such, it is not part of the Modality system the language.<sup>173</sup> This verb is relevant to Non-spatial Setting as it has been treated in the past as an indicator of modality by Jarkey (1991). The most important piece of evidence against *xav* as being part of the system of Modality of White Hmong is that, while *xav* can take the “serial-like complementation strategy” when its subject and that of its

<sup>173</sup> The following discussion on the status of *xav* ‘want to’ relies to a certain extent on the ideas expressed in Jarkey (2006:131-134).

complement are the same, it can also take a complement when the two subjects differ (Jarkey 2006:133). This is shown in (171) and (172) below.

(171) *Kuv xav tau ib phau ntawv* (Jaisser 1984:84)  
 1SG want get one CLF book  
 ‘I want to get a book.’

Here, *xav* is followed by the complement *tau ib phau ntawv* ‘get a book’, where the subject of *tau* ‘get’ is the same as that of *xav* ‘want’.

(172) *Nws xav kom kuv yuav koj* (Jarkey 2006:133)  
 3SG want PC 1SG marry 2SG  
 ‘He wants me to marry you.’

In this case, *xav* ‘want’ is followed by the complement *kom kuv yuav koj* ‘that I marry you’. In this case, the complement subject, *kuv* ‘1SG’, differs from the subject of *xav*, *nws* ‘3SG’. The fact that the subject of the complement can be different from the subject of *xav* itself disqualifies it from Secondary-A verb status (Dixon 2006:13). As such, since Dixon (2012:26) requires Modality-type verbs to be Secondary-A verbs, by definition, *xav* is not part of the system of Modality in White Hmong.

#### 4. Non-spatial Setting in White Hmong

This section covers the full system of Non-spatial Setting in White Hmong, organizing the above morphemes. It is found that White Hmong has a system that contains Lexical Time Words as part of Tense, markers of Reality, including Modality, Degree of Certainty, Phase of Activity, Completion, and Speed and Ease. Each of these categories is presented below in turn.<sup>174</sup>

##### 4.1 Tense

White Hmong does not mark tense. However, it does have a system of Lexical Time Words, as shown in Table 16.

Category of Lexical Time Words	Examples
Specific Time Spans	<i>hnub</i> ‘day’, <i>vas nthiv</i> ‘week’, <i>hli</i> ‘month’, <i>xyoo</i> ‘year’, <i>sauv ntxov</i> ‘morning’, <i>hnub tseg</i> ‘noontime’, <i>hnub qaij</i> ‘afternoon’, <i>tsaus ntuj</i> ‘night’
With Respect to Expectation	<i>twb</i> ‘already’, <i>yeej</i> ‘already’, <i>tseem</i> ‘still’ <sup>175</sup>
Temporal Shifters	<i>tag kis</i> ‘tomorrow’, <i>neeg kis</i> ‘the day after tomorrow’, <i>puag nraus</i> ‘three days from now’, <i>puag nag nraus</i> ‘four days from now’, <i>nag hmo</i> ‘yesterday’, <i>hnub hmo</i> ‘the day before yesterday’, <i>hnoob hnub</i> ‘three days ago’, <i>puag hnoob hnub</i> ‘four days ago’, <i>ntua</i> ‘just’, <i>nyuam qhuav</i> ‘just, a moment ago’, <i>maj mam</i> ‘after a while’

**Table 16.** Lexical Time Words in White Hmong.

##### 4.2 Reality

There is no distinct marker for Dixon (2012)’s Realis category in White Hmong.

However, the language has a robust system of Irrealis and Modality markers. This is shown below in Tables 17, 18, and 19. One point of interest here is the division of labor between Modal type markers and Semi-modal type markers, where markers of a certain variety usually do not have equivalents of the other syntactic type.

<sup>174</sup> For each subsection, please see the discussion for each word above for the source of the glosses found.

<sup>175</sup> As mentioned above, the adverbial *tab tom* ‘currently’ and other Imperfect markers fit with *twb* and *tseem* syntactically.

Category	Modal type	Semi-modal type
Positive Irrealis (incl. Future and many modalities)	<i>yuav</i> ‘POSITIVE IRREALIS, intend’	(none)
Negative Irrealis	(none)	<i>txhob</i> ‘NEGATIVE IRREALIS, should not’

**Table 17.** Basic irrealis system in White Hmong.

Category	Modal type	Semi-modal type
Necessity/Obligation	<i>yuav tsum</i> ‘should, have to, must’, <i>yuav tau</i> ‘must, have to’	( <i>txhob</i> )
Necessity/Ability	(none)	<i>tsum</i> ‘can, have to’
General Ability	(none)	<i>tau</i> ‘can’ ( <i>tsis</i> ) <i>yeej</i> ‘can(not)’
Physical Ability	(none)	<i>taus</i> ‘be physically/materially able to’
Acquired Ability	<i>txawj</i> ‘know how to’ (special)	(none)
Desire/Intent	( <i>yuav</i> )	(none)

**Table 18.** Modality system in White Hmong.

Category	Adverbial
Positive Irrealis (and Future)	<i>mam (li)</i> ‘will’

**Table 19.** Adverbial and other marking of irrealis in White Hmong.

### 4.3 Degree of Certainty

White Hmong has a set of words that signal high and moderate levels of certainty, as shown in Table 20.

Level of Certainty	Adverb/Particle
High	<i>kiag (li)</i> <sup>176</sup> ‘really’ <i>tiag (tiag)</i> ‘really’ <i>twb</i> ‘indeed’ <i>yeej</i> ‘definitely’ <i>xwb</i> ‘indeed’
Moderate	<i>tej zaum</i> ‘maybe’ <i>ntshai</i> ‘maybe’

**Table 20.** Degrees of Certainty in White Hmong.

<sup>176</sup> In some ways, *kiag* behaves like a particle, and in others like an adverb, as discussed above.

#### 4.4 Phase of Activity

White Hmong possesses three ways to mark beginning action, three ways to mark continuing action, and two ways to mark finishing action, as shown in Table 21.

Phase type	Pre-verbal	Post-verbal
Beginning	<i>pib</i> 'begin to', <i>tab tom</i> 'begin to', <i>chiv</i> 'begin to'	(none)
Continuing	<i>pheej/pej</i> 'continue to V, keep Ving', <i>nyim</i> 'keep Ving'	(none)
Continuing, Willful Effort	<i>rau siab ntso</i> 'keep Ving, commit oneself to V'	(none)
Finishing	(none)	<i>tas</i> 'finish Ving, be done Ving' <i>tiav</i> 'finish Ving'

**Table 21.** System of Phase of Activity in White Hmong.

An interesting observation here is the 'iconic' nature of Phase of Activity in White Hmong: the marking of beginning and continuing always precedes the main verb, while finishing is always indicated after the verb. It seems here that beginning is placed before the verb and finishing after the verb to iconically place the action's taking place relative to its beginning and ending in the actual ordering of the words themselves.

#### 4.5 Completion

Completion is represented by three perfect forms, one perfect construction, two imperfect forms, and one imperfect construction, as shown in Table 22.

Type of completion	Form	Construction
Perfect, Completion with Present Relevance	<i>lawm</i> ‘CP’	(none)
Perfect, ‘Attainment’	<i>tau</i> ‘have Ved’	Attainment SVC
Perfect, ‘Experiential’ <sup>177</sup>	<i>tau...dua, dua...lawm</i> ‘have Ved’	(none)
Imperfect	<i>tab tom</i> ‘IMPERFECT’	Reduplication
Imperfect, Ongoing/Repetitive	<i>sij</i> ‘continually, repeatedly’	(none)

**Table 22.** Completion markers in White Hmong.

#### 4.6 Speed and Ease

White Hmong has one clear marker of speed, *maj mam* ‘slowly, progressively, gradually’, marking slowness of an action.

#### 4.7 Summary of system

Altogether, White Hmong possesses a system of Lexical Time Words, Reality and Modality, Degree of Certainty, Phase of Activity, Completion, and Speed and Ease. As stated above, the constituents of Non-spatial Setting in White Hmong take the following order:

PreS NP PreMOD MOD NEGP IRR PreV Verb PostV NP PF ADP *lawm xwb*

In this ordering,<sup>178</sup> the Lexical Time Word category of Temporal Shifters generally fits into both PreS and PreMOD positions, where some words have a preference for one or the other position, while With Respect to Expectation adverbials always fit into the PreMOD slot. Reality is represented by: 1) *mam (li)* ‘will’, which fits into the PreMOD slot; 2) Modals, which fit into the MOD slot; 3) postverbal *tau* ‘can’ and *taus* ‘able to’, which fit into the PostV slot; and 4) other Semi-modals, which belong to the PreV slot

<sup>177</sup> Experiential Perfect, as a category of the perfect, following Comrie (1976).

<sup>178</sup> It should be reiterated here that while the ordering presented here is the most general, exceptions can be made for purposes of emphasis, local scope, or clausal subordination, where markers may appear in positions other than the ones presented here. This usually results in markers being found further to the right than as presented in this scheme.

(including *txhob* ‘should not, NEGATIVE IRREALIS’). Degree of Certainty is represented by: 1) *kiag* ‘really’, which is found in PreMOD, PostV, and ADP positions, as well as between verbs in a serial verb construction; 2) *tiag* ‘really’, which seems to appear in PreMOD<sup>179</sup> as well as ADP position; 3) *yeej* ‘certainly’, which fits into PreMOD position; 4) *ntshai* ‘maybe’ and *tej zaum* ‘maybe’, which are found in the PreS slot; and 5) *xwb* ‘indeed’ is clause-final. Phase of Activity markers appear in several positions: all of the Beginning and Continuing action markers are found in PreV position, and the Finishing action markers *tas* ‘finish’ and *tiaiv* ‘finish’ are placed in the PF slot. As for Completion, all Imperfect morphemes appear in the PreMOD position, while reduplication involves the Verb and PostV positions. Perfect markers can appear in one of several locations, depending on the marker: *tau* ‘ATT’ appears either in PreV or PostV position, *dua* ‘EXP’ appears in PostV position, and *lawm* appears in its own slot near the end of the clause. The remaining means to mark the Perfect, the Attainment SVC, takes place in the Verb and PostV positions. The slow Speed marker, *maj mam* ‘slowly, progressively, gradually’, appears in PreMOD position.

#### **4.8 Further directions of inquiry in White Hmong**

While this thesis generally covers all of the common markers of Non-spatial Setting in White Hmong, a few more potential candidates do appear in the literature, all of which either have very little available data or their membership in Non-spatial Setting is doubtful as they may not actually be grammatical markers or at least markers that genuinely form a part of Non-spatial Setting. These include *sam sim* ‘still, in the process of’ (Heimbach 1979:287), *nyaj* ‘without [a] doubt’ (Mottin 1978:115), and *sub*

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<sup>179</sup> This seems to be the case on the basis of example (64) above combined with the similar data on *kiag*, though more research is needed to determine whether it actually appears in PreV position in that instance.

