

THE COMPLEMENTIZER (HAI) TIAS 'THAT' IN HMONG

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

Review of tias as Defined in Heimbach's Dictionary

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

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

He adds that tias is "similarly used with the following verbs" (translations are from his dictionary):

paub	'know that'
qw	'shout, cry out loudly'
ntxub	'hate'
yws	'mutter, continue talking angrily'
yog	'that is to say'
xam	'reckon that'
hu	'call, cry out'
ntxhi	'whisper'
hawv	1. 'cry out', 2. 'threaten'
quaj	'cry aloud, weep aloud'
mloog	'listen'
cem	'scold'
hnov	'hear'

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

- (1) a. Nws tias... 'he said...'
 b. Nws hais tias... 'he said...' "

Review of tias as Defined in Mottin's Grammar

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- (6) Yog tias nws yuav mus
 be that he fut. go

- 'That is to say that he will go'
- (7) Yog tias koj tsis mus...
if that you NEG go
'If you don't go...'
- (8) Kuv tsis nyiam nws vim tias nws tsis pab kuv
I NEG like him because he NEG help me
'I don't like him because he doesn't help me'

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

hais	'say that'
piav	'explain that'
qhia	'inform, teach that'
nug	'ask if'
teb	'answer that'
hnov	'hear that'
paub	'know that'
xav	'think that'
ua xyem xyav	'wonder if'
xam	'reckon that'
lees	'acknowledge that'
zeem	'admit that'
pom	'see'
yog tias	'that is to say that'
tsis yog tias	'not that'
yog tias	'if'
vim tias	'because'

Discussion of Research Findings

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

Verbs involving speech:

cem	'scold'
dag	'lie'
hais	'say, speak'
hu	'call'
nug	'ask'
qw	'shout, yell'
qhia	'inform, teach'
teb	'answer'
hnyos	'ridicule, laugh at'
quaj	'cry aloud, weep aloud'
foom	'curse'
laug	'assure, speak at great length'
ntuas	'advise, urge'

Verbs involving perception:

hnov	'hear'
pom	'see'

nco	'remember'
paub	'know'
xav	'think'
ntshai	'fear, be afraid'
ntseeg	'believe'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(9) a. Tus nus txawm hais rau tus muam hais tias, "Koj yuav kuv
clf brother then say to clf sister that you marry me
'Then the brother said to his sister, "Marry me"'

(From The Flood, Level 1:14)

b. Nws qw hais tias, "Dabtsi?"
he yell that what
'He yelled, "What?"'

(From The Woodcutter, His Rooster and His Wife, Level 2:16)

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

(From Shao and His Fire, Level 1:17)

- d. Nws hu tias, "Twm aws, tawm los!"
 he call that buffalo oral particle come out come
 'He called, "Buffaloes, come out!"'

(From How We Got Grain and Meat, Level 1:26)

In the second pattern (hais) tias is used to introduce an embedded sentence reporting a proposition and occurs with the following main verbs, which all involve perception (except for hais, which is used to report direct quotations):

hais	'say, speak'
hnov	'hear'
nco	'remember'
ntseeg	'believe'
ntsia	'think'
ntsuas	'estimate'
ntshai	'fear, be afraid'
paub	'know'
pom	'see'
xav	'think'

Pattern (B) is illustrated in the following sentences:

- (10) a. Tus txiv xav hais tias tus lau qaib zoo nkauj thiab ntse
 clf man think that clf rooster beautiful and smart
 'The man thought the rooster was beautiful and intelligent'
 (From The Woodcutter, His Rooster and His Wife, Level 2:6)
- b. Tus poj niam tsis paub hais tias nws yog tsov
 clf wife NEG know that he be tiger
 'The wife didn't know that he was a tiger'
 (From The Woman and the Tiger, Level 2:7)
- c. Kuv hais rau nws hais tias kuv tsis muaj ib npib nyiaj
 I say to her that I NEG have one coin silver
 'I told her I didn't have any money'
 (From Yao the Orphan, Level 2:12)
- d. Kuv hnov dheev hais tias lawv tuaj, ces kuv mus xyuas
 I hear suddenly that they arrive so I go see
 'Suddenly I heard that they had arrived, so I went to see'
 (Bertrais:83)

Heimbach hinted at the use of tias to introduce an embedded sentence in his list of verbs which can be followed by tias. Mottin mentioned it when he said that speech is reported indirectly after tias and when he gave his list of verbs. However, according to Se Yang and Yang Dao as well as the data I collected, tias cannot be deleted after verbs involving thought. I tested (5), which is a Mottin example, with my informants; they said that Mottin's example was ungrammatical and that (hais) tias 'that' was obligatory after paub 'know'. These two points are illustrated below:

