

CHAPTER 5

Karen and surrounding languages

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[ABSTRACT]

This paper attempts to explore relationships that Karen, i.e., Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen, has had with surrounding languages in terms of word order and loanwords. It is difficult to conclude anything about such relationships from the viewpoint of word order. However, examining loanwords reveals that Pwo and Sgaw had contact with Mon before the split of these two languages.

0. Introduction

The ethnic groups that speak Karenic languages include many groups such as the Bwe, Geba, Gekho, Kayah, Kayo, Kayan, Manu, Monebwa, Mopwa, Paku, Pa-O, Pwo Karen, Sgaw Karen, Thalebwa, Yeinbaw, Yintale, and so on (see Shintani 2003). Today, these ethnic groups live in Myanmar and Thailand. As the author pointed out in Kato [加藤] (2016), the range of people who consider themselves to be ethnic “Karen” can vary according to various contexts, including political, ethnic, and linguistic. According to the author’s knowledge acquired through fieldwork, the ethnic Karen, in the narrowest sense, is comprised of Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen only, and in addition to these, the peoples that speak languages close to Sgaw Karen, i.e., Monebwa, Paku, and Thalebwa, may consider themselves Karen. Moreover, Bwe and Mopwa may also consider themselves Karen. Kayah and Pa-O usually see themselves as belonging to ethnic groups separate from the Karen. In Myanmar, out of the peoples speaking Karenic languages, the two groups, the Karen comprised mainly of the Pwo and Sgaw, and that comprised of the Kayah, have independent states, Karen State and Kayah State, respectively.

Karenic languages constitute the Karenic branch of the Tibeto-Burman family of the Sino-Tibetan linguistic stock. All the Karenic languages have an SVO word order, which is aberrant among the Tibeto-Burman languages, the large majority of which are of the SOV-type. Most likely, the ancestor of the Karenic languages originally had an SOV word order, but it changed into SVO at the Proto-Karen stage. This change was likely due to contact with some Mon-Khmer language(s). Matisoff (2000) suggests heavy contact with Mon in the late first millennium AD. Manson (2009) suggests that Mon-Khmer loanwords in Karenic languages imply a greater connection with the Palaungic branch of Mon-Khmer rather than the Monic branch.

In considering the genealogical position of Karenic in the Sino-Tibetan family, Benedict (1972) placed Karen (=Karenic) separately from Tibeto-Burman,

as is seen in Figure 1. This view reflects the fact that Karenic has an SVO word order. However, when we observe the vocabulary of the Karenic languages in detail, it is obvious that they are Tibeto-Burman. In accordance with this view, in Matisoff's (2003) genealogical tree shown in Figure 2, Karenic is located under Tibeto-Burman.¹

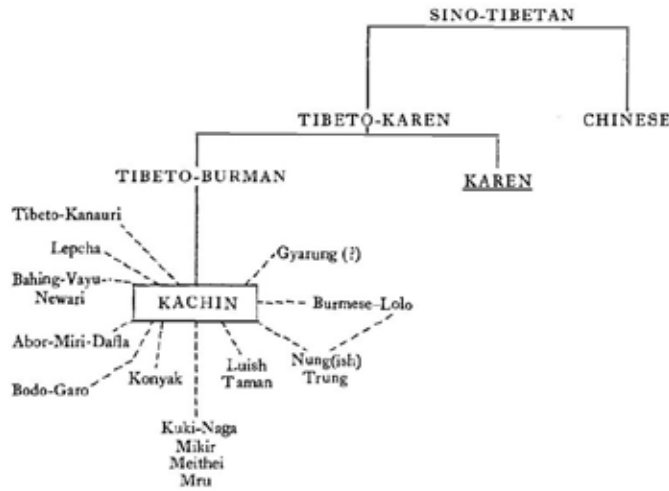


Figure 1: Benedict (1972)

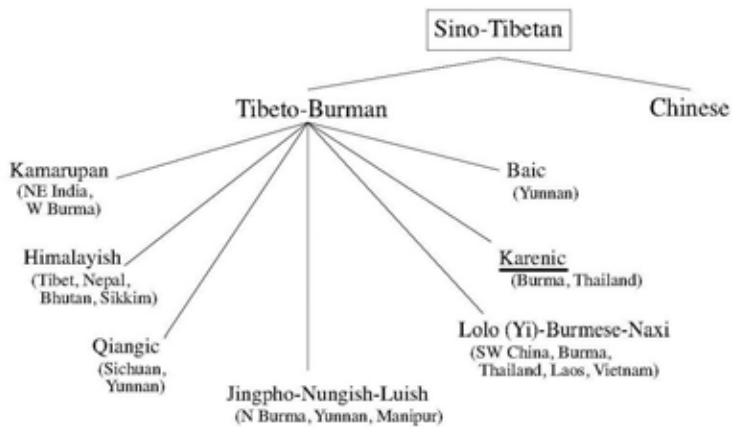


Figure 2: Matisoff (2003)

¹ Among diachronic studies of Karenic languages, Haudricourt's (1946, 53, 75) works are also highly important. For his method of reconstructing proto-tones, see Kato (2018). The genealogical relationship inside Karenic was first discussed by Jones (1961). Although his study is excellent especially in the descriptive respect, his reconstruction of proto-tones is problematic.

Opinions are divergent on the genealogy within the Karenic branch. Figure 3 is Manson's (2002) classification (cited from Manson 2009), and Figure 4 is Shintani's (2003).

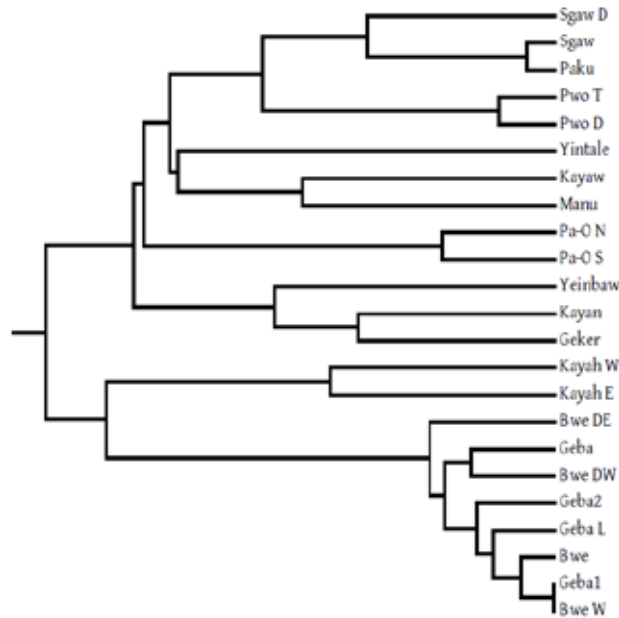


Figure 3: Manson's (2002) classification

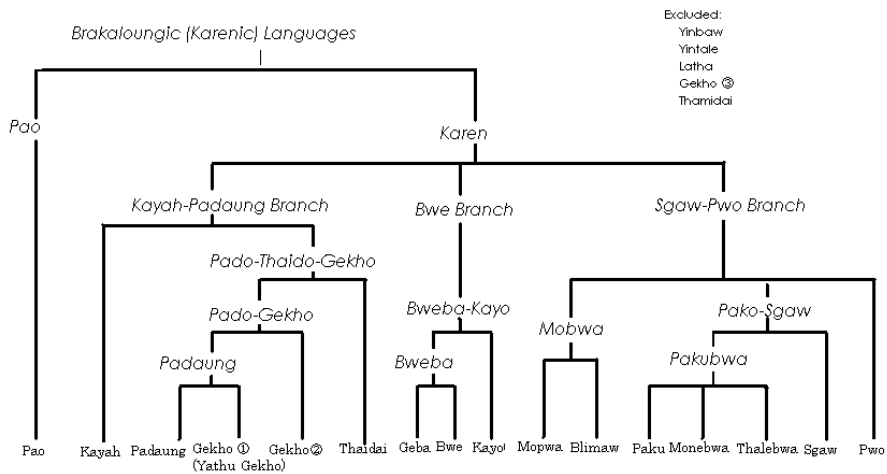


Figure 4: Shintani's (2003) classification

Figure 5 is Manson’s (2017a) new classification. This is proposed as a more comprehensive and scientific classification that is based on shared phonological developments among Karenic languages.²