‘interrogative and completive particle used to express probability with some doubt attached’ (Heimbach 1979:299). In addition, as mentioned above, further research is needed to prove what co-occurrence restrictions and paradigmatic relationships exist between a number of markers, especially those of the Degree of Certainty and Phase of Activity categories, as well as the Imperfect markers of the Completion category.

#### **4.9 Typological implications for Basic Linguistic Theory**

While most of the above findings fit neatly into what would be expected for markers of Non-spatial Setting, several important features are notable: the existence of the modal-like adverbial particle *mam (li)* ‘will’, the three-way distinction marking various types of Ability, the three-way distinction marking the Perfect—including an experiential perfect—with co-occurring markers, and the iconic nature of beginning and continuing versus finishing in terms of verbal placement as part of a larger system.

First, *mam (li)* is significant in that it is semantically a type of Modality marker, but syntactically it is an adverb. As Dixon (2012:26) points out, Modality markers are typically morphological markers or Secondary verbs of some sort. This would suggest that a language can have a full system of Modality markers as verbs, while also containing a morphological marker in the form of an adverb.

Second, the existence of a three-way distinction between various types of ability—in the form of *tau*, *taus*, and *txawj*, as shown above—is significant in that multiple possible forms of ability can distinctly be marked, rather than all falling into one general category of Ability, as Dixon (2012:26) presents it for English. It is also notable that this division of labor in the area of Ability is paralleled by Mandarin Chinese and Honghe Green Hmong.

Third, the three-way contrast in the Perfect, especially the existence of the existential perfect as a distinct category with the addition of an adverbial, is significant in that there exists a three-way distinction in Perfect types, and more significantly, that these three Perfect types can co-occur. The existential perfect is also a category that needs to be considered cross-linguistically as part of Non-spatial Setting in general, especially as it is one of Comrie (1976)'s basic forms of the perfect and because it is found as a distinct form in many languages in East Asia.

Fourth, the iconic nature of Phase of Activity in White Hmong in its placing of markers of Beginning, Continuing, and Finishing action is important as it shows how a grammatical system that uses Secondary verbs can have a split where the items belonging to the set fall into different positions (in line with Dixon 2012:40) based on the semantic perceptualization of an event, as a part of Non-spatial Setting. In addition, it shows how the existence of other constructions, such as the Accomplishment or Disposal Serial Verb Constructions, may have an influence on where markers of Finishing appear in the larger system, since as the verbs indicating the accomplishment or result of the disposal follow the main verb, so do the markers of Finishing.

In sum, the grammatical forms for Non-spatial Setting in White Hmong present an intriguing set of implications for this part of a grammar cross-linguistically.

## **5. Conclusion**

Altogether, White Hmong possesses a system of Non-spatial Setting that includes Lexical Time Words in the place of a tense system, Irrealis and Modality markers, Degree of Certainty markers indicating a high level of certainty, Phase of Activity markers that appear on one side of the verb or the other, depending on its type, a robust system of Completion markers, and one Speed and Ease marker.

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## Appendix A

### Narrative Text

(1) nyob zoo .  
hello

Hello.

(2) ntawd no kuv yog Txawj Zeb Yaj .  
here 1SG<sup>180</sup> COP Txawj Zeb Yang

My name is Txawjzeb Yang.

(3) kuv zoo siab hais tias hnuv no Nej Teem wb tau tuaj nyob ua ke hauv  
1SG happy that day this Nathan 1DU can come gather.together in  
kuv tsev no sib tham me ntsi txog kuv lub neej nyob tim ub tuaj txog  
1SG house this talk.about a.little.bit about 1SG CLF story over.there come arrive  
rau tim no.  
to here

I'm very happy that today Nathan and I would be able to meet together in my house to talk a little about my story from over there to here (Laos to America).

(4) yog li kuv xav piav rau nws mloog .  
that.is.why 1SG want tell to 3SG listen

That's why I would like to tell it to him.

(5) kuv lub npe hu ua Txawj Zeb .  
1SG CLF name call do Txawj Zeb

My name is Txawjzeb.

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<sup>180</sup> The reader is referred to the relevant section of the body of the thesis for citations of the glosses of morphemes discussed there. Other citations, when needed, are given once for the first instance and apply to the remainder of the three appendices.

(6) kuv yug nyob lub zos toj pob xeev khuam teb chaws plog .  
 1SG was.born in CLF town Tojpob Xieng Khouang Laos

I was born in the town of Tojpob, in the province of Xieng Khouang, Laos.

(7) kuv txiv lub npe hu ua tooj khwb .  
 1SG father CLF name call do Toojkhwb

My father's name was Toojkhwb.

(8) kuv niam lub npe hu ua maum tswb vaj .  
 1SG mother CLF name call do Maumtswb Vang

My mom's name was Maochue Vang.

(9) kuv nco qab muaj ib zawg peb tsiv los nyob rau hauv lub zos naj loom  
 1SG remember one.time 1PL move in to in CLF town Nalong  
 los raws kuv niam cov neej tsa peb los nyob hauv tau li ob xyoo  
 come live.with 1SG mother CLF in-laws 1PL come live in more.than two year  
 ntau .  
 more

I remember one time we moved to live in the town of Nalong to live with my mom's side of the family.

(10) kuv xav hais tias yuav yog xyoo xya caum tsib mus txog rau xya  
 1SG think that POS.IRR COP year seven ten five go about to seven  
 caum xya .  
 ten seven

I think it was from '75 to '77.

(11) *thaum peb los nyob hauv muaj ib xyoo thaum peb noj peb cawg tag*  
 when 1PL come live in have one year when 1PL eat New.Year's finish  
*ces kuv txiv cias li tau ib twj mob tsis zoo .*  
 then 1SG father have one CLF<sup>181</sup> sickness NEG good

When we came to live there, after we celebrated New Year's, then my father had a very bad sickness.

(12) *tus mob ntauv ua rau kuv txiv pom wb pom no tua kuv txiv .*  
 CLF sickness that do to 1SG father seeing.things harm 1SG father

Then that sickness made my dad see things and came to harm him.

(13) *nws pom poj koob yawm ntxwv los nrog nws nyob .*  
 3SG see ancestor come with 3SG live

He saw his ancestors come to live with him.

(14) *qhov nov ua rau kuv txiv feeb tsis meej .*  
 thing this do to 1SG father crazy

This sickness made my dad go crazy.

(15) *yog li peb nyob rau lub zos naj loom ntawd peb tsis muaj kwv tij txeeb zes*  
 so 1PL in to CLF town Nalong there 1PL NEG have close.relative  
*nrog peb nyob rau ntawd .*  
 with 1PL in to there

So, where we lived in the town of Nalong, we did not have any close relatives living with us there.

(16) *kuv txiv cov kwv tij hos nyob rau puag tom lub zos kiaj ma na lawm .*  
 1SG father CLF relative then live to far there CLF town Kiamana PRF

My father's relatives lived in a town called Kiamana.

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<sup>181</sup> This gloss is tentative, as other sources do not appear to contain it. The status of *twj* as a classifier is based on syntax and the fact that Jay Yang treated it in glossing in a manner similar to known classifiers. It is possibly related to Mottin (1978:67)'s *twg* 'that, whichever,' though the syntax of *twj* here differs noticeably from what Mottin provides.

(17) kab hais tias mus li ib hnuv ke thiaj mus txog .  
 figure that go about one day road consequently<sup>182</sup> go about

I guess it would take about one day's walk to get there.

(18) yog li thaum kuv txiv tus tij laug hlob hnov -- ua yog kuv txiv tus  
 and.then when 1SG father CLF older.brother hear do COP 1SG father CLF  
 tij laug hlob hlob hnov -- hais tias kuv txiv mob mob .  
 eldest.brother hear that 1SG father sickness sickness

And then, when my dad's older brother—that is, my dad's oldest brother—heard of my dad's sickness...

(19) yog li nws thiaj li tuaj nrog kuv txiv nyob tau ib vas nthiv  
 that.is.why 3SG consequently come with 1SG father live ATT one week  
 thiab nws tuaj ua neeb kho kuv txiv tau ib vas nthiv .  
 and 3SG come do jingle heal 1SG father ATT one week

...that's why he came to stay with my dad for a week and he (my uncle) came to “make jingle” to heal my dad for one week.

(20) ces ua ua rau ces kuv txiv kuj has nyob  
 then do repeatedly to then 1SG father consequently<sup>183</sup> get.a.little.better in  
 tu zog lawm.  
 not.worse.or.better CP

Then, he (my uncle) kept doing it. Then my dad calmed down.

(21) ces nws kuj tau hais rau kuv txiv hais tias nyob rau hauv  
 then 3SG consequently ATT say to 1SG father that live to in  
 naj loom ntawd ces yog raws neej tsa xwb .  
 Nanglong there then COP live.with in-laws only

Then he said to my dad, “Living in Nanglong, you live only with your wife's relatives.”

<sup>182</sup> Glosses for *thiaj* and *thiaj li* are from Heimbach (1979:340).

<sup>183</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:88).

(22) ces yog li nws yuav coj kuv txiv mus nrog nws nyob tom nws  
 then and.then 3SG POS.IRR take 1SG father go with 3SG in there 3SG  
 lub zos es nws thiaj yuav muaj caij nrhiav neeb nrhiav yaig kho kuv  
 CLF town so 3SG consequently POS.IRR have time find.a.shaman heal 1SG  
 txiv .  
 father

Then he took my father to live with him in his town, so he would have time to go find a shaman to come to heal my dad.

(23) yog li nws thiaj coj kuv txiv thiab kuv niam nrog rau kuv  
 COP about 3SG consequently take 1SG father and 1SG mother with to 1SG  
 tus kwv yaus thiab kuv tus muam yaus yog li lawv thiaj li  
 CLF youngest.brother and 1SG CLF youngest.sister and.then 3PL consequently  
 mus lawm .  
 go CP

So, he took my dad and my mom with my youngest brothers and my youngest sister and left.

(24) yog li lawv mus tau ib vas nthiv thaum ntawd tshuav kuv tij laug hlob  
 COP about 3PL go ATT one week then have 1SG oldest.brother  
 thiab kuv wb nyob tom qab rau qhov tshuav peb cov nplej nyob rau  
 and 1SG 1DU in back because have 1PL CLF unhulled.rice live to  
 tom teb tseem ua tsis tau tiav .  
 there farm still do NEG ATT done

So, they went for a week; at that time my oldest brothers and I would live back home because we still had unhulled rice in the farm that still needed to be done.

(25) ces yog li wb nyob tso wb mus ntaus nplej .  
 then COP about 1DU in so 1DU go thresh unhulled.rice

Then that's why we stayed so we could go finish the unhulled rice.