- (5) a. *Kuv paub nws yuav mus
 I know he fut. go
 (Mottin:126)
- b. Kuv paub (hais) tias nws yuav mus
 I know that he fut. go
 'I know that he will go'

This brings us to the most interesting fact that emerged from looking at the data, namely that the complementizer introducing direct speech quotations or embedded sentences reporting a proposition is (hais) tias, and not tias alone. Mottin alluded to this when he said that hais is often used before tias, no matter what the main verb is, when the main verb is followed by a direct or indirect object noun phrase (4a-c). This was found to be true in all the sentences I collected, even when there is no object noun phrase after the main verb. I will illustrate this point using one of Mottin's sentences (126):

- (4) c. Kuv hais rau nws hais tias...
 I say to him that
 'I said to him that...'

We can delete rau nws 'to him' and keep hais before tias, yielding:

- (11) Kuv hais hais tias...
 I say that
 'I said that...'

The hais in (hais) tias was found to be possible but not obligatory in all the sentences I collected, yielding the following pattern:

NP	main verb	<u>rau</u> NP	(<u>hais</u>) <u>tias</u>	"NP VP"
		NP		NP VP

This pattern is valid for all the main verbs I listed earlier, and is illustrated in (9a-d) and (10a-d)

According to my informants, hais can also be optionally inserted in (6), (7), and (8). In other words, 'if'-clauses and 'because'-clauses can be introduced by yog (hais) tias and vim (hais) tias respectively.

Let us consider the following two sentences to speculate on the nature of hais in the complementizer (hais) tias:

- (12) a. Kuv hais rau nws hais tias kuv txom nyem
 I say to her that I poor
 'I told her that I was poor'

(From Yao the Orphan, Level 2:12)

- b. Lawv paub hais tias Sis Nab tsis yog lawv txiv
 they know that Shee Na NEG be their father
 'They knew that Shee Na was not their father'

(From Ngao Njua and Shee Na, Level 2:14)

In (12a), the hais before tias originally probably meant 'say', like the main verb, yielding the following translation: 'I spoke to her, saying that I was poor'. This could be true of all the sentences where the main verb involves speech, as illustrated in (13):

- (13) Nws nug hais tias, "Nej puas ntshai?"
 he ask ?say that you Q be afraid
 'He asked saying that, "Are you afraid?"'

(From Shao and His Fire, Level 1:21)

Here we can draw a parallel with the King James version of the Bible, in which 'say' is used in a similar way, as seen below:

- (14) a. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying,
 "Behold, a sower went forth to sow"

(St. Matthew, Chapter 13:3)

- b. He asked his disciples, saying, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"

(St. Matthew, Chapter 16:13)

In (12b), however, hais tias 'that' follows a verb that does not involve speech and the hais before tias can no longer mean 'saying' as in (12a). In all the sentences in which (hais) tias follows a main verb that does not involve speech as well as in 'if'-clauses introduced by yog (hais) tias and 'because'-clauses introduced by vim (hais) tias, hais no longer means 'say'. Instead, we might hypothesize that the hais before tias has been grammaticized. By that, I mean that if we speculate that hais originally meant 'say' like the main verb based on its use with numerous verbs involving speech, this is no longer the case. It has become grammaticized and functions as an optional part of the complementizer (hais) tias 'that'.

The hypothesis that hais has been grammaticized is supported by the following evidence: first, in the hais hais tias 'say, saying that' sequence, the hais before tias would be redundant semantically; and second, hais tias is used with verbs that do not involve speech and with yog 'if' and vim 'because'. Starting with the second argument, consider (10a, b, and d), (12b) and the following sentences:

- (15) Kuv pom hais tias koj ua zoo
I see that you do well
'I see that you did well'

(Bertrais:57)

- (16) Yog (hais) tias koj tsis muaj mov noj li lawm, koj mus nqa
if you NEG have rice eat anymore you go get
me ntsis tom kuv tsev
a little at my house
'If you don't have any rice to eat anymore, go and get a
little at my house'

(From Se Yang, informant)

- (17) Nws tsis tau mus kawm ntawv vim hais tias nws mob
he NEG past go study because he sick
'He didn't go to school because he was sick'

(Yang Dao:644)

In none of these sentences does the hais before tias have anything to do with 'saying'. This was confirmed by my informants, who claim that hais does not mean anything in those sentences, thus supporting the hypothesis that hais as part of the complementizer has a different entry in the lexicon from the main verb hais 'say'.