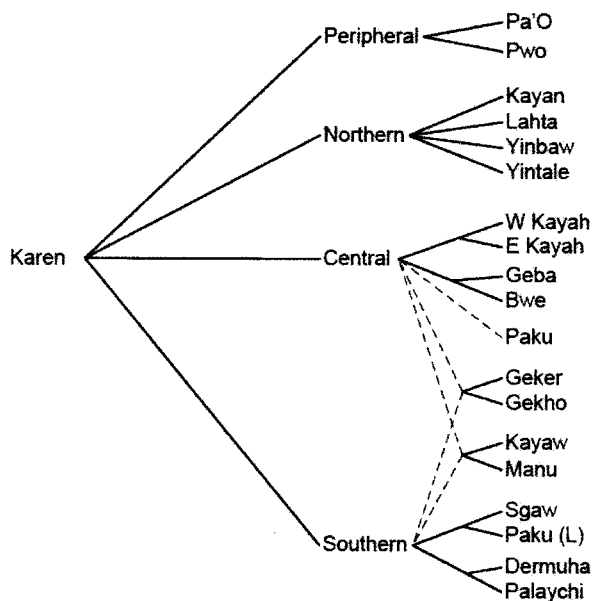


Figure 5: Manson’s (2017a) classification

In the present paper, by the word “Karen”, Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen, which are the languages spoken by Karen peoples in the narrowest sense, are meant. These two languages are both distributed from around the Myanmar-Thai border through the Ayeyarwady Delta in Myanmar. The purpose of this paper is to show the characteristics of word order and loanwords in Pwo and Sgaw and to examine whether we can explore relationships that these languages have had with surrounding languages from these viewpoints.

The Pwo Karen dialects treated in this paper are two: the one that is spoken in Hpa-an, the capital of Karen State, Myanmar, and the one that is spoken in Kyonbyaw (Kyonpyaw), Ayeyarwady Region, Myanmar. The Hpa-an dialect belongs to Eastern Pwo Karen, and the Kyonbyaw dialect belongs to Western Pwo Karen. For the grouping of Pwo Karen dialects, see Phillips (2000), Kato

² The author has speaking and reading competence of Pwo Karen, and reading competence of Sgaw Karen. The author’s impression is that Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen are languages that have a relatively close relationship. In the classifications of Manson (2002) and Shintani (2003), Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen are shown as having a relatively close relationship, but they have a distant relationship in Manson’s (2017a) new classification. His new grouping of Pwo and Sgaw is no small surprise to the author, and at the same time, it is highly intriguing.

(2009), Dawkins and Phillips (2009a, 2009b), and Phillips (2017: 4-5). Eastern Pwo Karen and Western Pwo Karen are the main dialect groups of Pwo Karen in Myanmar. They both are groups belonging to Pwo Karen, but they are not intelligible to each other. The Sgaw Karen treated in this paper is the dialect that is spoken in Hpa-an, Karen State, Myanmar. In general, the differences among the dialects of Sgaw Karen are not as large as those of the Pwo Karen, and they are intelligible to each other. Transcription of each dialect is phonemic. The transcription of the Hpa-an dialect of Pwo Karen follows Kato (2019a), and the transcriptions of the Kyonbyaw dialect of Pwo Karen and the Hpa-an dialect of Sgaw Karen follow Kato (2002).

1. Word order

We will first observe the characteristics of word order in Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen. Here, the term “word order” includes not only the order of words but also that of phrases and clauses. Out of the two Pwo Karen dialects mentioned above, only one dialect, i.e., the Hpa-an dialect that belongs to Eastern Pwo Karen, is treated in this section because Western Pwo shows essentially the same characteristics in word order as Eastern Pwo.

Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen both have the following linguistic characteristics: many of their morphemes are monosyllabic; they are isolating languages; they do not have tense as a grammatical category, and the opposition of realis and irrealis is often utilized in order to express time; they are topic-prominent. These characteristics can be also observed in other Karenic languages. The author (Kato [加藤] 2004, 2008) sets up nouns, verbs, adverbs, particles, and interjections as Pwo Karen word classes. The same word classes can be also distinguished in Sgaw Karen.

The reason that word order is selected for discussion here is that since Karen is an isolating language, word order is important in morphosyntax.

1.1 Arguments and the verb

The intransitive verb and its subject noun are placed in the order of “Subject + Verb”, as in (1) and (2). In many Southeast Asian and East Asian SVO languages, existential and phenomenon sentences utilize a VS order, but Karen does not use that order in such sentences.

(1) phlòonmwì yê [Pwo Karen]
 guest come
 ‘A guest came.’

(2) pyātəmyī hé [Sgaw Karen]
 guest come
 ‘A guest came.’

Both languages use an SVO order in a monotransitive sentence:

- (3) éaphàn dó òàkhléin [Pwo Karen]
 Shapan hit Thakhlein
 ‘Shapan hit Thakhlein.’

- (4) ?éthíkò tò ?èkəjón [Sgaw Karen]
 Ehthikaw hit Ehkanyaw
 ‘Ehthikaw hit Ehkanyaw.’

In a ditransitive sentence, the noun denoting “recipient” occurs immediately after the verb, and the noun denoting “theme” follows it:

- (5) éaphàn phílân òàkhléin khòthá [Pwo Karen]
 Shapan give Thakhlein mango
 ‘Shapan gave Thakhlein a mango.’

- (6) ?éthíkò hêdú? ?èkəjón təkó?thá [Sgaw Karen]
 Ehthikaw give Ehkanyaw mango
 ‘Ehthikaw gave Ehkanyaw a mango.’

1.2 Noun and adposition

In Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen, words corresponding to so-called “adpositions” in general terms are adpositional particles. An adpositional particle generally occurs before the noun in both languages. In (7), the adpositional particle *lá* is placed before the noun phrase *yéin phàn* ‘inside of the house’, and in (8) also, the adpositional particle *lá* is placed before the noun phrase *hí pū* ‘inside of the house’.

- (7) éaphàn mà chəmə lá yéin phàn [Pwo Karen]
 Shapan do work LOC house inside
 ‘Shapan worked in the house.’

- (8) ?éthíkò mā tàmə lá hí pū [Sgaw Karen]
 Ehthikaw do work LOC house inside
 ‘Ehthikaw worked in the house.’

