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# NEGATIVES BETWEEN CHAMIC AND BAHNARIC<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The paper deals with the verb embracing double negation found in both Chamic and Bahnaric languages and with the question how it developed. We propose both an internal and external explanation. The former relates to what is called a ‘Jespersen Cycle’, a hypothesis about the renewal of single negation out of double negation, itself developing out of another single negation. The latter is language interference from Chamic to Bahnaric. We argue that the Jespersen Cycle hypothesis is more plausible for Chamic, thus revisiting Lee (1996), and that the language contact hypothesis makes more sense for Bahnaric, thus supporting a more general hypothesis about the direction of interference between the two families (Sidwell 2008: 261, 265).

**Keywords:** negation, Jespersen Cycle, language contact

**ISO 639-3 codes:** bda, cja, cje, cjm, hro, jra, krr, rad, rog, stt

## 1 Introduction

Within the larger Austronesian phylum the Chamic languages are special – though not unique – in that they express standard negation, i.e. the negation of verbal main declarative clauses (Miestamo 2005), with two markers, one before the verb and one following the verb. The question is why this should be the case. Is it an internal development, more particularly, is it the result of a process found in other parts of the world and that is usually called ‘Jespersen’s Cycle’ or ‘a Jespersen Cycle’? Or is there (also) an external explanation? Is the double exponence due to language contact, for we know – and this makes the Chamic languages special in a second way – that they have been in close contact with Austro-Asiatic languages, for some two thousand years, mostly in what is now Southern Vietnam. We know that double negation is also found Bahnaric languages and, what has not been noticed before, as far as we know, is that the two families share some of the negators. Of course, the presence of double negation in two unrelated families does not betray the direction of the interference.

The puzzling double negation of the Chamic languages has been investigated before, viz. by Lee (1996). It is time, however, to address the puzzle again. Though the description of both Chamic and Bahnaric remains suboptimal, we have nevertheless made some progress in the last twenty years. Also, the areal perspective adopted in Lee is not ideal. The bipartite negation of Chamic is only compared – and very succinctly – to Vietnamese, Khmer, Chrau and Thai (Lee 1996: 312; see also Grant 2005: 75). The more relevant areal comparison is with Bahnaric, indeed including Chrau, but not Vietnamese, Khmer or Thai. Another justification for revisiting Lee (1996) is that we have learnt a lot more about the general process of the Jespersen Cycle. In section 2 we briefly discuss the latter. In sections 3 and 4 we discuss negation in the

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Chamic and Bahnaric languages, respectively. In section 5 we compare the negation in the two families. Section 6 is the conclusion.

## 2 The Jespersen Cycles

In 1979 Dahl coined the term ‘Jespersen’s Cycle’ for the process through which e.g. French is developing a postverbal negator *pas* from a preverbal negator *ne* through a stage in which both are present. (1) is a present-day French example – the construction in (1a) is ungrammatical now, (1b) is formal French and (1c) is informal, esp. spoken French.

(1a) *Je ne te vois*  
 I NEG you see  
 ‘I don’t see you’

(1b) *Je ne te vois pas*  
 I NEG you see NEG  
 ‘I don’t see you’

(1c) *Je te vois pas*  
 I you see NEG  
 ‘I don’t see you’

The original meaning of *pas*, which survives to this day, is ‘step’ and the reason why a word with this meaning could have become a negator is that it must have been used first (before there are historical records) with negative sentences about movement, meaning that someone didn’t even move one step. It is assumed that ‘step’ then lead to the meaning ‘at all’, for if one hasn’t moved a step, one indeed hasn’t moved at all. Then the emphatic ‘not at all’ meaning will have bleached into a non-emphatic ‘not’ meaning. Jespersen, the Danish linguist to which the term refers, didn’t quite explain the process in these terms, but he certainly drew the attention to the phenomenon, in the very first section of the first chapter of his booklet on *Negation in English and other languages* (1917) and he showed that what he called a ‘curious fluctuation’ (Jespersen 1917: 4) is found in various languages. We find it in English too, though the details are different. In English the original negation was *ne*, but the second element was not what is now called a ‘minimizer’, a word referring to a small entity, but a straightforward negative expression *not*, once meaning ‘nothing’.

Since Jespersen (1917) and Dahl (1979) we have increased our understanding of this process, both for the languages of which we already knew that they went through a Jespersen Cycle, i.e. languages of Western Europe and the Mediterranean (see e.g. Willis et al eds 2013) and for languages for which the process had not been documented well, e.g. the Bantu languages (Devos & van der Auwera 2013) or the languages of the America (e.g. van der Auwera & Vossen 2015). Thus we have learned that there are more sources for the second negators than the ones we find in English (or more generally Germanic) and French, that the second negator most typically develops on the right hand side of the verb, though not always, and that the process need not lead from the doubling stage to a simple negator stage, but that it can also, though rarely, result in a tripling and even a quadrupling stage (see van der Auwera 2009, 2010).