(26) yog li        wb thiaj                nyob wb nyob tau ib    vas nthiv ces  
           that.is.why 1DU consequently live 1DU live ATT one week    then  
 thiaj li            hnov xov xwm tsis zoo tuaj txog rau wb hais tias kuv txiv  
 consequently hear news        NEG good come arrive to 1DU that    1SG father  
 tau muab phom tua kuv niam thiab kuv niam tau tuag lawm .  
 ATT get gun kill 1SG mother and 1SG mother ATT die CP

That's why we stayed behind. We stayed behind for about a week, then we heard the bad news coming to us saying that my dad got a gun and killed my mom and she died.

(27) ces nws ho rov        muab phom tua nws tus kheej .  
           then 3SG turned.back get gun kill 3SG CLF self

Then he turned the gun against himself and killed himself.

(28) ces nkawv ob leej    tau tuag tas    sim neej nyob rau hauv lub zos  
           then 3DU two person ATT die finish forever in to in CLF town  
 kiaj ma na lawm .  
 Kiamana CP

Then both of them were dead forever in the town of Kiamana.

(29) yog li        qhov nov thiaj                ua rau kuv tu siab heev thiab  
           that.is.why thing this consequently do to 1SG sad    very and  
 tij laug            wb qhua.  
 older.brother<sup>184</sup> 1DU cry

Then that's why this news made me very sad and my brother and I cried.

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<sup>184</sup> Gloss relying on Heimbach (1979:316).

(30) yog li thaum kuv niam thiab kuv txiv nkawv tuag tas ces peb  
 that.is.why when 1SG mother and 1SG father 3DU die finish then 1PL  
 hlob tuaj coj peb cov me nyuam mus nrog nws nyob ces yog li peb  
 uncle come take 1PL CLF children go with 3SG live then that.is.why 1PL  
 thiaj li tau tsiv tawm hauv naj loom ntawd thiaj mus nrog kuv  
 consequently ATT move out Nanglong there consequently go with 1SG  
 txib hlob nyob rau tom kiaj ma na lawm .  
 uncle live to there Kiamana CP

When my mom and dad died, our uncle came to take us children to go live with him.  
 That's why we moved out of Nanglong to go live with my uncle in Kiamana.

(31) ces yog li thaum peb mus nyob tod tau li ib tog xyoo xwb ces  
 then and.then when 1PL go live there ATT about one half year only then  
 nyab laj kuj hos tuaj tua hauv zos kiaj ma na ces peb thiaj li tau  
 Vietnamese also while come kill in town Kiamana then 1PL consequently ATT  
 tawg mus nyob hav zoov hav tsuag lawm .  
 out go live jungle CP

Then when we came to live there for only about six months, then the Vietnamese  
 (soldiers) came and then we moved out of Kiamana to hide in the jungle.

(32) nyob rau lub caij nyoog nov yog lub caij nyoog uas mi kas thiab  
 in to CLF time this COP CLF time that America and  
 tsov rog nyab laj ntawd lawv tau swb lawm .  
 Vietnam war there 3PL ATT lose CP

At this time, it was the time when America—and the Vietnam War was going on—and  
 they lost the war.

(33) es mi kas tau swb rog nrog nyab laj lawm .  
 so America ATT lose war with Vietnamese CP

And America lost the war with Vietnam.

(34) es mi kas tau rov qab mus tsev thiab tsis tas li ntawd lub  
 so America ATT go.back go house and NEG done about there CLF  
 tsov rog nyob rau teb chaws plog kuj tau tag nyob rau lub sij hawm ntawd  
 war in to Laos also ATT finish in to CLF time that  
 thiab .  
 also

And they went back home and also the war in the country of Laos ended at that time too.

(35) yog li ntawd sawv daws kuj tau rov qab mus tsev .  
 COP about there everyone also get.to go.back go house

And also we got to go back home.

(36) lub sij hawm no yog lub sij hawm uas nyab laj tab tom nrhiav cov  
 CLF time this COP CLF time that Vietnamese IMPF find CLF  
 neeg uas ua thab ham nrog rau a mi kas ntawd tua pov tseg .  
 person that do soldier with to America at.that.time kill throw.away

This time was the time that the Vietnamese were searching for those that served with America at that time to kill them.

(37) yog li ces peb thiaj li tau tawg mus nyob hav zoov hav tsuag lawm  
 so then 1PL consequently ATT out go live jungle CP  
 vim kuv txiv hlob kuj yog ib tug nai thab ham ua tsov rog nrog rau  
 because 1SG father uncle also COP one CLF leader soldier do war with to  
 nai phoo lawv thiab .  
 general 3PL also

And then therefore we had to move and hide in the jungle because my uncle was a captain working with General Vang Pao too.

(38) yog li thaum peb mus nyob hav zoov hav tsuag tau muaj li rau hlub hli  
 so when 1PL go live jungle ATT have about six month  
 mus rau ib xyoos ntawd ces nyuab heev vim muaj me tub me nyuam thiab  
 go to one year there then hard very because have children and  
 poj niam tub se nrog sawv daws mus nyob rau tom hav zoov hav tsuag ntawd tsis  
 women with everyone go in to there jungle there NEG  
 muaj noj muaj haus txom nyem .  
 have eat have drink hunger

Therefore, when we moved to live in the jungle for about six months to a year, then it was very hard because we had women and children with us hiding there in the jungle; we were very hungry because there was nothing to eat or drink.

(39) yog li kuv txiv hlob thiaj li tau hais tias kom peb cov uas peb  
 then 1SG father uncle consequently ATT say that 1PL CLF that 1PL  
 hos me los sis cov laus uas mus tsis tau ces rov qab los mus thawj  
 so<sup>185</sup> small or CLF old that go NEG able then go.back come go surrender  
 nyab laj nyob rau tom zos .  
 Vietnamese in to there town

Then my uncle said that those who are little and the old people who cannot walk should go back to town and surrender to the Vietnamese.

(40) ces cov uas muaj zos thiab mus taus kev ces lawv thiaj li  
 then CLF that have strong and go able.to road then 3PL consequently  
 los mus rau thaib teb lawm .  
 come go to Thailand CP

Then those that had strength and were able to walk, then they went to Thailand.

(41) yog li thaum lawv los mus rau thaib teb tag , ces peb thiaj li  
 so when 3PL come go to Thailand end then 1PL consequently  
 rov qab los mus thawj nyab laj .  
 go.back come go surrender Vietnamese

So when they had gone to Thailand, then we went and surrendered to the Vietnamese.

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<sup>185</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:53).

(42) ces los mus nyob hauv zos kiaj mas nas tau li ib xyoos ntawd  
 then come go in in town Kiamana ATT about one year there  
 ces kuv tij laug thiaj li rov qab txib neeg , nws muaj neeg  
 then 1SG older.brother consequently go.back send person 3SG have person  
 rov qab los ces nws thiaj tau hais kom lawv los koj kuv thiab  
 go.back come then 3SG consequently ATT say PC<sup>186</sup> 3PL come take 1SG and  
 kuv tus muam wb mus rau thaib teb .  
 1SG CLF sister 1DU go to Thailand

Then, we stayed in the town of Kiamana for about one year. Then my brother sent people—there were some people returning—then he told them to take me and my sister—us—(and) go to Thailand.

(43) yog li wb thiaj li tau mus rau thaib teb lawm .  
 and.then 1DU consequently get.to go to Thailand CP

So then, we got to go to Thailand.

(44) ces peb mus txog rau thaib teb ces peb thiaj li txiav txim siab  
 then 1PL go arrive to Thailand then 1PL consequently make.decision  
 hais tias nyob rau lub teb chaws tid txog nyem thiab nws yog ib lub  
 that in to CLF country over.there poor and 3SG COP one CLF  
 teb chaws uas nws muaj tsov muaj rog .  
 country that 3SG have.war

Then, we got to Thailand. Then we made a decision not to stay there because that country is poor and there were wars going on.

(45) ces yog li peb yuav tau tuaj rau teb chaws a mi kas nov rau qhov  
 then and.then 1PL POS.IRR ATT come to country America this to thing  
 teb chaws a mi kas nov nws yog ib lub teb chaws tsis muaj tsov muaj rog thiab  
 country America this 3SG COP one CLF country NEG have.war and  
 nws kuj muaj noj muaj haus zoo heev .  
 3SG also have eat have drink good very

That's why we came here to America, because America is one of the countries that does not have war and it also has plenty to eat and drink.

<sup>186</sup> Gloss following Jarkey (2006:124).

(46) yog li ces peb thiaj li txiav txim siab<sup>187</sup> xam phaj tuaj rau  
 and.then then 1PL consequently make.decision interview come to  
 teb chaws a mi kas no .  
 country America here

So then we made the decision to interview to come here to America.

(47) yog li nyob rau lub ib hlis ntuj ces peb thiaj li sawv kev tuaj  
 so in to CLF one month sky then 1PL consequently get.up road come  
 nyob tom koos thej .  
 stay there Bangkok

So, in the month of January we came to stay in Bangkok.

(48) peb tuaj nyob rau tod tau li ib hlis ces lub ob hlis  
 1PL come stay to there ATT about one month then CLF two month  
 vas nthib nee kaum plaub ib txhiab cuaj pua yim caum ntawd ces peb  
 date twenty four one thousand nine hundred eight ten there then 1PL  
 thiaj li tuaj poob rau pem Nebraska ped .  
 consequently come fall to over.there Nebraska over.there

We came to stay there about a month, then, on February 24, 1980, we came to Nebraska.

(49) peb tuaj nyob rau ped tau li tsib xyoos .  
 1PL come live to over.there ATT about five year

We came to live there for five years.

(50) ces peb thiaj li khiav los nyob rau hauv California nov .  
 then 1PL consequently move come live to in California this

Then we moved to live here in California.

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<sup>187</sup> My transcription here corrected from *txiav txis siav* to match line 44, based in part on several sources (Heimbach (1979), Jarkey (2006), Xiong (2012)).

(51) thaum peb los nyob hauv California nov ces thiaj li los mus kawm  
 when 1PL come live in California this then then come go learn  
 ntawv tiav nyob hauv nov thiab ces thiaj li los yuav poj niam  
 education done in in here and then consequently come marry wife  
 nyob hauv Fresno nov .  
 in in Fresno here

When we came to live here in California, then I finished my education here and got married here in Fresno.

(52) tam sim nov kuv muaj ob tug me nyuam tub ib tug hu ua tub tsheej hos  
 right.now 1SG have two CLF children son one CLF call do Toucheng and  
 ib tug hu ua ywg pheej nrog rau kuv poj niam nws npe hu ua cua lis  
 one CLF call do Youpheng with to 1SG wife 3SG name call do Choua Lee  
 no .  
 this

Right now I have two children: one of them is named Toucheng, and the other one is named Youpheng, with my wife—her name is Choua Lee.

(53) yog li tam sim no peb nyob rau hauv Fresno.  
 so.then right.now 1PL live to in Fresno

Right now, we live here in Fresno.

(54) nov qhov nov yog lub neeg me me ntawm kuv lub neeg kuv  
 here thing here COP CLF person small small there<sup>188</sup> 1SG CLF person 1SG  
 piav qhia rau Nathan paub li ntawd .  
 tell teach to Nathan know about that

This is a little story about my life that I told Nathan.