1.3 Noun, stative verb, numeral classifier phrase, and demonstrative

It is unnecessary to set up the category “adjective” in Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen. In both languages, words corresponding to “adjectives” in general terms are stative verbs, which constitute a subgroup of verbs. A stative verb follows the noun. A numeral classifier phrase, which consists of a numeral and a numeral classifier, both subgroups of nouns, and a demonstrative also follow the noun. These elements are placed in the order of “stative verb - numeral classifier phrase - demonstrative” in both languages:

- (9) já phàdú θǎN béiN jò [Pwo Karen]
 fish big three NC(flat.thing) this
 ‘these three big fish’
- (10) nâ pháʔdô θá bê ʔi [Sgaw Karen]
 fish big three NC(flat.thing) this
 ‘these three big fish’

1.4 Modifying noun and modified noun

A noun modifying another noun precedes the modified one. See (11) and (12):

- (11) pəθábán kòUNlwē [Pwo Karen]
 youth organization
 ‘youth organization’
- (12) phóθáphó kərə [Sgaw Karen]
 youth organization
 ‘youth organization’

In examples (13) and (14), the modifying noun is the name of an ethnic group:

- (13) pəjân khāN [Pwo Karen]
 Burman country ‘Burma/Myanmar’
- (14) pəjō kò [Sgaw Karen]
 Burman country ‘Burma/Myanmar’

The noun denoting “possessor” also precedes the noun denoting the possessed object. In that case, the third-person pronoun may appear before the possessed noun in both languages. See (15) and (16). Both ʔə yéiN (Pwo Karen) and ʔə hí (Sgaw Karen) alone can mean ‘his/her house’.

- (15) chərâ (ʔə) yéiN [Pwo Karen]
 teacher 3SG house ‘the teacher’s house’
- (16) θərâ (ʔə) hí [Sgaw Karen]
 teacher 3SG house ‘the teacher’s house’

1.5 Noun and relative clause

Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen use different strategies in forming a relative clause.

In Pwo Karen, there are two ways of forming a relative clause: one way uses a relative marker and the other does not.³ Using the relative marker makes the sentence sound highly formal, and it is hardly used in daily conversation.

³ For more on relative clauses in Pwo Karen, see Kato [加藤] (2001).

Therefore, we will observe the way that does not use a relative marker here. When the relativized noun is the subject of the relative clause, the relative clause is placed after the head noun. In the relative clause, the subject noun is gapped:

- (17) phlòUN [ʔê lá phlòUN thíkhāN jò] [Pwo Karen]
 person come LOC Karen country this
 ‘the person who came to Karen State’

When the relativized noun is a non-subject noun, the relative clause is placed before the head noun. The relativized non-subject noun is gapped in the relative clause:

- (18) [jə dó] phlòUN nó [Pwo Karen]
 1SG hit person that
 ‘the person whom I hit’

In Sgaw Karen, relative clauses are formed by using the relative marker *lá*. Whether the subject noun is relativized as in (19) or one of the non-subject nouns is relativized as in (20), the relative clause is placed after the head noun. In both cases, a resumptive pronoun corresponding to the head noun may occur in the relative clause.

- (19) pyākəjə [lá ʔə hé lá pyākəjə kò] [Sgaw Karen]
 person REL 3SG come LOC Karen country
 ‘the person who came to Karen State’

- (20) pyākəjə [lá jə tò ʔɔ] nê [Sgaw Karen]
 person REL 1SG hit 3SG that
 ‘the person whom I hit’

1.6 Verb and adverb

An adverb occurs after the verb in both languages. When the verb has an object, the adverb occurs after it.

- (21) əphàn ʔán m̩ ʔəphlé [Pwo Karen]
 Shapan eat rice fast
 ‘Shapan eats rice fast.’

- (22) ʔêthíkò ʔɔ mē khlékhlé [Sgaw Karen]
 Ehthikaw eat rice fast
 ‘Ehthikaw eats rice fast.’

1.7 Verb and auxiliary

In Pwo Karen, words that function as so-called auxiliaries are verb particles (Kato [加藤] 2004: 277-372). Some verb particles appear before the verb, and the other verb particles appear after the verb. Kato [加藤] (2004) lists eleven verb particles that appear before the verb and fifty verb particles that appear after the

verb. In (23), *bá* is a verb particle that appears before the verb, and *jō* is one that appears after the verb:

- (23) *jə bá ʔán jō phlòʊn chəʔánchəʔə* [Pwo Karen]
 1SG must eat try.to Karen food
 ‘I have to try to eat Karen food.’

In Sgaw Karen also, there are both preverb and postverb particles. (24) is a sentence that semantically corresponds to (23). In this example, *bâ* is a verb particle that appears before the verb, and *kwà* is one that appears after the verb:

- (24) *jə kə bâ ʔô kwà pyākəjə tãʔtãʔə* [Sgaw Karen]
 1SG IRR must eat try.to Karen food
 ‘I have to try to eat Karen food.’

1.8 The position of question markers

The markers that indicate an interrogative sentence appears sentence-finally in both Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen. Both languages use different question markers in polar and content questions. In the case of a polar question, *ʋá* (Pwo Karen) and *há* (Sgaw Karen) are used:

- (25) *nə mə l̩ ʋá* [Pwo Karen]
 2SG IRR go Q
 ‘Will you go?’

- (26) *nə kə l̩ há* [Sgaw Karen]
 2SG IRR go Q
 ‘Will you go?’

In the case of a content question, *lê* (Pwo Karen) and *lê* (Sgaw Karen) are used:

- (27) *nə mə ʔán chənó lê* [Pwo Karen]
 2SG IRR eat what Q
 ‘What will you eat?’

- (28) *nə kə ʔô mənū lê* [Sgaw Karen]
 2SG IRR eat what Q
 ‘What will you eat?’

1.9 Verb and negative marker

The order of the verb and negative marker differs between Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen. In Pwo Karen, when the main clause is negated, the particle *ʔé* is placed in the clause-final position:

- (29) ʔəwê ɣê ʔé [Pwo Karen]
 3SG come NEG
 ‘He did not come.’

When a subordinate clause is negated, the particle *lə* is placed immediately before the verb, and the particle *bá* is placed in the final position of the subordinate clause. That is, “double negation” (Dryer 2005) is employed in a subordinate clause.

- (30) ʔəwê lə l̩ bá ʔəkhócòn, jə l̩ [Pwo Karen]
 3SG NEG go NEG because 1SG go
 ‘Because he did not go, I went.’

In Sgaw Karen, both main and subordinate clauses employ double negation. The particle *tə* is placed before the verb, and the particle *bâ* is placed in the clause-final position. Examples (31) and (32) semantically correspond to (29) and (30) respectively.

- (31) ʔəwé tə hé bâ [Sgaw Karen]
 3SG NEG come NEG
 ‘He did not come.’

- (32) ʔəwé tə lē bâ ʔəxó, jə lē [Sgaw Karen]
 3SG NEG go NEG because 1SG go
 ‘Because he did not go, I went.’

For a general discussion on negative markers in Karenic languages, see Manson (2017b).

1.10 Order of verbs in serial verb constructions

Many Southeast Asian languages have serial verb constructions. Although there are many common features in the serial verb constructions of various languages, there are also many different features. In 1.10.1 and 1.10.2 below, we will observe the characteristics of word order in Pwo Karen serial verb constructions, and after that we will examine Sgaw Karen serial verb constructions in 1.10.3. In the present paper, serialization consisting of two verbs will be treated. For the general characteristics of serial verb constructions in mainland Southeast Asian Languages, see Enfield (2019: 200-225).