Relative to the state of the art just sketched, the article by Lee (1996) must be considered somewhat of a pioneer study in that he explicitly related the double negation facts of Chamic to the ideas of Jespersen (1917) and Dahl (1979). In the mid-nineties the search for Jespersen Cycle outside of Europe had barely started. Lee made clear though that he followed in the footsteps of an earlier pioneer, viz. Early (1993). ‘Early (1993)’ refers to an unpublished conference presentation, the content of which will have resurfaced in Early (1994a, 1994). Early had discovered double, triple and even quadruple negation, he had also related his facts to Jespersen Cycle theorizing, and the language he focused on was also Austronesian, though one that is very far removed, both genetically and geographically, viz. the Lewo language of Vanuatu. Nevertheless, if

Early had persuasively argued for a Jespersen Cycle in one branch of Austronesian, Lee was right in exploring the Chamic languages from the same perspective.

It must also be stressed that Lee (1996) did more than test the Jespersen Cycle on Chamic. Most clearly for Roglai Lee discussed various other aspects of negation, e.g. the negative answer particle ‘No’ or the strategies for expressing ‘not yet’. In what follows our own focus is restricted: we only study double clausal negation and only from the point of view of the Jespersen Cycle, but with the extra twist of studying the relevance of language contact. A further restriction is that we only study standard negation, i.e. negation of verbal main declarative clauses (Miestamo 2005), as in (2). Thus we do not look at the negation in subordinate clauses (as in (3)), in ‘existential’ main declarative clauses (as in (4)) or in prohibitive constructions (as in (5)), nor at negative concord constructions as in (6).

- (2) *The child will not help Ali*
- (3) *I think that the child will not help Ali*
- (4) *Ali is a teacher*
- (5) *Don’t help Ali*
- (6) *I can’t get no satisfaction*

The reason for this limitation is by no means that these constructions are not interesting, only that information on these subtypes of ‘non-standard’ negation is even more suboptimal than that for standard negation. As to the suboptimality of data on standard negation, we will see that we sometimes only know the form of the negator, but not its position, sometimes the grammarians lists more than one negator and does not discuss the differences, if any, and there is bound to be dialectal variation, and we know little about this. Also, when we discuss language contact, we would want to know when, where and how the contact happened, but we don’t. The data are only synchronic descriptions of Chamic<sup>2</sup> and Bahnaric vernaculars of the last 40 years.

### 3 Negation in Chamic

If the double negation of the Chamic languages is due to a Jespersen Cycle, we would ideally like to see this Cycle, i.e. the various stages, reflected in historical data. This may be possible for Eastern Cham, but in this paper we can only look for reflections in synchronic comparative data. One tends to attribute 5 stages to a Jespersen Cycle, from an obligatorily single preverbal negation to an obligatorily single postverbal negation via three doubling stages with both a preverbal and a postverbal negator, viz. one in which the postverbal negator is optional, one in which both parts are obligatory and one which in which the preverbal part is optional.

- (7) Stage 1:           NEG V  
 Stage 2:           NEG N (NEG)  
 Stage 3:           NEG V NEG  
 Stage 4:           (NEG) V NEG  
 Stage 5:           V NEG

<sup>2</sup> For Cham there is a long written tradition but we do not know of any analysis of negation in the older documents.

More often than not the optional postverbal negator of the second stage initially has an emphatic effect, which will subsequently bleach. As long as this element is emphatic, it is not an exponent of standard negation. With respect to negation, we are still only in the first stage. Consider the English sentence (8).

(8) I have not visited Yangon at all

(8) expresses an emphatic negation, and this effect is due to *at all*. It is certainly possible that *at all* will lose its meaning of emphasis and turn into a bleached postverbal negative. This would not be more exotic than what happened with the French *pas* negator, which originally meant ‘step’. But at this stage there is no evidence that *at all* is losing its emphasis. It is true that *at all* is not an ordinary lexical item: it is a negative polarity item, it thus avoids a positive context, different from *certainly*, for example.

(9) \**I have visited Yangon at all*

(10) *I have certainly visited Yangon*

In what follows we will not register markers such as *at all*, unless we see evidence that the same marker shows up in another language as an exponent of standard negation.

Judging from the data, however incomplete they are, we find at least some of the stages reflected in the modern Chamic languages. This is shown in Tables 1 and 2. In these tables, as well as in the one for Bahnaric in the next section, we use the classification and the orthography of the *Ethnologue*. If a language is not in the *Ethnologue* (Lewis et al eds. 2014), we follow the grammar of the language. We do not, however, include Acehnese, spoken on Sumatra. Whether it is Chamic or more distantly related (see Brunelle in print), we exclude it because it is not spoken in Vietnam or Cambodia. By the same token we also exclude Tsat, which is spoken on Hainan, China. Different from the *Ethnologue* and like Lee (1996) we list formal and informal Eastern Cham separately. The data are nearly exclusively taken from Lee (1996) and Thurgood (1999)<sup>3</sup>. The Thurgood data are from an entry in a lexicon and there is no indication about the position of the verb. ‘V’ stands for Verb. In all tables and examples we use the orthography of the sources.