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<sup>188</sup> Gloss based on “there-nearby” found in Jarkey (1991:42). Found here and below.

## Appendix B

### Procedural Text

(1) nyob zoo .

hello

Hello.

(2) hnuv no yog lub ob hlis ntuj vas nthiv nees nkaum plaub ob phav  
 day this COP CLF two month sky week twenty four two thousand  
 kaum plaub .  
 ten four

Today is February 24, 2014.

(3) Neb tee rov qab tuaj rau hauv kuv tsev thiab wb yuav sib tham  
 Nathan go.back come to in 1SG house and 1DU POS.IRR RECP talk<sup>189</sup>  
 me ntsis txog kev ua noj yog li hnuv no qhov kuv txiav txim siab los mus  
 little about way do eat so.then day this thing 1SG make.decision come go  
 tham txog me ntsis yog tham txog kev ua qe noj .  
 talk about little COP talk about way do egg eat

Nathan came back to my house and we will talk a little bit about cooking, so then, today  
 I'm going to make a decision about how to cook eggs.

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<sup>189</sup> The glossing and treatment here and in Appendix C of the phrase *sib tham* relies on Jarkey (1991:351) and Jarkey (2006:129).

(4) qhov nov yog hmoob li ua qe noj xwb xwb thawj koj muab dos  
 thing this COP Hmong POSS<sup>190</sup> do egg eat first lead 2SG get onion  
 coj los hlais kom mos mos tas ces yog koj hos nyiam qhiav  
 take come slice so.that<sup>191</sup> fine<sup>192</sup> fine finish then COP 2SG while like ginger  
 nrog thiab no koj muab ib qho me me qhiav los tsoo kom  
 with also this 2SG get one little.piece small small ginger come crush so.that  
 mos mos *and then* koj muab tsos cia .  
 small small 2SG put.it.away

This is the Hmong way of how to cook eggs. First, you need to get some onion and slice it into thin (pieces), then, if you like ginger with it, you can get a little bit of ginger and crush it into very small pieces, and then you put it away.

(5) ces koj muab lub yias thiab koj muab li ob diav roj coj los  
 then 2SG get CLF pan and 2SG get about two spoon oil take come  
 tso rau hauv lub yias .  
 drop to in CLF pan

Then, you get a pan and you get about two tablespoons of oil and put it into the pan.

(6) thiab koj muab tso rau ntawm lub qhov cub .  
 and 2SG get drop to there CLF hole cooking.place

And, you put the pan on the stove.

(7) ces koj muab taws rau Medium High .  
 then 2SG get turn.on to

And then, you turn to Medium High.

(8) ces koj tos li ib mi pliag zoj li nees nkaum xis koos kom cov roj  
 then 2SG wait about a.little.while about twenty second so.that CLF oil  
 ntawd kub kiag lawm .  
 there hot really CP

Then, you wait for about twenty seconds until the oil is hot.

<sup>190</sup> Glosses for *li* rely on Heimbach (1979:111).

<sup>191</sup> Gloss following Jaisser (1984:58).

<sup>192</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:130).

(9) koj mam muab ob lub qe coj los tsoo tso rau hauv .  
 2SG will<sup>193</sup> get two CLF egg take come crush drop to in

Then, you get two eggs and break them and put them in there.

(10) ces koj muab tso rau hauv .  
 then 2SG get drop to in

Then, you put them in there.

(11) ces koj tso me ntsis ntsev rau thiab .  
 then 2SG drop little salt to also

And then, you put a little salt in there.

(12) ces koj muab cov dos uas koj tsuav ntawd thiab cov qhiav koj tsoo  
 then 2SG get CLF onion that 2SG chop there and CLF ginger 2SG crush  
 ntawd muab tso rau hauv .  
 there get drop to in

Then, you put the onions that you chopped there, and the ginger that you minced, put in there.

(13) ces koj mam li muab do rau kom zoo zoo tib si tas .  
 then 2SG need get stir to so.that good good together finish

Then, you will need to stir until it is mixed really well.

(14) ces thaum koj muab do tas lau , ces koj li *about* ib na thi  
 then when 2SG get stir done EP<sup>194</sup> then 2SG about one minute  
 li tej ntawd .  
 around there

Then when you are done stirring, then you wait for about a minute or so.

<sup>193</sup> Glosses for *mam* and *mam li* in line with Xiong (2014).

<sup>194</sup> The treatment of this particle as an ‘exclamatory particle’ is based in part on Jay Yang’s description of it. Mottin (1978:146) provides a description of a particle *lauj*, for which he describes its range of meaning as including “very great joy, surprise.” These are likely the same particle.

(15) ces koj saib cov qe yog koj nyiam noj kom siav siav ces  
 then 2SG watch CLF egg COP 2SG like eat so.that well-done well-done then  
 koj ua rau kom nws siav siav .  
 2SG do to so.that 3SG well-done well-done

Then, you watch the eggs. If you like to eat them well-done, then you need to make it well-done.

(16) thiab si li kuv no ces kuv tsuas nyiam noj kom siav kiag xwb .  
 but as 1SG this then 1SG only<sup>195</sup> like eat so.that well-done really only

But for me, I only like to eat them just right.

(17) ces koj ua li ntawd ces nws zoo qab dua rau kuv .  
 then 2SG do about there then 3SG good taste.good more<sup>196</sup> to 1SG

Then you do it this way, it tastes better to me.

(18) qhov ntawv lau koj ua tas , ntawm no ces koj muab coj los mus  
 thing paper EP 2SG do done right.here then 2SG get take come go  
 tso , hais ib tais mov thiab koj muab cov qe ntawd tso rau saum toj cov  
 drop say one plate rice and 2SG get CLF egg there drop to over CLF  
 mov ces koj mam li noj mas zoo nkaus li qab kawg li .  
 rice then 2SG may eat IP<sup>197</sup> good look.like taste.good very<sup>198</sup>

This is when you are done here, then you scoop it out, and put the eggs on top of the rice. And you may eat, it looks really good.

(19) ces kuv qhia li no rau koj paub hais tias ua qe hmoob yog ua  
 then 1SG teach like this to 2SG know that do egg Hmong COP do  
 li cas .  
 how<sup>199</sup>

Then, I'm letting you know how to make Hmong eggs.

<sup>195</sup> Gloss corroborated by Heimbach (1979:359).

<sup>196</sup> Gloss following Mottin (1978:56).

<sup>197</sup> Gloss following Fuller (1988).

<sup>198</sup> Gloss following Mottin (1978:110).

<sup>199</sup> Gloss following Mottin (1978:64, 67).

(20) ces tas li no lawm xwb .  
then finish like<sup>200</sup> this CP indeed<sup>201</sup>

And this is the end.

(21) ua tsaug .  
thank.you

Thank you.

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<sup>200</sup> Gloss relying in part on Heimbach (1979:111).

<sup>201</sup> Gloss following Strecker & Vang (1986:5).

## Appendix C

### Hortatory Text

(1) Nyob zoo .

hello

Hello.

(2) Ib tsoom niam txiv kwv tij neej tsa hmov thiab tshua ntawm no kuv yog  
everybody mother father brothers in-laws all.my.beloved right.here 1SG COP  
xib fwb txawj zeb yaj .

Teacher Txawj Zeb Yang

All my beloved, this is Teacher Tzerge Yang.

(3) kuv yog tus yuav tuaj muab Vaj Tswv txoj lus rau peb sawv daws sib  
1SG COP CLF POS.IRR come get God word to 1PL everyone RECP<sup>202</sup>  
cog mloog nyob rau lub caij lub nyoog no .  
bring listen in to at.this.time.and.hour this

I am the one that will come to preach to you at this time.

(4) kuv vaj thiab cia siab hais tias nej sawv daws yuav koom nrog kuv  
1SG hope and let liver that 2PL<sup>203</sup> everyone POS.IRR join with 1SG  
thiab nrog kuv nyob es peb sib cog kawm Vaj Tswv txoj lus seb  
and with 1SG in and 1SG RECP bring learn God word whether  
Vaj Tswv txoj lus hais li cas rau peb es peb thiaj li yuav paub coj  
God word say what to 1PL and 1PL consequently POS.IRR know take  
los ua peb lub neej kom muaj nuj nqis nyob rau ntawm Vaj Tswv .  
come do 1PL CLF life so.that have important in to there God

I hope that you will join with me and stay with me so we can learn the word of God together, to see what God's word means to us so we know that it's important to live our lives according to God.

<sup>202</sup> Gloss based on Heimbach (1979:292) and Jarkey (2006:129).

<sup>203</sup> Gloss supported by Mottin (1978:44).

(5) hnuv no kuv coj Vaj Tswv txoj lus tuaj yog muaj lub ntsiab hais li no  
 day this 1SG take God word come COP have CLF title say as this  
 hais tias txhua yam tsav yog pib ntawm Vaj Tswv los .  
 that each type kind<sup>204</sup> COP start there God come

Today I will preach God's word on the title of "Everything Starts with God."

(6) yog nej muaj Vaj Tswv txoj lus thov caw nej muab Vaj Tswv txoj lus  
 COP 2PL have God word please invite 2PL get God word  
 los thiab peb nthuav rau phauv ntawv Khau Lau Xais tshooj ib nqi kaum  
 come and 1PL open to book Colossians chapter one verse ten  
 rau es peb mus nyeem ua ke seb Vaj Tswv txoj lus hais li cas rau peb es  
 six and 1PL go read together see God word say what to 1PL and  
 peb mam li ho pib kawm ua ke mus nawb yom .  
 1PL will so<sup>205</sup> start learn together go TAG

If you have the word of God, please, I invite you to get the word of God and open to Colossians chapter 1, verse 16, so we can read together to see what the word of God says to us so we can learn and respond together.

(7) nyob rau hauv Khau Lau Xais tshooj ib nqi kaum rau nws hais li no  
 in to in Colossians chapter one verse ten six 3SG say as this  
 hais tias : [ Text read from Colossians 1:16]  
 that

In Colossians chapter 1, verse 16, this is what it says: [Text read from Colossians 1:16]

(8) Ib tsoom niam txiv kwv tij neej tsa , Vaj Tswv txoj lus hais li cas nyob  
 everybody mother father brothers in-laws God word say what in  
 rau hauv Khau Lau Xais tshooj ib nqi kaum rau ?  
 to in Colossians chapter one verse ten six

All my brothers and sisters, what did God's word say to us in Colossians chapter 1, verse 16?

<sup>204</sup> Gloss from "Hmong Dictionary Online by James B Xiong."

<sup>205</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:53).