Pwo Karen has two types of serial verb constructions: the concatenated type and separated type.⁴ The concatenated type of serialization does not allow a noun

⁴ For more detail on serial verb constructions in Pwo Karen, see Kato [加藤] (1998, 2004). Kato (2017) and Kato (2018) also discuss them a little bit. Descriptive studies on serial verb constructions in other Karenic languages include Kato [加藤] (1992) and Weinhold (2011) on Sgaw Karen, Solnit (1997: Chapter 4) and Solnit (2006) on Kayah, Manson (2010: 287-302) on Kayan, Swanson (2011) on Bwe, and Cooper (2017) on Pa-O. The concatenated type and separated type in Pwo Karen respectively correspond to

to occur between the first verb (V1) and the second verb (V2), whereas the separated type does. These two types can be distinguished by the location of the negative particle *lə* when the serial verb construction appears in a subordinate clause. The negative marker occurs before V1 in the concatenated type, as in (33), while it occurs before V2 in the separated type, as in (34).

(33) *jə lə l̩ xwè bá ʔəkhócòn ...* [Pwo Karen]
 1SG NEG V1:go V2:buy NEG because
 ‘Because I did not go to buy (something), ...’

(34) *jə ʔó lə máo bá ʔəkhócòn ...* [Pwo Karen]
 1SG V1:be NEG V2:comfortable NEG because
 ‘Because I am not healthy, ...’

1.10.1 Concatenated type

In a serial verb construction of the concatenated type, verbs are arranged according to the order of time when the events denoted by the verbs occur. No noun can appear between V1 and V2. Serial verb constructions of this type can be grouped into four patterns in terms of the combination of intransitive and transitive verbs, as is shown in (a) to (d) below. In each of the instances from (a) to (d), there are restrictions on “combination of volitionality” and “argument sharing”.

(a) Intransitive + Intransitive → Intransitive

When V1 and V2 are both intransitive verbs, the entire serial verb construction also functions like an intransitive verb. In this case, both V1 and V2 are volitional verbs. The subject arguments of the two verbs are shared, which can be represented as $S_1=S_2$. (In this paper, S represents the single subject argument of an intransitive verb, A the subject argument of a transitive verb, and O the object argument of a transitive verb. The numbers indicate V1 and V2.) This shared argument occurs as the subject of the whole serial verb construction.

(35) *ʔəwê thàin mí jào* [Pwo Karen]
 3SG return sleep PFV
 ‘He went home and slept.’

(b) Intransitive + Transitive → Transitive

When V1 is an intransitive verb and V2 is a transitive verb, the entire serial verb construction functions like a transitive verb. V1 and V2 are both volitional verbs. The object argument of V2 occurs as the object of the whole construction. The subject arguments of V1 and V2 are shared, which can be represented as

Aikhenvald and Dixon’s (2006) “contiguous serial verb construction” and “non-contiguous serial verb construction”. In *Role and Reference Grammar’s* (see Van Valin and LaPolla 1997) terms, the concatenated type corresponds to “nuclear juncture”, and the separated type to “core juncture”.

$S_1=A_2$. This shared argument occurs as the subject of the whole serial verb construction.

- (36) *jə chînàN ʔókhò ʔəwê* [Pwo Karen]
 1SG sit wait 3SG
 ‘I sat down and waited for him.’

(c) Transitive + Transitive → Transitive

When V1 and V2 are both transitive verbs, the serial verb construction functions like a transitive verb. V1 and V2 are both volitional verbs. The subject arguments of V1 and V2 are shared, which can be represented as $A_1=A_2$. This shared argument occurs as the subject of the whole serial verb construction. The object arguments of the two verbs are usually shared, and the shared argument occurs as the object of the whole construction as in (37) but may not always be shared, as in (38). The object argument of *chúlàn* (V1) in (38) is *jáʔúthî*, and that of *ʔán* (V2) is *mì*. When the object arguments are not shared, as in this case, the object argument of V2 occurs as the object of the whole construction.

- (37) *ʔəwê ʔánphôn ʔán mì* [Pwo Karen]
 3SG cook eat rice
 ‘He cooked and ate rice.’

- (38) *jə chúlàn ʔán mì dē jáʔúthî* [Pwo Karen]
 1SG put.in eat rice with fish.sauce
 ‘I put fish sauce in the rice and ate the rice.’

It is noteworthy that the object noun in (37) cannot be placed between the two verbs. Thus, (39) is ungrammatical:

- (39) **ʔəwê ʔánphôn mì ʔán* [Pwo Karen]
 3SG cook rice eat
 Intended meaning: ‘He cooked and ate rice.’

In Pwo Karen, a noun can occur between the two verbs only in the case of the separated type of verb serialization, in which V2 denotes a result or possibility. Solnit (1997: 56-57) points out that “Karenic languages show a preference for immediate concatenation of verbs.” This is also true of Pwo Karen.

(d) Transitive + Intransitive → Transitive

When V1 is a transitive verb and V2 is an intransitive verb, the entire serial verb construction functions like a transitive verb. In this case, V1 is a volitional verb, and V2 is a non-volitional verb. The object argument of V1 and the subject argument of V2 are shared, which can be represented as $O_1=S_2$. This shared argument occurs as the object of the whole serial verb construction, while the subject argument of V1 occurs as the subject of the whole construction.

- (40) jə dó θî thwí [Pwo Karen]
 1SG hit die dog
 ‘I hit the dog intending to kill it.’

1.10.2 Separated type

In separate type serialization, the object noun of V1 can occur between V1 and V2. The separated type differs largely from the concatenated type in this respect. An adpositional phrase modifying V1 may also occur between the verbs. There are restrictions on types of verbs and argument sharing in the separated type, as shown in (i) and (ii) below:

- (i) V2 is always non-volitional, and it is usually intransitive. There is no restriction on volitionality and valency in V1.
 (ii) Some arguments of V1 and V2 need to be shared, but there is no restriction on the combination of shared arguments; thus, $S_1=S_2$, $A_1=S_2$, and $O_1=S_2$ are all possible.

Semantically, there are two cases in the separated type. One is the case in which V2 denotes an accidental result caused by the event denoted by V1. This case is the same as the concatenated type in that the verbs are arranged according to chronological order. However, unlike the concatenated type, the object of V1 can appear between V1 and V2, as can be seen in (41) through (43).

- (41) jə ʔán mî blè jàʊ [Pwo Karen]
 1SG eat rice full PFV
 ‘I ate rice and got full.’ ($S_1=S_2$)
- (42) mijò bá k̄ā θî [Pwo Karen]
 cat bump car die
 ‘A cat bumped into a car and died.’ ($A_1=S_2$)
- (43) jə dó thwí θî mèn [Pwo Karen]
 1SG hit dog die naturally
 ‘When I hit the dog, it died.’ ($O_1=S_2$)

The difference between (43) and (40) is noteworthy. These examples are the same in that the argument sharing is $O_1=S_2$, but their meanings are quite different. In (40), the death of the dog was intended by the agent of V1, whereas the death of the dog was not intended but happened accidentally in (43).

The other is the case in which V2 denotes possibility, ability, or permission. In this case, no chronological relationship is observed between the events denoted by V1 and V2. See (44):

- (44) ʔəwê nân k̄ā θî [Pwo Karen]
 3SG drive car can
 ‘He can drive a car.’