Table 1 reports on the languages that allow a *buh* form as a first negator. For Chru and Rade the two sources are not in agreement. This could be due to idiolect or dialect variation but also to the fact that there is very little information in Thurgood (1999). Different from Lee (1996), we exclude Jorai *bu V tah* (Lee 1996: 302) and informal Eastern Cham *di V ô* and *V kê* (Lee 1996: 305, see also Blood 1977: 40), for these constructions show markers that are associated with emphasis and they do not show up as standard negators (cp. also Moussay 1996: 70, who translates *di V o* as ‘never’). For Jorai the earlier, unpublished Dournes (1964: 129) states that *bbuh*<sup>4</sup> is ‘normally completed’ by the sentence-final *oh*, which means that his Jorai would go in stage 2.

<sup>3</sup> For Cham we also have access to Niemann (1891: 34), Aymonier and Cabaton (1906), and Moussay (2006:70-71). Niemann and Moussay list several negation strategies, but the descriptions are not detailed. Aymonier and Cabaton (1906: 38: 222) state that *o* and its variants can be placed before or after the verb or both before and after, and they imply that *di* can replace the first *o* of a doubling construction.

<sup>4</sup> Editor’s note: Here and throughout the paper data items are reproduced as they are transcribed in the original sources, rather than regularized. In this particular case note that Dournes’ *bb* indicates an implosive stop (as does his *dd*).

**Table 1:** A Jespersen Cycle in the Chamic languages with *buh*<sup>5</sup> as first negator

Stage	Language	Branch	Construction	Source
2	Bih	Highlands	<i>buh</i> V ( <i>ôh</i> ) <i>kĩn</i> V ( <i>rei</i> )	Nguyen 2013: 135-136 Nguyen 2013: 135-136
2 or 3	Chru	Highlands	' <i>buh</i> V ( <i>o'u</i> ) <i>bu</i> ... <i>au</i>	Lee 1996: 307-309 Thurgood 1999: 313
	Rade	Highlands	<i>bu</i> ... ( <i>oh</i> ) <i>amâo</i> V <i>oh</i>	Thurgood 1999: 313 Lee 1996: 301-302, 309
3	Jorai	Highlands	<i>bu</i> V <i>ôh</i> <i>buh</i> ... <i>oh</i>	Lee 1996: 302-303, 309 Thurgood 1999: 313
	Roglai	Highlands	<i>buh</i> V <i>oh</i> <i>buh</i> ... <i>oh</i>	Lee 1996: 292-293, 309; Thurgood 1999: 313
5	Informal Eastern Cham	Coastal	V <i>ô</i>	Blood 1977: 49; Lee 1996: 304-305, 309; Brunelle & Phú in print
	Western Cham	Coastal	V <i>ô</i> <i>o</i>	Baumgartner 1998: 5, 17-19 Thurgood 1999: 313

We illustrate the potential Stages 2, 3 and 5 with examples (11) to (13).

(11) Bih (Nguyen 2013: 135)

*buh nu pau oh*  
NEG 3 CAUS.hungry NEG  
'He won't let him be hungry'

(12) Jorai (Lee 1996: 302)

*kão bu homão prăk ôh*  
I NEG have money NEG  
'I don't have any money'

(13) Western Cham (Baumgartner 1998: 5)

*rean ngăk pap gah nuk matau non ô*  
dare do evil direction child child.in.law that NEG  
'He didn't dare do any more evil things to the son-in-law'

All in all, a Jespersen Cycle hypothesis makes good sense of the data. Not every stage of a possible Jespersen Cycle is represented but at least we see a progression from stage 2 to stage 3 and then, plausibly, stage 5. For the *buh* marker Lee (1996: 300-301) notes that that in Roglai, the language that he knows best, there are two homophones. One is an affirmative particle and the other is the verb 'see' used as an existential verb. Lee (1996: 316) further speculates – for the family as a whole – that the negator *buh* derives from a combination of a negator *oh*, the very same that appears on the right of the verb, and either the affirmative or the existential *buh*, and that *oh* subsequently disappeared. Lee (1996) brings in two points to support this speculation. First, *oh* does in fact appear in preverbal positions in two languages, viz. Haroi and Formal Eastern Cham. This is shown in Table 2 and since in Formal Eastern Cham, preverbal *oh* combines with a postverbal *oh* (*ô* in Table 2), the Cham facts entered as Stage 5 in Table 1 make even more sense in Table 2, not least also because Formal Eastern Cham can be taken to represent an earlier stage than Informal Eastern Cham. The Jespersen Cycle that thus appears is the subtype that repeats the preverbal marker in a postverbal

<sup>5</sup> In the text we use *buh* for all its lookalikes and assumed cognates, thus disregarding the phonetic or orthographic details of the different languages. We will do the same for *oh*.

slot. This is a process for which there is ample cross-linguistic evidence (e.g. Brabant Dutch, Afrikaans, North Italian, Brazilian Portuguese – see van der Auwera 2009).