(9) Vaj Tswv txoj lus tau hais tias Vaj Tswv yog tus tsim ib puas tsav yam  
 God word ATT say that God COP CLF create everything  
 tag nrho huv tib si tsis hais saum tej nruab ntug los sis nyob hauv  
 completely<sup>206</sup> all<sup>207</sup> together NEG say above some sky<sup>208</sup> or in in  
 lub ntiaj teb no , tsis hais tej qhov muag pom thiab tej qhov muag tsis  
 CLF earth this NEG say some thing eye see and some thing eye NEG  
 pom , tsis hais tej tim tswv los sis tej muaj koob meej thiab cov uas muaj  
 see NEG say some gods or some have fame and CLF that have  
 meej mom .  
 powerful

God's word told us that God is the creator of all things, the things that are in the sky, and also things here on earth, and the things that the eye can see, and the things that the eye cannot see, all the gods, and also those that are powerful.

(10) Vaj Tswv yog tus tsim ib puas tsav yam .  
 God COP CLF create everything

God is the creator of all things.

(11) Yog li qhov ntawd qhia rau peb hais tias txhua yam tsav nyob hauv lub  
 so thing there tell to 1PL that each type kind in in CLF  
 ntiaj teb no tsis yog av luaj dag tawg es cia li tsim muaj los xwb tiam sis  
 earth this NEG COP come.by.itself so<sup>209</sup> let as create have come only but  
 nws yeej muaj ib tug tswv yog tus tsim ib puas tsav yam ntawd tsis  
 3SG certainly have one CLF lord COP CLF create everything there NEG  
 tas li ntawd xwb txawm yog peb los Vaj Tswv yog tus tsim peb huv  
 finish about there only even<sup>210</sup> COP 1PL come God COP CLF create 1PL all  
 tib si thiab yom .  
 together and TAG<sup>211</sup>

So this tells us that all the things in this world did not just come up by themselves, but there is a God who created all things—not just those things, but us also, OK?

<sup>206</sup> Gloss and treatment based on Heimbach (1979:182).

<sup>207</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:56).

<sup>208</sup> Gloss and treatment based on Xiong (2014).

<sup>209</sup> Gloss from Xiong (2014).

<sup>210</sup> Gloss following Xiong (2014).

<sup>211</sup> Gloss corroborated by Heimbach (1979:429).

(12) Yog li ib tsoom niam txiv kwv tij neej tsa sawv daws , yog hais tias  
 so everybody mother father brothers in-laws everyone COP that  
 koj thiab kuv peb tsis ntseeg los sis tsis paub hais tias Vaj Tswv tsim  
 2SG and 1SG 1PL NEG believe or NEG know that God create  
 ib puas tsav yam cais peb yuav saib peb lub neej tsis muaj nuj nqis  
 everything then<sup>212</sup> 1PL POS.IRR look.at 1PL CLF life NEG have important  
 thiab peb yuav saib ib puas tsav yam hauv lub ntiaj teb no tsis muaj  
 and 1PL POS.IRR watch everything in CLF earth this NEG have  
 nuj nqis dab tsi rau peb hlo li .  
 important what to 1PL at.all

So, all my brothers and sisters, if, you and I, we do not believe or know that God created all things, then we will look at our lives as not important, and we will look at all things here on earth as not important at all.

(13) Yog hais tias thaum zoo li no lawm cais peb yuav tsis paub hlub  
 COP that when good as here CP then 1PL POS.IRR NEG know love  
 thiab txuag ib puas tsav yam uas tshwm sim nyob rau hauv lub ntiaj teb no .  
 and take.care everything that appear in to in CLF earth here

When we see things like this, then we will not know how to love and take care of all the things that appear here on earth.

(14) Peb yuav muab siv ua lwj ua liam pov tseg kom tag rau peb  
 1PL POS.IRR get use<sup>213</sup> do run do ruin<sup>214</sup> throw.away so.that finish to 1PL  
 hnuv no xwb .  
 day this only

We will waste all these things, just on ourselves, only for today.

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<sup>212</sup> Mr. Yang glossed the word *cais* as ‘then’ in two other locations, consulting an unknown source when glossing the second of these two others (in line 30); none of my sources had this gloss for *cais*, however. This gloss is applied here as well, based on the free translation.

<sup>213</sup> Gloss supported by Heimbach (1979:295).

<sup>214</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:113).

(15) Peb tsis pom tag kis hais tias muaj nuj nqis dab tsi ntxiv rau koj  
 1PL NEG see tomorrow that have important what anymore<sup>215</sup> to 2SG  
 thiab rau kuv peb lawm .  
 and to 1SG 1PL CP

We cannot see that tomorrow is important to you or me—us—any more.

(16) Ib tsoom niam txiv kwv tij neej tsa kuv xav kom koj thiab kuv peb  
 everybody mother father brothers in-laws 1SG want PC 2SG and 1SG 1PL  
 paub zoo li no hais tias lub hom phiaj uas peb los nyob rau hauv ntiaj teb  
 know good as here that CLF purpose that 1PL come live to in earth  
 no tsis yog rau peb tus kheej nyob ib pliag xwb nawb mog .  
 this NEG COP to 1PL CLF self live one moment<sup>216</sup> only TAG

My brothers and sisters, I really want you and me to understand that the purpose for which we live in this world is not just to live for ourselves only temporarily, OK?

(17) Vaj Tswv lub hom phiaj rau peb lub neej nws zoo tshaj txhua yam  
 God CLF purpose to 1PL CLF life 3SG good more<sup>217</sup> each type  
 tsav uas nyob rau hauv peb lub neej uas peb niaj hnuv ua nov .  
 kind that in to in 1PL CLF life that 1PL every<sup>218</sup> day do this

God's purpose for our lives is much better than what we have everyday here (on earth).

(18) nws zoo tshaj peb tsev neeg , nws zoo tshaj peb lub hom phiaj thiab peb  
 3SG good more 1PL family 3SG good more 1PL CLF purpose and 1PL  
 lub hwj chim uas peb niaj hnuv ua npauv suav xav yuav xav tau nyob rau  
 CLF glory that 1PL every day do dream think want think get in to  
 yav pem ntej .  
 in.the.future

It's better than our family. It's better than our purpose and our glory that we dream of having in our lives in the future.

<sup>215</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:212).

<sup>216</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:251).

<sup>217</sup> Gloss following Mottin (1978:56).

<sup>218</sup> Gloss confirmed by Heimbach (1979:140).

(19) yog peb xav paub txog hais tias yog vim li cas peb ho los nyob rau  
 if 1PL want know about that COP because what 1PL so come live to  
 hauv lub ntiaj teb no , peb yuav tsum los pib nrhiav peb tus kheej nyob rau  
 in CLF earth this 1PL must come start search 1PL CLF self in to  
 ntawm Vaj Tswv .  
 there God

If we want to know why we came to live in this world, we must start searching for ourselves in God.

(20) vim hais tias nws tsim peb los ntawm nws lub hom phiaj thiab tsim  
 because that 3SG create 1PL come there 3SG CLF purpose and create  
 peb los rau nws lub hom phiaj , tsis yog los rau peb lub hom phiaj  
 1PL come to 3SG CLF purpose NEG COP come to 1PL CLF purpose  
 nawb mog .  
 TAG

Because God created us for him and for his purpose, and it is not for our purpose, OK?

(21) yog peb nrhiav ntawm peb xwb yeej tsis tau vim peb tsis  
 if 1PL search there 1PL only have.success<sup>219</sup> NEG able because 1PL NEG  
 yog tsim peb los rau peb lub hom phiaj .  
 COP create 1PL come to 1PL CLF purpose

If we look only in ourselves, we won't be able to find it, because we are not created for our purpose.

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<sup>219</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:424).

(22) peb niaj hnuv nrhiav peb lub hom phiaj ntawm peb lub neej los nyob  
 1PL every day search 1PL CLF purpose there 1PL CLF life come live  
 rau hauv ntiaj teb no yog dab tsi tiag tiag tau ntau xyoo ntau tiam los  
 to in earth this COP what really<sup>220</sup> ATT many year many generation come  
 lawm peb nrhiav tsis tau thiab tsis paub txog li .  
 CP 1PL search NEG can/ATT and NEG know about as

We are searching for our purpose in life everyday in this world. What is it that we are looking for—for so many years and so many generations—that we cannot find and have no knowledge of?

(23) yog vim li cas cov kwv tij es ?  
 COP because what CLF brothers PPART<sup>221</sup>

Why is that, brothers and sisters?

(24) vim peb nrhiav yuam kev lawm peb thiaj nrhiav tsis tau  
 because 1PL search wrong.way CP 1PL consequently search NEG can/ATT  
 los sis tsis paub hais tias yog vim li cas peb hom los nyob rau hauv lub  
 or NEG know that COP because what 1CP so<sup>222</sup> come in to in CLF  
 ntiaj teb no .  
 earth this

Because we are searching in the wrong place—that's why we cannot find it or have no knowledge of it—why we came to live in this world.

(25) peb pib nrhiav peb lub hom phiaj li no peb nrhiav ntawm peb tus kheej  
 1PL start search 1PL CLF purpose like this 1PL search there 1PL CLF self  
 ua ntej .  
 do first

This is how we start searching for our purpose: we search in ourselves first.

<sup>220</sup> Gloss corroborated by Heimbach (1979:319).

<sup>221</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:2).

<sup>222</sup> Gloss following treatment for *ho* 'so' above.

(26) peb nug peb tus kheej li no tias kuv xav ua dab tsi nes ?  
 1PL ask 1PL CLF self like this that 1SG want do what IEP<sup>223</sup>

We are asking ourselves like this: “What do I really want to do?”

(27) kuv yuav ua kuv lub neej zoo li cas ?  
 1SG POS.IRR do 1SG CLF life good what

What do I really want my life to be?

(28) kuv cov hom phiaj los sis kuv cov kev npau suav rau kuv lub neej nyob  
 1SG CLF purpose or 1SG CLF NMLZ<sup>224</sup> dream to 1SG CLF life in  
 yav tom ntej nes yog dab tsi tiag ?  
 future IEP COP what really

What are my goals or my dreams for my future?”

(29) yog hais tias peb tsuas nrhiav peb lub neej ntawm peb tus kheej xwb cais  
 if that 1PL only<sup>225</sup> search 1PL CLF life there 1PL CLF self only then  
 kuv qhia rau nej hais tias peb yeej nrhiav tsis tau ib zaug hlo li .  
 1SG teach to 2PL that 1PL certainly search NEG can one time at.all

If we’re searching only in ourselves, then let me tell you, we won’t be able to find it.

(30) Vaj Tswv txoj lus hais li no tias , Vaj Tswv yog tus tswj hwm peb lub  
 God word say like this that God COP CLF control 1PL CLF  
 neej thiab Vaj Tswv yog tus tswj hwm ib puas tsav yam uas muaj sia nyob  
 life and God COP CLF control everything that have life<sup>226</sup> in  
 rau hauv lub ntiaj teb no nyob rau hauv yauj tshoom kaum ob kaum .  
 to in CLF earth this in to in Job chapter ten two ten

This is what God’s word said: God is the one who controls our lives and God is the one who controls all things that have life in this world, in Job chapter 12, verse 10.