1.10.3 Serial verb constructions in Sgaw Karen

Next, we will observe the Sgaw Karen serial verb constructions semantically corresponding to the Pwo Karen constructions that we have discussed above. For more details on Sgaw Karen serial verb constructions, see Kato [加藤] (1992) and Weinhold (2011). Jones (1961) also offers a description of Sgaw Karen verb serialization.

First, we will examine the concatenated type. As is shown below, it is possible to make semantically corresponding serial verb constructions to (35) through (38) and (40):

(35') ʔəwé kē mí lí [Sgaw Karen]
 3SG return sleep PFV
 'He went home and slept.'

(36') jə shênō ʔôkhóʔ ʔō [Sgaw Karen]
 1SG sit wait 3SG
 'I sat down and waited for him.'

(37') ʔəwé phó ʔô mē [Sgaw Karen]
 3SG cook eat rice
 'He cooked and ate rice.'

(38') jə shwílō ʔô mī dóʔ nâʔûthí [Sgaw Karen]
 1SG put.in eat rice with fish.sauce
 'I put fish sauce in the rice and ate the rice.'

(40') jə tò thí thwî [Sgaw Karen]
 1SG hit die dog
 'I hit the dog intending to kill it.'

As is the case of Pwo Karen, the object noun in (37') cannot be placed between V1 and V2. Thus, *ʔəwé phó mē ʔô (3SG / cook / rice / eat) is ungrammatical.

In the case of the separated type, some of the semantically corresponding serial verb constructions are acceptable, but some are unacceptable. As for (41), the corresponding construction (41') is acceptable:

(41') jə ʔô mē blé lí [Sgaw Karen]
 1SG eat rice full PFV
 'I ate rice and got full.'

The construction (44') corresponding to (44), which denotes ability, is also acceptable:

(44') ʔəwé nó ká thé [Sgaw Karen]
 3SG drive car can
 'He can drive a car.'

Nevertheless, (42') below, which corresponds to (42) above, is unacceptable. The intended meaning must be expressed by using two separate clauses, as shown in (42'')

(42') *θâmíjṅ bātêʔ ló ká θí [Sgaw Karen]
 cat bump with car die
 Intended meaning: 'A cat bumped into a car and died.'

(42'') θâmíjṅ bātêʔ ló ká dṣʔ θí [Sgaw Karen]
 cat bump with car and die
 'A cat bumped into a car and died.'

Similarly, (43') below, which corresponds to (43) above, is unacceptable. The intended meaning must be expressed by using two separate clauses, as shown in (43'')

(43') *jə tò thwî θí wé [Sgaw Karen]
 1SG hit dog die EMP
 Intended meaning: 'When I hit the dog, it died.'

(43'') jə tò thwî dṣʔ ʔə θí wé [Sgaw Karen]
 1SG hit dog and 3SG die EMP
 'When I hit the dog, it died.'

It may follow from these that in Sgaw Karen, unlike in Pwo Karen, accidental results, as expressed in (42) and (43), cannot be expressed with a serial verb construction.

1.11 Comparison with Burmese, Mon, and Thai

At least three languages can be listed among those with which Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen have most frequent contact in Myanmar and Thailand today: Burmese, Mon, and Thai. I have attempted to compare the characteristics of the word order of Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen, which we have seen above, with those of Burmese, Mon, and Thai. Table 1 summarizes the results. In this table, Pwo Karen is taken as the criterion of comparison, and when each language shows the same order as Pwo Karen, it is represented by a gray background. Judgments of Burmese and Thai are based on the author's knowledge of these languages. As for Mon, judgments are made referring to the description of Jenny (2014) and the author's own data.

Table 1: Comparison of word order between Burmese, Pwo Karen, Sgaw Karen, Mon, and Thai

	Burmese	Pwo Karen	Sgaw Karen	Mon	Thai
1	SOV	SVO	SVO	SVO	SVO
2	house + at	at + house	at + house	at + house	at + house
3	fish + big + big big + fish	fish + big	fish + big	fish + big	fish + big
4	fish + three + NC	fish + three + NC	fish + three + NC	fish + three	fish + three + NC
5	this + fish	fish + this	fish + this	fish + this	fish + this
6	teacher + house	teacher + house	teacher + house	house + teacher	house + teacher
7	RC + NOUN	NOUN + RC	NOUN + RC	NOUN + RC	NOUN + RC
8	RC + NOUN	RC + NOUN	NOUN + RC	NOUN + RC	NOUN + RC
9	fast + eat	eat + fast	eat + fast	eat + fast	eat + fast
10	go + Q	go + Q	go + Q	go + Q	go + Q
11	what + eat + Q	eat + what + Q	eat + what + Q	eat + what + Q	eat + what
12	not1 + come + not2	come + not	not1 + come + not2	not + come	not + come
13	not + come	not1 + come + not2	not1 + come + not2	not + come	not + come
14	yes (without Type (d))	yes	yes	yes (without Type (d))	no
15	no	yes	yes	yes	yes

Number 1 concerns basic word order. S, V, and O represent Subject, Verb, and Object.

Number 2 concerns the order of noun and adposition. The noun is represented by “house” and the adposition is represented by “at” for ease of understanding.

Number 3 concerns the order of noun and stative verb (adjective). The noun is represented by “fish”, and the stative verb is represented by “big”. In Burmese, the meaning ‘big fish’ is expressed by using *há cíjí* or *cí=dê há*. The word *cíjí* is a reduplicated form of *cí* ‘big’, and *cí=dê* is the verb *cí* cliticized with the adnominal marker =*tê*/=*dê*. In Table 1, the pattern of *há cíjí* is represented by “fish + big + big”, and the pattern of *cí=dê há* is represented by “big + fish”. Although the former is like Pwo Karen in that the stative verb occurs after the noun, reduplication is employed in Burmese, and a reduplicated form of a verb can be considered a kind of noun (for this discussion, see Kato 2013). Thus, I judged that the pattern of Burmese differs from Pwo Karen. Note that Burmese

also has the expression *ηá-jí* ‘big fish’,⁵ but we can consider this a compound noun consisting of *ηá* and *cí*.

Number 4 concerns the order of noun and numeral. The noun is represented by “fish”, and the numeral is represented by “three”. NC represents a numeral classifier. To the exclusion of Mon, when a numeral modifies the noun, a numeral classifier is required.

Number 5 concerns the order of noun and demonstrative. The noun is represented by “fish”, and the demonstrative is represented by “this”.

Number 6 concerns the order of possessor noun and possessed noun. The former is represented by “teacher” and the latter is represented by “house”.

Numbers 7 and 8 concern the order of noun and relative clause. The head noun is represented by “NOUN”, and the relative clause is represented by “RC”. Number 7 is a case in which the subject is relativized, and Number 8 is a case in which a non-subject noun is relativized. As discussed in 1.5, since Pwo Karen uses different orders in the cases of subject and non-subject, we must divide the cases in this way.

Number 9 concerns the order of verb and adverb. The verb is represented by “eat” and the adverb is represented by “fast”.

Number 10 concerns the position of the polar question marker as related to the verb. The question marker is represented by Q, and the verb is represented by “go”. In all the languages concerned, the question marker occurs in the sentence-final position.

Number 11 concerns the position of content question marker as related to the verb. The question marker is represented by Q, the verb is represented by “eat”, and the interrogative word is represented by “what”. All the languages except Thai place the question marker in the sentence-final position. Thus, it can be concluded that Thai alone differs from the other languages.