**Table 2:** A Jespersen Cycle in the Chamic languages with *oh* as first negator

Stage	Language	Branch	Construction	Source
1	Haroi	Coastal	<i>soh/oh V</i> <i>ʔɔh</i>	Lee 1996: 308-309 Thurgood 1999: 313
1 EMPH	Formal Eastern Cham	Coastal	<i>ôh V (ô)</i>	Blood 1977: 40; Lee 1996: 305-306, 309; Thurgood 2005: 504
5	Informal Eastern Cham	Coastal	<i>V ô</i>	Blood 1977: 40; Lee 1996: 304-305, 309; Thurgood 2005: 504
	Western Cham	Coastal	<i>V ô</i> <i>o</i>	Baumgartner 1998: 5, 17-19; Thurgood 1999: 313

Building on Lee (1996) but different from him, we thus envision the possibility of two distinct, though related Jespersen Cycles, one for preverbal negator *buh* and another one for preverbal *oh*. Assuming furthermore that Eastern and Western Cham fit the second Jespersen Cycle better than the first one, we add that the identity of the preverbal marker is specific to the subfamily: *buh* for the Highlands languages and *oh* for the Coastal languages.

A second bit of evidence that Lee offers for the speculation about the original preverbal *buh oh* marking is that in Rade there is an alternative preverbal *amao* with a similar hypothesized etymology, viz. *oh* plus an existential ‘have’ verb. Negative existentials, we add, are a well-documented source of standard negators (Veselinova 2014).

We should add that the speculation that early Chamic had a preverbal *buh oh* marking is not necessary for the plausibility of the Jespersen Cycle. There is nothing ‘wrong’ with attributing different preverbal negators for the two branches. Even within the Highlands languages we have to do that: there is *buh* and *amao* in Rade, and Bih has both *buh* and *kĩn* element. The latter goes with its ‘own’ postverbal marker *rei*.

- (14) *kĩn nu pau rei*  
 NEG 3 CAUS.hungry NEG  
 ‘He won’t let him be hungry’

Both *kin* and *rei* function in constructions other than standard negation: *kin* can be used as an NP-final emphatic negation and *kin ... rei* can also mean ‘not ... either’ (cp. *uroi* in Rogali, Lee 1996: 293, and Cham *o ... rei* ‘not ... either’, Moussay 2006: 71).

- (15) Bih (Nguyen 2013: 138)  
*char kin kao ciang*  
 big.gong NEG I want  
 ‘As for the big gong, I don’t want it’

- (16) Bih (Nguyen 2013: 136)  
*kin kao eieng rei*  
 NEG I want either  
 ‘I don’t want it either’

The development of *kin ... rei* for standard negation must have followed a non-Jespersen road (or a non-classical Jespersen road), although bleaching must be involved too, assuming that the standard negator use of (14) derives from the semantically richer ‘not ... either’ use of (16).

A complication with the proposed etymology of *buh* is that, according to Thurgood (1999: 244, 313), at least the onset of the word suggests that it is borrowed from Mon-Khmer. This is also claimed for the ‘see’ homophone (Thurgood 1999: 352). So perhaps *buh* came from Mon-Khmer as a readymade negator, but the hypothesis that it is borrowed does not rule out that the univerbation of a ‘see’ verb and negator and eventually yielding a *buh* negator happened only in Chamic. One should also mention that not much can be said about the origin of *oh* either (Lee 1996: 315) and Thurgood (1999: 244), while in agreement, thinks that the preglottalized initial also suggests a Mon-Khmer origin. Lee (1996: 315) further states that *oh* does not appear to be related to any other word, except for *soh* ‘nothing’, which actually serves a negator in Haroi, but Lee (1986: 315) would derive *soh* from *oh* (with *sa* ‘one’). Interestingly though, Thurgood (1999: 331), followed by Sidwell (2007: 126), lists *soh* with the meaning ‘only, empty, free, leisure’ and claims that the vowel suggests a Mon-Khmer origin.

To conclude, much is unclear, esp. about the origin of *buh* and *oh*, but to explain the current synchrony of the double negation in Chamic, a Jespersen Cycle hypothesis makes good sense. However, *buh*, *oh* and even *soh* might be borrowed from Mon-Khmer. The Mon-Khmer languages spoken in the vicinity of Chamic – and for a very long time – are the Bahnaric ones. They too show double negation, and even with *oh*. Let us first see in what form the doubling pattern occurs and whether the Jespersen Cycle could offer an explanation.