Going back to the first argument, consider (9a), (10c), (12a) and the following sentence:

- (18) Tus nus rov hais hais tias, "Koj yuav kuv"
clf boy again say [saying] that you marry me
'The boy said again, "Marry me"'

(From The Flood, Level 1:16)

In all of these sentences, it would be redundant to have two hais meaning 'say'. Diachronically, the hais before tias might have meant 'say', but synchronically, it appears in the lexicon as part of the complementizer (hais) tias.

Turkish and Hmong share similarities regarding the findings discussed above. The Turkish equivalent of 'say' is demek. In his grammar of Turkish, Underhill (1976) points out that "when a direct quotation is followed by any verb other than demek, the particle diye must follow the quotation. Diye 'saying' is originally an adverbial form of demek...":

- (19) a. Hasan, "hemen geliyorum" diye bagirdi
 saying shout
 'Hasan shouted, [saying], "I'm coming at once" '
 b. Profesor, "isminiz ne?" diye sordu
 saying ask
 'The professor asked, [saying], "What is your name?" '
 (Underhill 1976:431)

In Turkish, diye is used in the same way as the hais preceding tias in Hmong, except that Turkish deletes it when the main verb is demek 'say', as seen in the following sentence from Underhill (432):

- (20) a. Polis memuru, "yol kapali" dedi
 say
 b. *Polis memuru, "yol kapali" diye dedi
 *saying say

'The policeman said, "The road is closed" '

Underhill (p.c.) speculates that the reason diye 'saying' may not be used when the main verb is demek 'say' is that to use the same verb twice would be redundant. Then the fact that Hmong uses the complementizer (hais) tias with the main verb hais, as well as with any other appropriate main verb, must show that the hais in the complementizer (hais) tias is no longer felt to mean 'saying' in Hmong.

Underhill (432) goes on to say that "diye may also be used like a postposition, following entire sentences included within other sentences (without quotation marks). Sentences followed by diye are either literally or figuratively indirect quotations; they frequently indicate the reason for which the subject takes some action...":

- (21) Su kesilebilir diye banyolari doldurdum
 water may be cut off [saying] bathtubs I filled
 'I filled the bathtubs because the water may be cut off'

Compare (21) with (17) and (22):

- (22) Nag hmo, kuv tsis tau tuaj vim hais tias kuv mob taub hau
 yesterday I NEG past come because I hurt head
 'I didn't come yesterday because I had a headache'.
 (From Se Yang, informant)

There is an interesting parallel between the use of diye 'saying' in (21) and the occurrence of hais 'saying' in vim hais tias in (17) and (22). Both are derived from the main verb 'say' and are now used to express causality.

As stated earlier, the grammaticization of hais before tias might account for its optionality. When an entity, in this case hais, is grammaticized it loses its meaning; this might explain why hais is an optional element of the complementizer (hais) tias. The rules on when it can be deleted could not be drawn from either the data collected or consultation with the informants. I believe they are discourse related and would require a more extensive study of Hmong texts than the scope of this paper allows.

Heimbach and Mottin also claimed that hais as a main verb could be deleted in (1a) and (3), respectively. This sequence is ungrammatical according to Yang Dao and Se Yang, and would not be used in written Hmong. It is, however, used in spoken, colloquial Hmong, which accounts for its occasional presence in the folk tales.

Nothing in tias "intensifies the action of the verb", as Heimbach claims (468). We have never come across an NP V tias sequence where tias

affects the meaning of the verb and could end a sentence, as other post verbal intensifiers do. Thus, Heimbach's entry for tias as a restricted post verbal intensifier can be safely dismissed. Mottin's analysis comes closer to the findings that emerged from the data, but the complementizer used to report propositions either directly or indirectly is not tias alone, it is (hais) tias. (Hais) is optional and tias is obligatory under all circumstances as in French, but contrary to English where 'that' can be deleted under certain conditions.

FOOTNOTE

After the oral presentation of this paper, several people offered the observation that the use of hais 'say' in (hais) tias 'that' to introduce direct speech quotations, 'if'-clauses, 'because'-clauses and embedded sentences reporting a proposition is paralleled in some related languages. Gedney (p.c.) reported similarities with Tai, Huffman (p.c.) with Mon-Khmer languages and Watters (p.c.) with Kham.

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(This paper is drawn from my M.A. thesis on complementation in Hmong. Comments and comparative data from other Southeast Asian languages would be greatly appreciated.)