Number 12 concerns the order of verb and negative marker in the main clause. The verb is represented by “come” and the negative marker is represented by “not”. In Burmese and Sgaw Karen, two negative markers appear before the verb and clause-finally. Thus, the former is represented by “not1” and the latter is represented by “not2”.

Number 13 concerns the order of verb and negative marker in the subordinate clause. The verb is represented by “come” and the negative marker is represented by “not”. In Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen, two negative markers appear before the verb and clause-finally. Thus, the former is represented by “not1” and the latter is represented by “not2”.

Number 14 concerns whether the languages have the concatenated type of verb serialization. In Thai, in a serial verb construction like *hǔŋ kin* (cook / eat), the object of V1 can always appear between the verbs as in *hǔŋ khâaw kin* (cook / rice / eat), thus it can be concluded that Thai does not have the concatenated type of serialization. As mentioned in 1.10.1 and 1.10.3, the serial verb construction like Thai *hǔŋ khâaw kin* is ungrammatical in Pwo and Sgaw.

⁵ Burmese also has the expressions *ηá ʔǎ-cí* and *ηá ʔǎ-cí-jí*. *ʔǎ-* in both expressions is a nominalizing prefix, and *-jí* in the latter is an augmentative that comes from the stative verb *cí*.

Burmese and Mon have concatenated type verb serialization.⁶ However, they do not have the verb serialization of Type (d) shown in 1.10.1 (the pattern of $O_1=S_2$). Therefore, they are noted as “without Type (d)”.

Number 15 concerns whether the languages have the separated type of verb serialization. The separated type of verb serialization is a construction in which a noun can occur between V1 and V2. Burmese does not have this kind of serialization. In Pwo Karen, serialization of this type is possible when V2 denotes a result or possibility/ability/permission, and in Sgaw Karen, this type is possible when V2 denotes possibility/ability/permission. In Mon, this type is also possible, at least when V2 denotes possibility/ability/permission. Thus, “no” is placed in the Burmese column only.

Although we have seen the order of verb and auxiliary in 1.7, since the order of verb and auxiliary varies in both Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen, I excluded it from the table.

Looking at Table 1 allows us to conclude that when we compare Karen with Burmese, Mon, and Thai in terms of word order, Mon is the most like Karen. Nevertheless, none of these languages decisively resembles Pwo Karen or Sgaw Karen. Therefore, from the viewpoint of word order, it is difficult to conjecture which language has had most impact on Karen, if any.

2. Loanwords

Here, we will delve further into the relationships between Karen and its surrounding languages in terms of the loanwords existing in Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen. It is possible to judge whether the borrowing of a certain word occurred prior to the split of Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen, or prior to the split of Eastern Pwo Karen and Western Pwo Karen.

Table 2 shows how the Proto-Karen tones (represented as 1,2,2',3)⁷ reconstructed by Haudricourt (1946, 1975) have changed in Pwo Karen (the Hpa-an dialect) and Sgaw Karen (the Hpa-an dialect). B, M, and H represent initial consonant groups of Proto-Karen. Roughly speaking, B is the group of voiced consonants, M is the group of voiceless non-aspirated stops, and H is the group of voiceless aspirated stops and voiceless fricatives and sonorants. The Proto-Karen tones split in this way according to the types of initial consonants. The tonal split in Karen resembles that of the Tai languages in that tones split according to three types of initial consonants. For the details of Haudricourt's

⁶ According to Michihiro Wada (p.c.), an anthropologist who has been working on Mon both in Myanmar and Thailand, Mon speakers on the Myanmar side arrange the words as “cook + eat + rice” when they want to say ‘cook and eat rice’, while Mon speakers on the Thai side arrange the words as “cook + rice + eat”. Therefore, Mon on the Thai side is not likely to have concatenated type serialization. Table 1 treats Mon on the Myanmar side because Myanmar is the main place where Karen and Mon have had extensive contact.

⁷ Luangthongkum (2013, 2019) claims that Haudricourt's (1975) reconstruction of Tone 2' is unnecessary. However, as I discussed in Kato (2018), reconstructing Tone 2' can well explain the tonal changes that occurred in the transition from Proto-Karen to modern Karen languages.

reconstruction of Proto-Karen tones, see Kato (2018) (for the tonal split of the Tai languages, see Li 1977).

Table 2: Proto-Karen tones and the tones of Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen

	1 (plain)	2 (plain)	2' (plain)	3 (checked)
B	Pwo /à/[11] : Sgaw /ā/[33]	Pwo /ā/[33] : Sgaw /à/[11]	/	Pwo /á/[55] : Sgaw /àʔ/[11]
M	Pwo /à/[11] : Sgaw /á/[55]	Pwo /á/[55] : Sgaw /â/[51]	Pwo /á/[55] : Sgaw /á/[55]	Pwo /à/[11] : Sgaw /áʔ/[44]
H	Pwo /â/[51] : Sgaw /á/[55]	Pwo /á/[55] : Sgaw /â/[51]	Pwo /á/[55] : Sgaw /á/[55]	Pwo /à/[11] : Sgaw /áʔ/[44]

When Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen have loanwords from another language that are possibly cognate, if their tones match the correspondence pattern in Table 2, those loanwords can be considered to have been borrowed before the split of Pwo and Sgaw. On the contrary, if they do not match this pattern, they were probably borrowed after the split of Pwo and Sgaw.

Furthermore, let us examine Table 3, which shows how Eastern Pwo Karen (abbreviated as “EP”) and Western Pwo Karen (abbreviated as “WP”) tones correspond to each other. Eastern Pwo Karen is spoken in Karen State, Mon State, Tanintharyi Region, and western Thailand, and Western Pwo Karen is spoken around the Ayeyarwady (Irrawaddy) Delta. In this paper, we use the forms of the Hpa-an dialect for Eastern Pwo Karen and those of the Kyonbyaw (Kyonpyaw) dialect for Western Pwo Karen. When Eastern Pwo Karen and Western Pwo Karen have loanwords from another language that are possibly cognate, if their tones match the correspondence pattern in Table 3, those loanwords can be considered to have been borrowed before the split of Eastern Pwo Karen and Western Pwo Karen. On the contrary, if they do not match this pattern, they were probably borrowed after the split of Eastern Pwo and Western Pwo.

Table 3: Tonal correspondence pattern of Eastern Pwo Karen and Western Pwo Karen

	1 (plain)	2 (plain)	2' (plain)	3 (checked)
B	EP /à/[11] : WP /á/[55]	EP /ā/[33] : WP /â/[51]	/	EP /á/[55] : WP /aʔ/[51ʔ]
M	EP /à/[11] : WP /á/[55]	EP /á/[55] : WP /â/[11]	EP /á/[55] : WP /â/[11]	EP /à/[11] : WP /aʔ/[51ʔ]
H	EP /â/[51] : WP /à/[11]	EP /á/[55] : WP /â/[11]	EP /á/[55] : WP /â/[11]	EP /à/[11] : WP /aʔ/[51ʔ]

If loanwords that are possibly cognate among Eastern Pwo, Western Pwo, and Sgaw do not match either the patterns of Tables 2 or 3, those loanwords can be considered to have been borrowed separately into each of the three languages.

Based on the method explained by Gudschinsky (1956) using Swadesh’s 200 word list, I estimated that the split of Eastern and Western Pwo Karen occurred

in the 17th century (Kato [加藤] 1999). Using the same method, the split of Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen is estimated to have taken place in the 11th century.