<sup>223</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:136), based on *ne/nej/nev*, with the same meaning.

<sup>224</sup> Gloss corroborated by Mottin (1978:25).

<sup>225</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:359).

<sup>226</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:298).

(31) yog li kuv xav kom peb nkag siab rau nqi vaj lu kub no hais tias  
 so 1SG want PC 1PL understand<sup>227</sup> to verse Bible this say that  
 Vaj Tswv yog tus ua ib puas tsav yam ntawd .  
 God COP CLF do everything that

So, I would like us to understand this Bible verse that says that God is the one who created all things.

(32) yog li peb yuav tsum los nrhiav ntawm nws xwb peb thiaj li nrhiav  
 so 1PL must come search there 3SG only 1PL consequently search  
 tau peb lub hom phiaj .  
 ATT 1PL CLF purpose

So, we must search in God in order for us to find our purpose.

(33) twb yeej muaj ntau phau ntawv , ntau liab nam thiab ntau  
 already certainly have many book many CLF<sup>228</sup> movie and many  
 lub rooj cob qhia rau peb hais tias peb yeej nrhiav tsis tau peb lub  
 CLF conference to 1PL say that 1PL certainly search NEG can 1PL CLF  
 hom phiaj ntawm peb lub neeg los ntawm peb tus kheej ib zaug hlo li .  
 purpose there 1PL CLF person come there 1PL CLF self one time at.all

Already there are many books, many movies, and many teaching conferences for us that we absolutely cannot search our purpose of our lives in ourselves at all.

(34) Tej zaum peb twb muaj coob tug sim tas lawm .  
 maybe 1PL already have many CLF try<sup>229</sup> done CP

Maybe we have many people who have tried it already.

<sup>227</sup> Gloss and treatment following Heimbach (1979:151).

<sup>228</sup> The gloss here is uncertain. It follows Jay Yang's tendency to gloss classifiers as "the," as he did with *liab* here.

<sup>229</sup> Gloss following Heimbach (1979:294), Jarkey (2006:133).

(35) peb twb    tsis yog tus tsim    peb nes es    peb yuav    ua cas nrhiav  
 1PL already NEG COP CLF create 1PL IEP and 1PL POS.IRR how<sup>230</sup> search  
 tau    peb lub hom phiaj ntawm peb tus kheej .  
 can/ATT 1PL CLF purpose    there    1PL CLF self

We are not the ones who created us. How can we find our purpose in ourselves?

(36) pib txwv : koj sim saib    seb                    ib    tug neeg    uas nws tsim    ib  
 example    2SG try watch whether.or.not one CLF person that 3SG create one  
 rab riam los sis ib    rab taus los sis ib    rab    hlau .  
 CLF knife or    one CLF axe or    one CLF<sup>231</sup> hoe

Let's take a look at one individual who created a knife or an axe or a hoe.

(37) yog vim    li cas nws ho                    tsim tej    cuab yeej                    ntawm ?  
 COP because what 3SG how.come create those household.equipment<sup>232</sup> there

What did he create all those things for?

(38) nws tsim    rab taus los    mus ndov ntoo txib taw    .  
 3SG create CLF axe come go chop tree split wood

He created an axe for chopping trees, splitting wood.

(39) qhov ntawd yog nws lub hom phiaj nws thiaj li                    tsim    rab taus los  
 thing that COP 3SG CLF purpose    3SG consequently create CLF axe come  
 rau qhov ntawm .  
 for thing there

That is its purpose, so that he created an axe for it.

<sup>230</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:5).

<sup>231</sup> Gloss confirmed by Heimbach (1979:274).

<sup>232</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:18).

(40) Nws tsim rab hlau yog los ncaw ab thiab los khaw nroj los ua  
 3SG create CLF hoe COP come till soil and come dig.up weed come do  
 tej yam ntawd .  
 that.kind this

He created a hoe to till soil and to dig up weeds, and that's the kind of job that it does.

(41) yog li nws lub hom phiaj nws tsim rab hlau los ua qhov ntawd .  
 so 3SG CLF purpose 3SG create CLF hoe come do thing that

So its purpose that the creator created the hoe for is to do that kind of job.

(42) yog li rab hlau tshwm sim vim tus tswv uas tsim rab hlau ntawd nws  
 so CLF hoe appear because CLF lord that create CLF hoe there 3SG  
 muaj lub hom phiaj rau rab hlau ntawd .  
 have CLF purpose for CLF hoe this

So, the hole exists because the Lord who created this hoe—he has a purpose for this hoe.

(43) yog vim li cas Vaj Tswv tsim peb ?  
 COP because what God create 1PL

Why does God create us?

(44) rau qhov vim Vaj Tswv tsim peb los rau nws lub hom phiaj .  
 because God create 1PL come for 3SG CLF purpose

Because God created us for his purpose.

(45) nws yeej muaj lub hom phiaj zoo rau koj thiab kuv peb .  
 3SG certainly have CLF purpose good for 2SG and 1SG 1PL

He has a good purpose for you and me—us.

(46) yog li Vaj Tswv thiaj li            tsim    peb   los    rau Vaj Tswv lub hom phiaj  
       so    God            consequently create 1PL come for God            CLF purpose  
 xwb .  
 only

So, God created us for his purpose only.

(47) yog li koj thiab kuv peb thiaj li            nrhiav tsis    tau            lub hom phiaj  
       so    2SG and 1SG 1PL consequently search NEG can/ATT CLF purpose  
 ntawm peb tus kheej vim            peb tsis    yog tus    tsim    peb .  
 there 1PL CLF self    because 1PL NEG COP CLF create 1PL

So, you and I—we—cannot find our purpose in ourselves because we are not the one who created us.

(48) peb tsis    muaj hom phiaj .  
       1PL NEG have purpose

We do not have a purpose.

(49) yog li peb yuav    ua cas nrhiav    tau            lub hom phiaj ntawd ?  
       so    1PL POS.IRR how    search can/ATT CLF purpose    there

How can we find this purpose (in ourselves)?

(50) yog li Vaj Tswv txoj lus hais nyob rau hauv Yauj tshooj    kaum ob    kaum  
       so    God            word    say    in    to    in    Job    chapter ten    two ten  
 thiaj li            hais tias : [ quote from Job 12:10]  
 consequently that

So, God's word says in Job chapter 12, 10, that: [quote from Job 12:10]

(51) yog li peb yuav tsum pib    nrhiav peb tus kheej nyob rau ntawm Vaj Tswv .  
       so    1PL have.to    start search 1PL CLF self    in    to    there    God  
 vim    Vaj Tswv yog tus    tsim    peb rau nws lub hom phiaj .  
 because God            COP CLF create 1PL to    3SG CLF purpose

So, we have to start searching for ourselves in God, because God is the one who created us for his purpose.

(52) qhov uas peb tshwm sim los ua neeg nyob rau hauv lub ntiaj teb no ,  
 thing that 1PL appear come do person in to in CLF earth here  
 vim twb yog Vaj Tswv tsim peb thiaj li muaj peb .  
 because already COP God create 1PL consequently have 1PL

How we came about in this world is because God is the one who created us to be here.

(53) Vaj Tswv yog tus tsim peb thiab nws tsim peb los rau lub hom phiaj  
 God COP CLF create 1PL and 3SG create 1PL come for CLF purpose  
 uas nws muaj ntawd .  
 that 3SG have here

God is the one who created us and he created us for the purpose that he has.

(54) tsis yog rau peb lub hom phiaj yog hais tias peb tsis nkag siab zoo li  
 NEG COP to 1PL CLF purpose COP that 1PL NEG understand good like  
 no ces peb yeej tsis paub lub hom phiaj uas peb los ua nyob rau  
 this then 1PL certainly NEG know CLF purpose that 1PL come do in to  
 hauv lub ntiaj teb no yog dab tsi hlo li nawb mog , peb cov niam txiv  
 in CLF earth this COP what at.all TAG 1PL CLF mother father  
 kwv tij neej tsa e .  
 brothers in-laws PPART<sup>233</sup>

It is not for our own purpose; if we do not understand this, then we won't know what we came to live in this world for. OK, my brothers and sisters?

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<sup>233</sup> Gloss here based on treatment of *es* 'PPART' above.

(55) Qhov uas peb yuav nrhiav tau peb lub hom phiaj ntawm peb lub neeg  
 thing that 1PL POS.IRR search ATT 1PL CLF purpose there 1PL CLF person  
 thiab peb txoj kev uas peb yuav mus ntawd , peb yuav tsum pib nrhiav  
 and 1PL CLF<sup>234</sup> road that 1PL POS.IRR go that 1PL must start search  
 ntawm Vaj Tswv mus xwb peb thiaj li yuav paub hais tias peb yuav  
 there God go only 1PL consequently POS.IRR know that 1PL POS.IRR  
 mus qhov twg peb lub hom phiaj yog ua dab tsi tiag tiag .  
 go where 1PL CLF purpose COP do what really

The way for us to find our purpose in life and the way that we are going, we must start searching only in God so that we will know where we are supposed to go, what is really our purpose.

(56) txhua txoj kev uas nyob hauv ntiaj teb no puav leej pab tsis tau peb  
 each CLF road that in in earth this all help NEG can 1PL  
 kom peb paub txog peb lub hom phiaj uas peb los ua neeg nyob hauv  
 so.that 1PL know about 1PL CLF purpose that 1PL come do person live in  
 ntiaj teb no .  
 earth this

All the roads in this world won't be able to help us to know our purpose why we came to live in this world.

(57) Kuv tau nyeem ntau phau ntawv los pab kuv ua kuv lub neej .  
 1SG ATT read many book come help 1SG do 1SG CLF life

I have read many books to help my life.

(58) txhua phau ntawv uas kuv nyeem no pua leej qhia kuv nrhiav kuv lub  
 each book that 1SG read this all teach 1SG search 1SG CLF  
 neej ib yam nkaus .  
 life the.same<sup>235</sup> way

Every book that I read, they all teach me how to search for my life the same way.

<sup>234</sup> Gloss relying on Mottin (1978:37).

<sup>235</sup> Gloss here relying on Heimbach (1979:419).

(59) cov ntawv no qhia kuv hais tias kuv yuav muab kuv cov kev  
 CLF paper this teach 1SG that 1SG POS.IRR get 1SG CLF NMLZ  
 npau suav coj los saib seb kuv nyiam ua dab tsi .  
 dream take come watch whether.or.not 1SG like do what

These books taught me that I will have to look at my dreams to see which one I like more.

(60) Kuv yuav tsum muab kuv cov kev npau suav ntawd coj los theej  
 1SG must get 1SG CLF NMLZ dream there take come record  
 tseg saib yog dab tsi tiag tiag .  
 write.down<sup>236</sup> watch COP what really

I must take all my dreams and write them down to see what my dream really is.