#### 4 Negation in Bahnaric

As far as we know there is no overview study of negation of the type that Lee (1996) provided for Chamic and nobody has paid any attention to the double negation pattern found in these languages.<sup>6</sup> Like for the Chamic languages, we can only survey the synchronic variation and, if a Jespersen Cycle is relevant, one would ideally like to see the various stages reflected in synchronic variation. Table 3 shows the data. For 5 of the languages we only know the form of the negator, not the position, the reason being that the data come from word lists. However, since the Bahnaric family seems to prefer preverbal negation<sup>7</sup> and because we see at least a few lookalikes as clear preverbal negatives in other Bahnaric languages, we list them – with a question mark – at the single preverbal stage 1. For Rengao we also add a question mark, because our classification is only based on examples and not on a claim by Rengao’s linguist Gregerson. For Chrau Thomas (1971L 57, 144) lists many preverbal particles, but without further analysis or good examples – Thomas (1971: 183-184) also mentions 3 sentence particles (viz. *uy, dang and nôq*), which may co-occur with at least some of the preverbal ones, but they are all emphatic and because we don’t see any Bahnaric lookalike that has bleached to standard negation, they are excluded. The lack of Bahnaric bleaching evidence also leads us to exclude the Koho Sre construction *ʔàʔ goʔ V luy* (Manley 1971: 224-225) and Vietnamese Stiêng *bun V laang* (Miller 1976: 18). We illustrate the potential stages 1 to 3 with examples (17) to (19). Vietnamese Stiêng, it will be noted, is entered twice: for it is unclear whether the postverbal *oom*, which is said to often occur with *bun*, can also occur with *pau*.

<sup>6</sup> Lee (1996: 312) mentions Chrau, but only a doubling construction that is emphatic.

<sup>7</sup> This may also be true for the larger area (see also Vossen & van der Auwera 2014 on Austronesian and Ratliff 2013 on Hmong-Mien) and for Austroasiatic as a whole. 19 of the 21 Austroasiatic languages listed in the WALS (Dryer 2013) have preverbal negation – the two exceptions are Munda. But see Jenny et al (2014: 107), suggesting that the picture may not be that clear.

**Table 3:** A Jespersen Cycle for the Bahnaric languages

Stage	Language	Branch	Construction	Source
1	Sapuan	West	<i>ta</i> V	Jacq & Sidwell 1999: 22
	Sedang	North	( <i>ôh</i> ) <i>ta/ti/tu/pa</i> V	Smith 1979: 108-109; Smith & Sidwell 2014: 824
	?Hrê	North	? <i>ùh</i> V	Trebilco 1971: 5
	?Cua	North	<i>le e</i> V	Maier & Burton 1971: 5
	Bahnar	Central	<i>uh ko</i> V <i>ko-V</i>	Banker, J. 1964: 36; Banker, E. 1964: 116-117
	?Koho Lach	South	<i>ò</i> V	Thomas & Nut 1970: 5
	?Eastern Mnong	South	<i>ay so</i> V	Blood & Blood 1972
	?Koho Chil	South	<i>gô/ô/ôso ê</i> V	Evans 1970: 5
	Koho Sre	South	? <i>à?</i> V	Manley 1971: 222-224
	Chrau	South	<i>jó(q)/ví/có/sun/sây/êq/toq/un</i> V	Thomas 1971: 57, 144
	Stiêng (Vietnam)	South	<i>pau</i> V	Miller 1976: 37-38
2	?Rengao	North	<i>bɨg</i> V ( <i>oh</i> )	Gregerson 1979: 20, 54
	Central Mnong	South	<i>mau</i> V ( <i>ôh</i> )	Phillips 1973: 130
			<i>mo</i> V ( <i>oh</i> ) <i>lic/e:/li:/pwaj</i> V	Butler 2014: 739
	Stiêng (Cambodia)	South	? <i>bun</i> V ( <i>oom</i> )	Miller 1976: 37-38
			<i>bən</i> V ( <i>de</i> )	Bon 2014: 120-121, 412-413
3	Brao	West	<i>tha/thaden</i> V <i>îm</i>	Keller 1976: 26-28, 42, 44 ILL

(17) Bahnar (Banker E. M. 1964: 117)

*ĩnh uh ko băt*  
I NEG NEG know  
'I don't know'

(18) Stiêng (Cambodia) (Bon 2014: 413)

*pa:j-kət bən sɔw de:*  
frog NEG see NEG  
'He does not see the frog'

(19) Brao (Keller, 1976: 28)

*mè̀w tha kap îm*  
cat NEG catch NEG  
'The cat didn't catch it'

What is immediately noticeable in Table 3 is the diversity of the preverbal markers. Some of them are similar to forms of other languages, either related (with *ta* being close to *\*tɔ:/de*, reconstructed for Katuic (Peiros 1996: 69) or not related (with lookalikes to Chamic *oh*). It is also clear that Bahnaric has double negation, but only to a limited extent. There is also direct evidence for a Jespersen Cycle, but it is minimal, if we may assume that the optional postverbal emphasizer *oom* in Vietnamese Stiêng is a cognate to the postverbal negator *îm* in Brao. It so happens that for Brao we have some dialectal evidence and for the variation found there a Jespersen scenario that makes sense too. Thus Keller e.a. (2008: 135) report the constructions shown in Table 4, and we immediately categorize them in terms of a Jespersen Cycle. The Keller e.a. (2008) paper, however, does not have examples and nothing is said about the position of the verb. We assume that the doubling constructions (marked as 'x ... y') embrace the verb and we further assume that the one dialect with a single marker uses it preverbally.