The data from the three languages that were used here were collected in the course of my fieldwork.

2.1 Cases in which Eastern Pwo, Western Pwo, and Sgaw show regular correspondences

Listed below are loanwords that show regular correspondences among Eastern Pwo Karen, Western Pwo Karen, and Sgaw Karen. EP, WP, and S stand for Eastern Pwo, Western Pwo, and Sgaw, respectively. Shown after the mark “¶” are modern forms of possible source languages. The Modern Mon forms are from Sakamoto [坂本] (1994), and after them Shorto’s (1962) literary forms are shown in angle brackets “< >”. After the Modern Burmese forms, whose transcription follows Kato [加藤] (2019b), the so-called Written Burmese forms are also shown in angle brackets.

- EP *pàintàrân* WP *tàràn* S *pétró* ‘window, door’ ¶ Mon *taʔraŋ*, *paŋtaʔraŋ*
<paŋtarān>
 EP *tələ* WP *tələ* S *tələ* ‘box’ ¶ Mon *kaʔla* <kālā>
 EP *thòUN* WP *thòUN* S *thâ* ‘bag’ ¶ Mon *thaəŋ* <thuiŋ>, Thai *thŭŋ*, Shan
thōŋ
 EP *pəlân* WP *pəlân* S *pələ* ‘bottle’ ¶ Mon *paʔlaŋ* <palān>, Burmese *palin*
<pu lang:>
 EP *càkhô* WP *saʔkhàu* S *sáʔkhó* ‘paper’ ¶ Mon *cakkhau* <cakkho>
 EP *phjá* WP *phjá* S *phjá* ‘market’ ¶ Mon *phya* <phyā>
 EP *kəbàn* WP *kəbàn* S *kəbó* ‘ship’ ¶ Mon *kaʔbaŋ* <kbaŋ>
 EP *θəŋi* WP *θəné* S *θəné* ‘harbor, landing place’ ¶ Mon *hneh* <sneh>
 EP *lái* WP *leiʔ* S *liʔ* ‘script’ ¶ Mon *ləc* <lik>
 EP *pəráN* WP *pərà* S *pərə* ‘news’ ¶ Mon *paʔraəŋ* <paruiŋ>
 EP *tàv* WP *tuʔ* S *táʔ* ‘building’ ¶ Mon *taək* <tuik>, Burmese *taiʔ* <tuik>
 EP *təwàn* WP *təwàn* S *θəwó* ‘village’ ¶ Mon *kwan* <twān>
 EP *kəmá* WP *kəmá* S *kəmá* ‘pond’ ¶ Mon *kaʔma* <kamā>
 EP *pədə* WP *pədə* S *pədə* ‘rabbit’ ¶ Mon *haʔtai* <batāy>
 EP *phlə* WP *phláu* S *xɔ̄* ‘coconut tree’ ¶ Mon *prèə* <brau>
 EP *báN* WP *bàn* S *bô* ‘bamboo shoot’ ¶ Mon *baŋ* <bañ>
 EP *kəli* WP *kriʔ* S *kráʔ* ‘be suitable’ ¶ Mon *kraək* <krak>
 EP *pətháv* WP *pəthəuʔ* S *pətuùʔ* ‘to stop’ ¶ Mon *təʔ*, *pətəʔ* <padui>
 EP *thòUN* WP *thòUN* S *tù* ‘to bear, endure’ ¶ Mon *təŋ* <duŋ>
 EP *klicì* WP *kleʔsiʔ* S *kléʔsáʔ* ‘to endeavor’ ¶ Mon *kleʔ* *cvt* <kleʔ cuit>

Only borrowings from Mon show regular correspondences among the three languages. The words meaning ‘bottle’ and ‘building’ also resemble the Burmese form; however, considering that most of the other borrowings are from Mon, they are likely not to be borrowings from Burmese. Similarly, although the words meaning ‘bag’ also resemble the Thai and Shan forms, they are likely not from Thai or Shan. The forms listed above can be presumed to be old loanwords that were borrowed before the split of Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen.

2.2 Cases in which Western Pwo and Sgaw show regular correspondences

In the correspondence shown below, only Western Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen have a regular correspondence. The Eastern Pwo Karen form is bracketed because it is not cognate with the other forms.

(EP *māchəmàì*) WP *pànlê* S *pôlê* ‘sea’ ¶ Burmese *pìnlê* <pang lay>

Usually, loanwords showing regular correspondences between Western Pwo and Sgaw also show regular correspondences with Eastern Pwo Karen, as is the case for the forms listed in 2.1. However, the Eastern Pwo Karen form meaning ‘sea’ is *māchəmàì*, and this is related to the Mon *hmahmac*, *saʔmasaʔmac* <mhā samit>. The author believes that this situation can be explained as follows: the forms WP *pànlê* and S *pôlê* can be traced back to a loanword that was borrowed from Burmese before the split of Pwo and Sgaw, but Eastern Pwo Karen replaced this word of Burmese origin with a borrowed word from Mon.

2.3 Cases in which Eastern Pwo and Sgaw show regular correspondences

Below are loanwords that show regular correspondences between Eastern Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen. The Western Pwo Karen forms are bracketed because they are not cognate with the forms of the other languages. The Western Pwo Karen forms meaning ‘island’ and ‘toddy palm’ are probably related to the Burmese forms *cún* (WB <kywan:>, Inscription Burmese <klywan:>) and *thán* (Written Burmese <than:>), respectively.

EP *kò* (WP *klóun*) S *kóʔ* ‘island’ ¶ Mon *kɔʔ* <tkaʔ>

EP *tà* (WP *thàn*) S *tá* ‘toddy palm’ ¶ Mon *ta* <tā>

Usually, loanwords showing regular correspondences between Eastern Pwo and Sgaw also show regular correspondences with Western Pwo, as is the case for the forms listed in 2.1. In each case of the two correspondences above, the Eastern Pwo and Sgaw forms can probably be traced back to a loanword that was borrowed before the split of Pwo and Sgaw, but in Western Pwo Karen, the cognate loanword of Mon origin was replaced with a Burmese loanword later. The Eastern Pwo and Sgaw forms meaning ‘island’ also resemble the Thai word *kòʔ* ‘island’, but it seems reasonable to suppose that they come from Mon because older loanwords are of Mon origin in many cases.

2.4 Cases in which Eastern Pwo and Western Pwo show regular correspondences

Below are loanwords that show regular correspondences between Eastern Pwo Karen and Western Pwo Karen. These forms can be considered loanwords that were borrowed sometime during the period between the split of Pwo and Sgaw and that of Eastern and Western Pwo.

EP *tàN* WP *tá* (S *tà*) ‘pillar’ ¶ Mon *taəŋ* <tuiñ>, Burmese *tàin* <tuing>
 EP *chàrà* WP *shàrà* (S *θàrà*) ‘teacher’ ¶ Burmese *shǎyà* <cha raa>
 EP *pō* WP *phô* (S *phá?*) ‘to read’ ¶ Mon *pòh* <bah>, Burmese *pha?*
 <phat>

The forms meaning ‘pillar’ can be of either Mon or Burmese origin. Although the Sgaw Karen form *tà* is like the Eastern and Western Pwo forms, we can conclude that it was borrowed separately into Sgaw Karen because it does not have a regular correspondence with the other forms.