(61) kuv yuav tsum saib seb kuv txawj ua yam twg .  
 1SG must look.at whatever 1SG know.how do type which<sup>237</sup>

I need to see what I know how to do.

(62) kuv yuav tsum ntseeg hais tias kuv yeej yuav tsum ua tau xwb ces  
 1SG must believe that 1SG certainly must do can indeed then  
 rau siab ntso ua mus tsis txhob tas kev cia siab ces ib hnuv kuv  
 continue.to do go NEG NEG.IRR finish NMLZ hope then one day 1SG  
 yeej yuav ua tau raws li kuv txoj kev npau suav thiab raws li  
 certainly POS.IRR do can according.to 1SG NMLZ dream and according.to  
 qhov kuv xav yuav xav tau .  
 thing 1SG think want think get

I must believe that I will be able to do this, then, continue to do this, do not lose hope,  
 and one day you will be able to have your dream the way you always wanted and wanted  
 to have.

<sup>236</sup> Mr. Yang may have obtained this gloss from an outside source, or read material from an outside source and thought of this gloss; in either case, none of my sources contained it.

<sup>237</sup> Gloss based on Heimbach (1979:330) and Mottin (1978:67).

(63) tej ntauv nyob hauv ntiaj teb no nws puav leej txawj qhia  
 those paper in in earth this 3SG all educated teach  
 yus mus txog rau tej ntaud .  
 INDF.PRON<sup>238</sup> go about to those that

Those books that are in this world, it all teaches you about all these things (dreams).

(64) kuv tsis tau hais tias tej ntaub ntauv no pab tsis tau kuv .  
 1SG NEG ATT say that those book this help NEG can 1SG

I did not mean that all these books cannot help me.

(65) tej lus pab no tej zaum nws yeej pab tau yus kom  
 these word help this maybe 3SG certainly help can INDEF.PRN so.that  
 yus ua tau lub neej vas meej yog hais tias yus rau siab ntso ua  
 INDF.PRON do get CLF life successful COP that INDF.PRON continue.to do  
 tiag tiag .  
 really

All these teachings, maybe it will be able to help you to become successful if you're willing to commit yourself to doing it.

(66) cov kwv tij yog hais tias peb xav muaj nyiaj ces peb yuav tsum  
 CLF brothers COP that 1PL want have money then 1PL must  
 rau siab ntso mus khwv tiag tiag tas hnuv tas hmo xya hnuv xya hmo  
 continue.to go work really done day done night seven day seven evening  
 ces peb yeej yuav tsum muaj nyiaj xwb .  
 then 1PL certainly must have money indeed

My brothers, if we want to have money, then we must commit ourselves to working really hard day and night, seven days and seven nights. Then we will have money.

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<sup>238</sup> Gloss following Jarkey (1991).

(67) yog peb xav ua ib tug kws kho mob ces peb rau siab mus kawm peb  
 COP 1PL want do one CLF doctor then 1PL aspire! go learn 1PL  
 yeej yuav tau los ua xwb .  
 certainly POS.IRR ATT come do indeed

If we want to become a doctor, then we aspire to learn, (then) we will become one.

(68) tiam sis qhov kuv coj tuaj qhuab qhia peb hmo no los sis hnuv no  
 but thing 1SG take come preaching 1PL evening this or day this  
 los sis lub sij hawm no tsis yog tej kev vas meej nyob rau hauv lub  
 or CLF time this NEG COP these NMLZ successful in to in CLF  
 ntiaj teb no xwb los sis nyob rau peb lub neej no xwb .  
 earth this only or in to 1PL CLF life this only

But what I bring to preach to us tonight or today or in this hour, it is not about the success in this world or in our life here.

(69) kuv hais txog lub homphiaj uas yog vim li cas Vaj Tswv ho tsim  
 1SG say about CLF purpose that COP because what God so create  
 koj thiab kuv peb los nyob rau hauv lub ntiaj teb no nws yog dab tsi  
 2SG and 1SG 1PL come live to in CLF earth this 3SG COP what  
 tiag tiag .  
 really

What I'm talking about: what really is the purpose that God created you and me—us—to live in this world for.

(70) Qhov ntawd lau yog qhov kuv xav coj koj thiab kuv peb sib tham  
 thing this EMPH COP NMLZ 1SG want take 2SG and 1SG 1PL RECP talk  
 txog yog qhov ntawd .  
 about COP thing here

This is it! It is what I want to take you and me—us—into discussion about what I was saying before.

(71) tsis yog tej kev vas meej nyob rau ntawm yus tus kheej nyob  
 NEG COP those NMLZ successful in to there INDF.PRON CLF self in  
 rau hauv lub ntiaj teb no xwb .  
 to in CLF earth this only

This is not about the success in yourself in this world.

(72) rau qhov hais tias lub hom phiaj uas kom yus lub neej vas meej  
 because that CLF purpose that cause<sup>239</sup> INDF.PRON CLF life successful  
 nyob hauv lub ntiaj teb no thiab lub hom phiaj ntawm yus lub neej yog  
 in in CLF earth this and CLF purpose there INDF.PRON CLF life COP  
 vim li cas yus ho los nyob hauv ntiaj teb no txawv txav tsis zoo  
 because what INDEF.PRON so come in in earth this different NEG good  
 ib yam nawb mog cov kwv tij .  
 the.same TAG CLF brothers

Because the purpose that makes your life a success in this world and the purpose why you are in this world are different—not the same. OK, my brothers?

(73) kuv xav kom peb paub li no peb thiaj li paub los mus nrhiav  
 1SG want PC 1PL know like this 1PL consequently know come go search  
 peb lub hom phiaj nyob rau ntawm Vaj Tswv .  
 1PL CLF purpose in to there God

I want us to know like this so that we know to search for our purpose in God.

(74) tawm yog koj thiab kuv peb twb ua tau peb lub neej vas meej nyob  
 even COP 2SG and 1SG 1PL already do get 1PL CLF life successful in  
 rau hauv lub ntiaj teb no lawm los peb yeej tsis tau paub hais tias yog  
 to in CLF earth this CP come 1PL certainly NEG ATT know that COP  
 vim li cas Vaj Tswv ho tsim peb los nyob rau hauv lub ntiaj teb no .  
 because what God so create 1PL come live to in CLF earth this

Even you and I, we already have a successful life in this world now, but we still don't know why God created us to live in this world.

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<sup>239</sup> Gloss from Heimbach (1979:85).

(75) Vaj Tswv txoj lus hais li no tias : [ quote from Matthew 16:26].  
 God word say like this that

This is what God's word says: [quote from Matthew 16:26].

(76) nyob rau hauv ma thais tshooj kaum rau nqi nee nkaum rau hais li no  
 in to in Matthew chapter ten six verse twenty six say like this

In Matthew chapter 16, verse 26, it says like this.

(77) nqi vaj lub kub no tau hais tias yog peb nrhiav peb lub hom phiaj ntawm  
 verse Bible this ATT say that COP 1PL search 1PL CLF purpose there  
 peb tus kheej xwb peb yeej nrhiav tsis tau li nawb mog .  
 1PL CLF self only 1PL certainly search NEG can/ATT TAG

This Scripture has said that we cannot find our purpose in ourselves. We will not be able to find it. OK?

(78) peb yuav tsum los nrhiav ntawm Vaj Tswv txoj kev xwb peb thiaj li  
 1PL must come search there God CLF way only 1PL consequently  
 yuav nrhiav tau peb tus kheej thiab qhov tseeb ntawm peb tus kheej .  
 POS.IRR search can/ATT 1PL CLF self and thing<sup>240</sup> true<sup>241</sup> there 1PL CLF self

We must search only God's way so that we can find ourselves and the truth about ourselves.

<sup>240</sup> Gloss following Mottin (1978:25).

<sup>241</sup> Gloss following Heimbach (1979:350).

(79) qhov nov lau cov kwv tij es qhov kuv qhia hnuv no los sis lub  
 thing this EMPH CLF brothers PP NMLZ 1SG teach day this or CLF  
 sij hawm no rau koj thiab kuv peb kawm no tsis yog qhia li tej  
 time this to 2SG and 1SG 1PL learn this NEG COP teach as those  
 ntau ntau hauv ntiav teb no qhia los nrhiav ib txoj hauj lwm zoo rau koj  
 book in earth this teach come search one CLF job good for 2SG  
 , los pab kom koj tau raws li koj txoj kev npau suav , los  
 come help so.that 2SG get in.accordance.with as 2SG NMLZ dream come  
 pab koj npaj koj lub neej hauv ntiav teb no .  
 help 2SG prepare 2SG CLF life in earth this

This is it, my brothers! What I'm teaching today or at this time for you and me and us to learn is not the same as what the books of this world teach you—how to find a good job for you, help you fulfill your dreams, teach you how to help prepare for your life in this world.

(80) Kuv tsis yog yuav qhia koj nrhiav lub nras<sup>242</sup> hnyav ntxiv los rau  
 1SG NEG COP POS.IRR teach 2SG search CLF burden heavy another come to  
 koj lub neej .  
 2SG CLF life

I'm not trying to teach you to find another burden for your life.

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<sup>242</sup> Mr. Yang originally gave this word as *nra*, though after checking an outside source, he decided on *nras*. This appears to be a case of tone sandhi in any case (following Jarkey 1991:25, Mottin 1978:18, etc.). Heimbach (1979:173) glosses *nra* as 'goods, baggage'—a clear match.

(81) tiam sis qhov kuv qhia hnuv no los sis hmo no los sis lub sij hawm  
 but thing 1SG teach day this or evening this or CLF time  
 no yog qhia hais tias peb yuav nrhiav li cas thiaj li paub nrhiav lub  
 this COP teach that 1PL POS.IRR search how consequently know search CLF  
 nras kom sib los rau peb lub neej los ntawm kev saib seb  
 burden so.that light come to 1PL CLF life come there NMLZ look.at whatever  
 yam twg yog yam tseem keeb tshaj es ua yam ntawd mus xwb .  
 type which COP type important more then do type that<sup>243</sup> go only

But what I'm teaching you today or this evening or at this time is teaching us how to find a lighter burden for our lives by looking at which one is the more important thing, then do that one only.

(82) txhob mus lob yam ub yam no yam pev yam nrauv los rau  
 NEG.IRR go grab type this type this type over.there type over.here come to  
 peb tus kheej .  
 1PL CLF self

Don't go grab things from here and there, over there and over here, for ourselves.

(83) qhov ntawd nws yuav ua lub nras hnyav thiab yuav ua  
 thing that 3SG POS.IRR do CLF burden heavy and POS.IRR do  
 kev nyuab siab rau peb nyob rau hauv lub ntiaj teb no .  
 trouble to 1PL live to in CLF earth this

These things, it will make a heavy burden and will make troubles for us to live in this world.