**Table 4:** A Jespersen Cycle for the Brao dialects

Stage	Dialect	Construction	Source
1	Lun Path	<i>ih V</i>	Keller e.a. 2008: 138
3	South Brao	<i>taa V ?iim</i>	Keller e.a. 2008: 135, 138
	Lun Din Daeng, 'other Lun', Kavet	<i>?ih V ?iim</i>	Keller e.a. 2008: 135, 138
	Ombaa	<i>taj/tej V ?ə?</i>	Keller e.a. 2008: 135, 138

The interesting thing is that in the Lun dialects and in Kavet, we see a progression from Stage 1 to Stage 3 with an identical *ih* marker.

Nevertheless, turning back to Table 3, the evidence for a Jespersen Cycle in Bahnaric is modest, at least for a classical language-internal one (more on this in section 4). Different from Chamic, there is no Stage 2 or Stage 3 that could be taken to share its preverbal negator with a Stage 1 language, and the one Stage 3 language does not seem to share its preverbal negator with a Stage 2 language either. Furthermore, there is no language shedding the preverbal negator and keeping the postverbal one. Finally, the fact that most of the languages are in Stage 1 has little argumentative force, although it must be pointed out that five of them seem to have two negators, but both are on the left side of the verb. For this kind of doubling a Jespersen cycle cannot be ruled out, but it will be a non-classical one, without the verb embracing that tends to go with doubling.

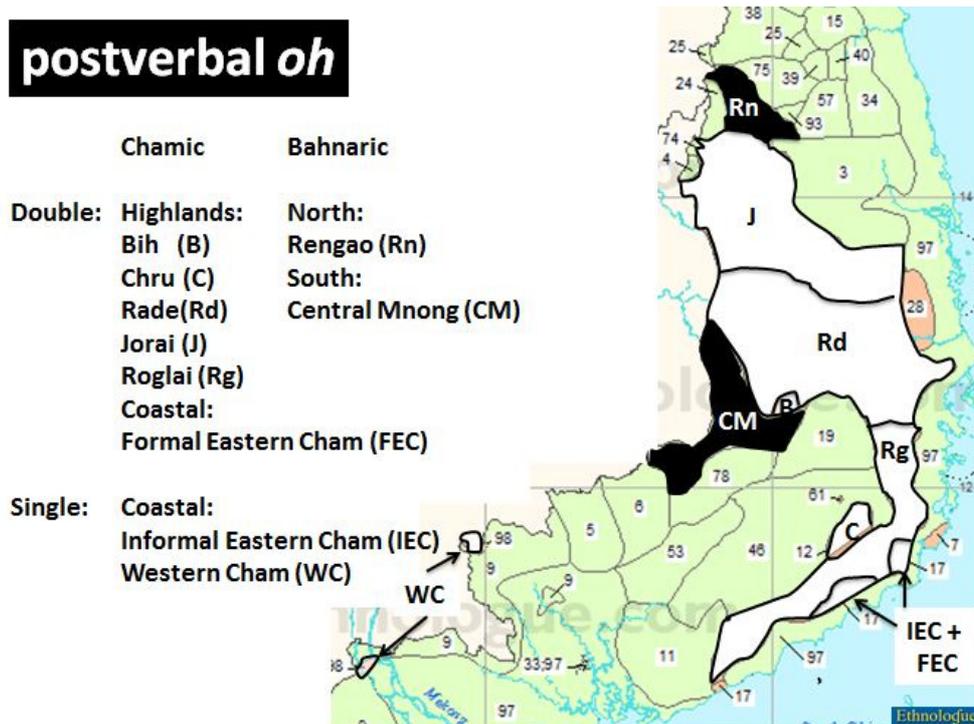
#### 4 Negation in Chamic and Bahnaric compared

Of the four cases of double negation in Bahnaric, only one (Brao) seems to call for a language-internal Jespersen Cycle hypothesis. For the three remaining ones, some other or a more complicated scenario seems necessary. For Cambodian Stiêng *bən V (de)*, Bon (2014: 412-413) thinks it likely that both parts are borrowed from Khmer.<sup>8</sup> That leaves us with Rengao *big V (oh)* and Central Mnong *mau V (oh)*. They both contain a postverbal *oh*, which we know from Chamic. Given the general hypothesis that Bahnaric borrowed extensively from Chamic (Sidwell 2008: 261, 265), it would seem appealing to apply this hypothesis to *oh* too. We show the spread of postverbal *oh* in the two families in Figure 1.<sup>9</sup>

Figure 1 shows that postverbal *oh* is much more widespread in Chamic than in Bahnaric and also that it occurs in contiguous zones. Furthermore, in Chamic it also shows up in two constructions, a double and a single one, a variation which makes sense from a Jespersen Cycle perspective. In Bahnaric only the doubling construction appears and though the Jespersen Cycle is relevant for Bahnaric, there is no evidence that it applies to postverbal *oh*. The two Bahnaric languages with postverbal *oh*, Rengao and Central Mnong, are genetically and geographically distant, but they are both geographically close to Chamic languages that have doubling postverbal *oh*: Rengao is close to Jorai and Central Mnong is close to both Rade and Bih. It has been claimed that the borrowing from Chamic into Bahnaric concerned South, North and Central Bahnaric, but not West (Sidwell 2008: 265), and this is in accord with what we see here: Rengao and Central Mnong are not West Bahnaric. All in all, we dare to propose that Bahnaric postverbal *oh* is due to language contact with Chamic, and that it is not due to a language-internal Jespersen Cycle.