The forms meaning ‘teacher’ in the three languages are probably borrowed from Burmese. However, since the Sgaw Karen form *θàrà* does not show a regular correspondence with Eastern and Western Pwo, we can conclude that it was also borrowed separately into Sgaw Karen. The initial consonant of the first syllable *θ* does not usually correspond to EP *ch* or WP *sh*. This fact can also be considered evidence to support the conclusion that it is a separate borrowing.

The Eastern Pwo Karen and Western Pwo Karen forms meaning ‘to read’ are both borrowings from Mon. Aspiration of the initial consonant of the Western Pwo form can be ascribed to the influence of the Burmese form. The Sgaw Karen form is a borrowing from Burmese.

2.5 Cases in which no regular correspondence is found

Here, we will examine the cases in which no regular correspondence is found among loanwords in the three languages. It can be concluded that they were borrowed separately into each language.

Below are cases in which the form of a single language is a borrowing from Mon or Burmese. The forms without brackets are loanwords, and the bracketed forms are native Karen words.

EP *lé* (WP *nòkhù*) (S *nóké*) ‘stick’ ¶ Mon *lè?* <le’>
 (EP *châin*) WP *pàlou?* (S *shé*) ‘shirt’ ¶ Mon *pa?lv?* <palo’>
 EP *páichân* (WP *sé*) (S *sé*) ‘money’ ¶ Burmese *pai?shàn* <puik chaM>
 EP *pəti* (WP *me?*) (S *mé?*) ‘sand’ ¶ Mon *ha?tvi* <batī, bī>
 EP *kəlōv* (WP *shamá*) (S *tāmā*) ‘work, job’ ¶ Mon *kəlon* <klon>
 EP *θəná* (WP *dúudá*) (S *dúudá*) ‘enemy’ ¶ Mon *hna?* <sna>
 EP *plài* (WP *má pháunphle?*) (S *mā pūphlé?*) ‘to save’ ¶ Mon *prac*
 <prāk>
 EP *pò* (WP *θi*) (S *θi*) ‘(A monk) dies’ ¶ Mon *pə* <paw>
 EP *kəná* (WP *yài*) (S *hé*) ‘(A monk) comes’ ¶ Mon *na?* <kña>

As can be seen from these, only Eastern Pwo Karen often has a borrowing from Mon. This reflects the fact that their areas of settlement are near those of the Mon today.

In the next sample, the Eastern Pwo Karen form is a borrowing from Thai, and the Western Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen forms are borrowings from Burmese. It can be concluded that the Western Pwo and Sgaw forms were borrowed from Burmese separately into each language because their tones do not show a regular correspondence.

EP *ləkōN* WP *pjaʔzaʔ* S *pjāzā* ‘drama, play’ ¶ Thai *laʔkhɔɔn*, Burmese *pyázaʔ* <pra jaat>

The samples shown below are all borrowings from Burmese. Despite the fact that the forms of all three languages are borrowings from the same Burmese words, no two of them show a regular correspondence. Thus, each of these forms was borrowed into each language separately.

EP *cəpwē* WP *səpwé* S *səpwé* ‘desk, table’ ¶ Burmese *zəbwé* <caa: pwai>
 EP *cé* WP *séʔ* S *séʔ* ‘machine’ ¶ Burmese *séʔ* <cak>
 EP *pēiN* WP *béiN* S *bé* ‘wheel’ ¶ Burmese *béiN* <bhii:>
 EP *θó* WP *θó* S *θó* ‘sheep’ ¶ Burmese *ʔó* <sui:>

The words shown below are English loanwords, but it is highly possible that they were borrowed via Burmese. In this case as well, no two of the languages show a regular correspondence.

EP *kā* WP *ká* S *ká* ‘car’ ¶ English *car*, Burmese *ká* <kaa:>

There are many loanwords that do not show a regular correspondence between any two of Eastern Pwo, Western Pwo, and Sgaw. Besides the loanwords listed above, there are many more. They include many loanwords that have been borrowed very recently. Today, on the Myanmar side, both Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen have many Burmese loanwords; likewise, on the Thai side, both languages have many Thai loanwords. Such words never show a regular tonal correspondence.

2.6 What can be inferred from loanwords

Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen have many loanwords that were borrowed from Mon before the time when Pwo Karen and Sgaw split. Therefore, we can presume that the language contact between Karen and Mon happened at a very early stage, before the split of Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen.

The time when Karen began to have contact with the Burmese language is much more recent by comparison with Mon because the borrowing words from Burmese do not show a regular tonal correspondence between any two of the Karen languages, with the exception of the words meaning ‘sea’. Today, Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen both have extensive contact with Burmese. However, the extensive contact of Pwo Karen with Burmese happened only after the split of Eastern and Western Pwo Karen. Considering that the Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen generally live in proximity to each other, it can be assumed that the extensive contact of Sgaw Karen with Burmese also happened after the split of Eastern and Western Pwo Karen.

Traces of contact with Tai languages, including Thai and Shan are not found often, at least in Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen on the Myanmar side. Eastern Pwo Karen has a few Thai loanwords, but they are very recent additions. Therefore,

based on what we have observed in Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen, we can say that their contact with Tai languages is very new, as is also the case with Burmese.

In this study the dates of borrowing are estimated on the basis of tonal correspondences only; however, if we also took correspondences of consonants and vowels into consideration, we could arrive at more accurate judgments, although the regularly corresponding forms discussed above also seem to show regular correspondences of consonants and vowels.

3. Conclusion

It is difficult to determine what sorts of contact Karen has had with surrounding languages by examining word order. However, from the viewpoint of loanwords, it is possible to presume that Karen had contact with Mon at a very early stage. Its contact with Burmese or Tai languages is relatively recent. Nevertheless, we cannot conclude from this that Proto-Karen changed its SOV-type word order into SVO due to contact with Mon. Out of the Karen languages that I have researched, Geba, for example, seems to have fewer Mon loanwords than Pwo Karen or Sgaw Karen. Thus, although it is certain that Mon had an influence on the immediate ancestor of Pwo and Sgaw, we cannot say that it had an influence on Proto-Karen, the language of an earlier generation. Manson (2009) suggests contact with Palaungic, stating the following⁸:

The source of these Mon-Khmer loans has usually been assigned to Mon, which is spoken in the southern region of modern-day Burma. However, a comparison of the list in Luce (1985 “Chart E”) with Shorto’s Mon-Khmer reconstruction shows a greater connection with the Palaungic branch of Mon-Khmer rather than the Mon branch.

Therefore, we must also survey elements originating from Palaungic in the Karenic languages in the future study.⁹

Abbreviations

1 = first person; 2 = second person; 3 = third person; A = subject argument of a transitive verb; EMP = emphasis; EP = Eastern Pwo Karen; IRR = irrealis; LOC = particle denoting Location, Source, and Goal; NC = numeral classifier; NEG = negation; O = object argument of a transitive verb; PFV = perfective; PL = plural; Q = question marker; RC = relative clause; S = subject argument of an intransitive verb or Sgaw Karen; SG = singular; Vpt = verb particle; WB = Written Burmese; WP = Western Pwo Karen.

⁸ In Manson’s words quoted here, “Shorto’s Mon-Khmer reconstruction” probably refers to the reconstruction of Shorto (2006).

⁹ Luce’s (1985) Charts E, F, G, H, I, J show a comparative vocabulary of Karenic languages and are highly worthy of being examined. Looking into Yamada’s (2008) descriptive grammar of Wa, a palaungic language, gives the impression that Wa is quite different from Karen in morphosyntax, including its VSO word order.

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