(84) yog qhia kom peb paub ua peb lub neej los sis ua ib tug neeg  
 COP teach PC 1PL know do 1PL CLF life or do one CLF person  
 raws li Vaj Tswv lub hom phiaj uas nws tsim peb los ua neeg nyob  
 according.to God CLF purpose that 3SG create 1PL come do person live  
 rau hauv lub ntiaj teb no xwb .  
 to in CLF earth this only

It is teaching us to know our lives or to become a person according to God's purpose alone, for which he created us to live in this world.

<sup>243</sup> Gloss following Heimbach (1979:186).

(85) yog li peb yuav ua li cas peb thiaj li paub txog peb lub hom phiaj  
 so 1PL POS.IRR do what 1PL consequently know about 1PL CLF purpose  
 hais tias yog vim li cas Vaj Tswv thiaj li tsim peb los nyob rau  
 that COP because what God consequently create 1PL come live to  
 hauv lub ntiaj teb no ?  
 in CLF earth this

So, what do we need to do so that we know about our purpose why God created us to live in this world?

(86) lub hom phiaj ntawm peb lub neej uas Vaj Tswv tsim peb los nyob rau  
 CLF purpose there 1PL CLF life that God create 1PL come live to  
 hauv ntiaj teb no yog dab tsi tiag tiag ?  
 in earth this COP what really

What is really the purpose in our lives that God created us to live in this world for?

(87) qhov yooj yim tshaj plaws ces rov qab mus cuag tus uas tsim koj xwb  
 thing easy more.than then go.back go contact CLF that create 2SG only  
 , nws thiaj yuav paub hais tias yog vim li cas .  
 3SG consequently POS.IRR know that COP because what

The easiest way is to go back to the one who created us—he will know why.

(88) Vaj Tswv yeej tsis tau tso peb nyob tsaus ntuj nti tsis paub dab tsi  
 God certainly NEG ATT drop 1PL live darkness NEG know what  
 hlo li thiab niaj hnub tso peb xav hais tias peb lub neej ces yog li no  
 at.all and every day drop 1PL want that 1PL CLF life then COP like this  
 los sis yog li tod xwb .  
 or COP like that only

God does not let us stay in the dark knowing nothing at all, and does not let us think that our lives are just like this or like that.

(89) Vaj Tswv tau qhia tseeb tseeb txog tsib yam hom phiaj nyob rau hauv peb  
 God ATT teach the.truth<sup>244</sup> about five type purpose in to in 1PL  
 lub neej nyob rau hauv Vaj Tswv txoj lus uas yog phau vaj lus kub .  
 CLF life in to in God word that COP book Bible

God has taught us the truth about five types of purpose in our lives in God's word which is the Bible.

(90) nyob rau hauv Vaj Tswv txoj lus tau qhia rau peb hais tias yog vim  
 in to in God word ATT teach to 1PL that COP because  
 li cas peb thiaj li muaj sia nyob , peb yuav ua peb lub neej li cas ,  
 what 1PL consequently have life live 1PL POS.IRR do 1PL CLF life what  
 yam twg yog yam uas peb yuav tsum tsis txhob ua thiab nws muaj dab tsi  
 which COP type that 1PL must NEG NEG.IRR do and 3SG have what  
 tos peb nyob rau peb lub neej yav pem suab .  
 wait 1PL in to 1PL CLF life in.the.future

In the word of God, it teaches us why we are able to live, how we will live our lives, which one is the one that we must not do, and what he has waiting for us in the future.

(91) Vaj Tswv txoj lus hais li no hais tias : [ quote from 1 Corinthians 2:7].  
 God word say like this that

God's word says like this, that: [quote from 1 Corinthians 2:7].

(92) Nyob rau hauv ib khau li thaus tshooj ob nqi xya hais li ntawm .  
 in to in one Corinthians chapter two verse seven say like there

In 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 7, it says like that.

(93) Vaj Tswv tsis yog txoj sia uas xub pib tuaj xwb tiam sis nws yog lub  
 God NEG COP CLF life that start come only but 3SG COP CLF  
 hauv paus siab .  
 foundation life

He is not only the starting point of life, but he is the founder of life.

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<sup>244</sup> Gloss is Mr. Yang's original, which is corroborated as "spoken truth" in Heimbach (1979:350).

(94) yog peb xav paub txog peb lub hom phiaj ntawm peb lub neej hais tias  
 COP 1PL want know about 1PL CLF purpose there 1PL CLF life that  
 yog vim li cas peb ho los nyob hauv lub ntiaj teb no peb yuav tsum los  
 COP because what 1PL so come live in CLF earth this 1PL must come  
 nrhiav ntawm Vaj Tswv uas yog tus tsim peb nawb mog cov kwv tij .  
 search there God that COP CLF create 1PL TAG CLF brothers

If we want to know about our purpose in our lives—why we are here in this world—we must come search in God, the one who created us, my brothers.

(95) peb tsis txhob mus nrhiav ntawm neeg lub tswv yim .  
 1PL NEG NEG.IRR go search there person CLF wisdom

We shouldn't go search in the wisdom of man.

(96) peb yuav tsum ua peb lub neej nyob rau ntawm txoj kev tseeb uas nyob  
 1PL must do 1PL CLF life live to there NMLZ true that lives  
 tas mus ib txhis tsis zoo li neeg ntiaj teb lub tswv yim es nyob ib pliag  
 forever NEG like person earth CLF wisdom so<sup>245</sup> live temporarily  
 xwb .  
 only

We must live our lives in the truth that lives forever, not like the wisdom of man in this world that lives only temporarily.

(97) thaum muaj tus neeg txawj tshiab los ces nws yuav hais tias yog  
 when have CLF person educated new come then 3SG POS.IRR that COP  
 li no lawm .  
 like this CP

When there is a new educated person coming, then he will say that it is like this now.

(98) Vaj Tswv txoj lus hais li no ntxiv : [ quote from Ephesians 1:11].  
 God word say about this add

In addition, this is what God's word says: [quote from Ephesians 1:11].

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<sup>245</sup> Gloss from Xiong (2014).

(99) nyob rau hauv E fe xaus tshooj ib nqi kaum ib hais li ntawm .  
 in to in Ephesians chapter one verse ten one say like there

In Ephesians chapter 1, verse 11, (it) says like that.

(100) nyob rau nqi Vaj lub kub no nws muaj peb lub ntsiab lus qhia peb .  
 in to verse Bible this 3SG have 1PL CLF meaning teach 1PL

In this Bible verse here, it has three meanings to teach us.

(101) lub ntsiab lus ib peb yuav tsum nrhiav tau peb tus kheej thiab peb lub  
 CLF meaning one 1PL must search can 1PL CLF self and 1PL CLF  
 hom phiaj los ntawm peb muaj txoj kev sib rauv zoo nrog Ye Xus Khe Tos  
 purpose come there 1PL have NMLZ relationship good with Jesus Christ  
 .

The first meaning: we must be able to search ourselves and our purpose by having a good relationship with Jesus Christ.

(102) qhov ob tuaj mus Vaj Tswv twb paub peb ua ntej peb paub nws .  
 thing two come go God already know 1PL first 1PL know 3SG

Here is the second meaning: God already knew us before we knew him.

(103) Vaj Tswv twb npaj peb lub neej thiab peb lub hom phiaj thaum tsis  
 God already prepare 1PL CLF life and 1PL CLF purpose when NEG  
 tau muaj peb lawm .  
 ATT have 1PL CP

God already prepared our lives and our purpose when we did not yet exist.

(104) lub ntsiab lus thib peb hais li no hais tias Vaj Tswv lub hom phiaj rau  
 CLF meaning three say about this that God CLF purpose to  
 peb tseem loj tshaj li qhov peb xav yuav xav tau .  
 1PL still big more than thing 1PL think want think get

The third meaning says like this: God's purpose for us is bigger than what we think and want.

(105) Vaj Tswv lub hom phiaj yog kom peb muaj txoj sia nrog Vaj Tswv nyob  
 God CLF purpose COP so.that 1PL have CLF life with God live  
 mus ib txis .  
 go forever

God's purpose is for us to have life with him forever.

(106) Qhov no lau !  
 thing this EMPH

This is it!

(107) Cov kwv tij yog lub hom phiaj uas Vaj Tswv xav kom koj thiab kuv  
 CLF brothers COP CLF purpose that God want PC 2SG and 1SG  
 peb tau thiab yog qhov Vaj Tswv tsim peb los nyob rau hauv lub ntiaj teb  
 1PL get and COP thing God create 1PL come live to in CLF earth  
 no .  
 this

My brothers, this is the purpose that God wants you and me—us—to have and is what  
 God created us to live in this world here for.

(108) Yog li kuv xav kom koj thiab kuv peb txhob niaj hnub mus nrhiav  
 so 1SG want PC 2SG and 1SG 1PL NEG.IRR every day go search  
 peb lub neej nyob rau ntawm peb tus kheej lawm los sis peb lub hom phiaj rau  
 1PL CLF life in to there 1PL CLF self CP or 1PL CLF purpose to  
 ntawm peb tus kheej .  
 there 1PL CLF self

So, I do not want you and me—us—to go search for our lives in ourselves or our purpose  
 in ourselves everyday.

(109) tiam sis peb yuav tsum mus nrhiav rau ntawm Vaj Tswv peb thiaj  
 but 1PL must go search to there God 1PL consequently  
 paub hais tias lub hom phiaj nyob rau ntawm Vaj Tswv .  
 know that CLF purpose in to there God

But, we must search in God. So, we know that our purpose is in God.

(110) los sis peb lub hom phiaj yog dab tsi tiag tiag .  
 or 1PL CLF purpose COP what really

Or we know what is really our purpose.

(111) nawb mog .  
 TAG

OK?

(112) Es kuv vam thiab siab hais tias nej sawv daws yuav nkag siab zoo es  
 and 1SG hope<sup>246</sup> that 2PL everyone POS.IRR understand good and  
 nej yuav muab qhov no coj los ua ib txoj kev rau nej npaj nej lub  
 2PL POS.IRR get thing this take come do one CLF way to 2PL prepare 2PL CLF  
 neeg nyob rau hauv lub ntiaj teb no nawb mog .  
 person live to in CLF earth this TAG

And I hope that everyone will understand well and will take this as one way to prepare your lives here in this world. OK?

(113) Es yog li thov Vaj Tswv nrog nraim nej thiab thov Vaj Tswv  
 and so please God with 2PL and please God  
 pub koob hmoob nej cov uas nej koom nrog kuv nyob rau lub sij hawm no .  
 bless 2PL CLF that 2PL join with 1SG in to CLF time this

And may God be with you and may God bless you—those that join with me at this hour.

(114) Es peb mam li rov sib ntsib dua nawb mog yog Vaj Tswv tsis tau  
 and 1PL will return meeting again TAG COP God NEG ATT  
 los .  
 come

And we will meet again—OK?—if God has not come.

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<sup>246</sup> Mr. Yang found the gloss ‘hope’ for *vam* in an outside source, and decided that ‘hope’ best matched the full phrase here. The gloss for *vam* as ‘hope’ is corroborated by Jarkey (2006:133).