<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, Khmer went into the Jespersen cycle with the construction *mwn ... tee*: Haiman (2011: 230) is explicit on the similarity with French *ne ... pas* (cp. also Huffman 1970: 23) and, as a perfect illustration of a Jespersen Cycle, in the older description by Jacob (1968: 60-61) the postverbal particle is glossed as 'indeed, at all'.

<sup>9</sup> For Western Cham, the map only shows the easternmost locations.



**Figure 1:** Postverbal *oh* in Chamic and Bahnaric<sup>10</sup>

Note that this Chamic-to-Bahnaric hypothesis does not rule out that, as suggested by Thurgood (1999: 244), *oh* ultimately comes from Mon-Khmer (see Sidwell 2007). And we also do not rule out that speakers of Rengao and Central Mnong borrowed Chamic postverbal *oh* for exactly the kind of strengthening involved in a language-internal Jespersen Cycle. Instead of a minimizer like French *pas* ‘step’ or a language-internal negative word like English *not*, Bahnaric speakers could have introduced a language-external negative word. It depends on whether or not one defines the Jespersen Cycle as a strictly language-internal process. We see no reason to be that strict. Of course, the reason why Rengao and Central Mnong speakers introduced postverbal *oh* might have nothing to do with Jespersenian strengthening: maybe they just imitated their neighbors.

Let us now look at preverbal *oh*, for this too appears in both Chamic and Bahnaric. But the facts are less clear here, at least for Bahnaric. Sedang *ôh* and Koho Lach *ò*, Koho Chil *õ*, Koho Sre *ʔàʔ* could be phonetically close enough to Chamic *oh*, but does this hold for Hrê *ʔùh* and Bahnar *uh*? Figure 2 represents the more liberal interpretation, that of taking all of these to be related to Chamic *oh*.

<sup>10</sup> Note: this and the other maps in this paper were prepared with a base map downloaded from SIL International (URL: [http://www.ethnologue.com/map/VN\\_s\\_](http://www.ethnologue.com/map/VN_s_)). We acknowledge SIL’s copyright and invoke fair use for research purposes only.

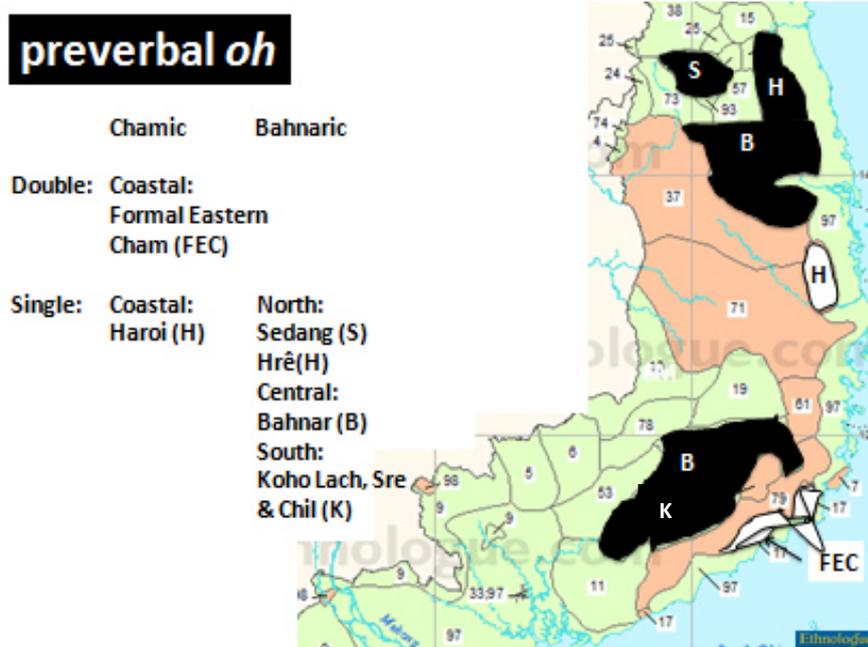


Figure 2: Preverbal *oh* in Chamic and Bahnaric

On the liberal view of the possible cognacy of the various markers, we now have Bahnaric with most *oh* forms. This is compatible with Thurgood’s assumption that *oh* is originally Mon-Khmer and even with the observation that postverbal *oh* is more widespread in Chamic than in Bahnaric, for the Jespersenian hypothesis has it that preverbal *oh* is older than postverbal *oh*. Nevertheless, the more expected view that *oh* went from Chamic to Bahnaric is not ruled out either. There are three reasons for thinking so, all relating to the fact that in the large Highland Chamic area in between the North and the South Bahnaric *oh* areas, we find preverbal *buh* – see Figure 3.

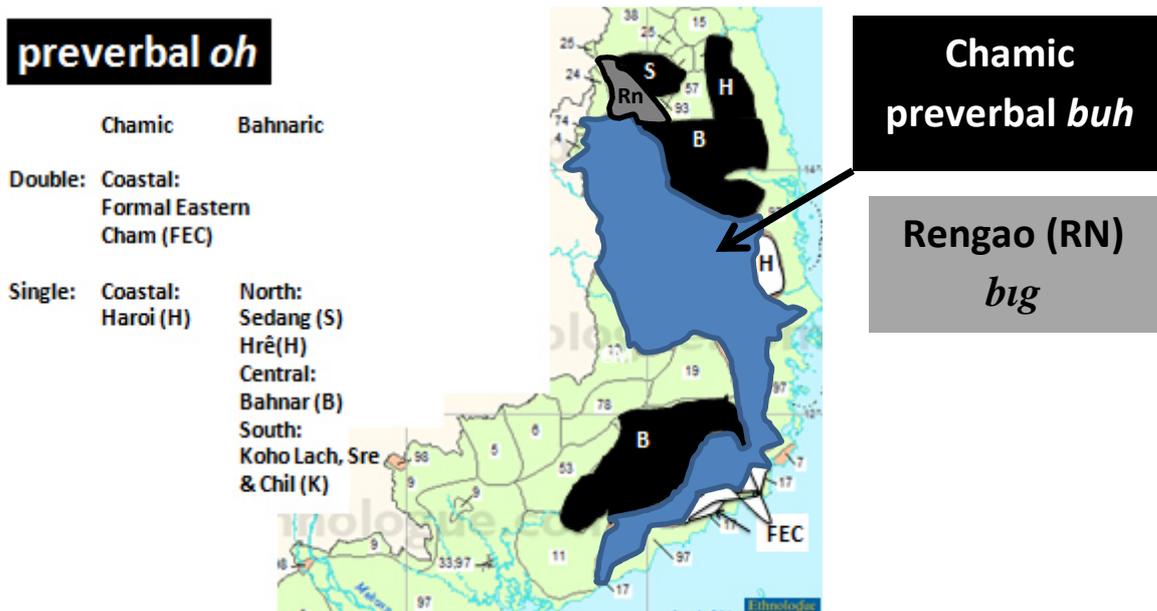


Figure 3: Preverbal *oh*, Chamic preverbal *buh* and Rengao *big*

First, it is not to be excluded that some of the Bahnaric markers are actually forms of *buh* rather than *oh*. Second, even if they aren't, one should not forget that, on Lee's interpretation, *buh* was a combination of a 'see' verb and the *oh* negator. Third, there is the Bahnaric language Rengao that has a preverbal *big* negator (as a part of a doubling construction with a postverbal *oh*), which is most similar to *buh*. Since there is no clear Jespersenian hypothesis to explain Rengao *big* V *oh*, while there is one for the adjacent *buh* V *oh* Chamic languages to the South, the hypothesis that Chamic was the donor gains strength. Of course, the wider claim from Sidwell (2007, 2008) remains valid, i.e., the claim that at the ancient Mon-Khmer component of Chamic is not Bahnaric and that any clear Chamic Bahnaric contact 'was almost entirely from Chamic' (Sidwell 2008: 261) into Bahnaric.<sup>11</sup> Finally, Central Mnong (Bahnaric) has a unique preverbal negator *mau*, unique within our Bahnaric data. Could this derive from adjacent Chamic Rade *amâo*? Interestingly again, all the Bahnaric languages involved are non-West Bahnaric. All in all, though the facts about preverbal *oh* allow both directionalities and it need not be the same direction for every Chamic Bahnaric pair, the explanation of the double negation of Bahnaric is probably the contact hypothesis.

## 5 Conclusion

Generalizing over both postverbal and preverbal *oh* one thing is clear: *oh* is attested in both families, both as a preverbal and as postverbal negator. The mists of time make it hazardous to explain the facts. Nevertheless, for Chamic we offer a Jespersen Cycle hypothesis and for Bahnaric we count on language contact. Independently of the ultimate origin of *oh* negators – and of *buh* negators, their appearance in Chamic is well-behaved, from a Jespersen Cycle perspective, and their appearance in Bahnaric is not. That there has been intensive contact between the two families is clear. There is no reason why this could not affect negation and if the general directionality is from Chamic to Bahnaric, then why not also for negation?

## Abbreviations

CAUS 'causative'  
 NEG 'negative'  
 V 'verb'

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<sup>11</sup> Since Chamic *oh* could have been originally Mon-Khmer, it is not ruled out that it stayed around in Bahnaric, where it could get strengthened and induced to doubling through contact with Chamic.

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