A STUDY OF THAI AND KHMU CUTTING WORDS

Suwilai Premsrirat

1. ASPECTS OF WORD SEMANTICS

1.1 Introductory note[1]

One of the problems which confronts linguistic field workers, anthropologists, translators, lexicographers and students of foreign languages is how to distinguish words with similar meanings from one another. Bierwisch (1970:169) says that all semanticists agree that a study of meaning should deal on the one hand with the way words (and sentences) are related to objects and processes in the world and, on the other, with the way in which they are related to one another in terms of such notions as 'synonymity', 'entailment', and 'contradition'. In addition the specific semantic system of a language must be considered.

While it is true that one synonym can be substituted for another in at least certain contexts, words with exactly the same meaning do not seem to exist. One hardly finds words which have both the same conceptual meaning and stylistic meaning even if there are words with distributional overlap and closely related meanings. Nida (1975a:120) supports this idea, saying that the basic fundamental presuppositions which should underlie all adequate semantic analysis are:

1. No word (or semantic unit) has ever exactly the same meaning in two different utterances.

2. There are no complete synonyms within a language.

3. There are no exact correspondences between related words in different languages.

While point 1 seems to be questionable, points 2 and 3 are quite acceptable.

1.2 Deficiencies of dictionaries

Dictionaries are the main source of word meanings. Though in general they are extremely useful in providing readers with practical clues to the meaning and the use of words, they are often inconsistent in organisation and deficient in their presentation of relevant data. Dictionaries normally list words in alphabetical order and provide the meaning(s) for each word. They tend to present meanings in terms of basic and secondary meanings but they are not usually sufficiently explicit. Dictionaries make use of paraphrases, synonyms, pictures or another language for presenting the definition of the word. Many definitions seem to be overlapping and indistinct. There are often no clear differences between words with similar meanings.

Hammarström (1976:105) points out that what the authors of dictionaries have to tackle is the problem of a systematic account of the allosemes (meaning variants) of some particular lexeme sememe (all meanings of a word) or of some morpheme sememe.

Nida (1975a:172) clearly presents five kinds of dictionary deficiencies:

1. The order in which different meanings are listed tends to be a poor compromise between historical developments and logical relations.

2. The distinction between meanings is often stated merely in terms of different types of contexts, rather than on the basis of different semantic domains.

3. The lists of meanings tend to be quite selective particularly in interlingual dictionaries.

4. Meanings are too often defined merely by means of substitutable words (i.e. by synonyms) rather than by listing distinctive features.

5. The listing of synonyms and antonyms, often sketchy, does not provide all the related meanings necessary to establish the corresponding domain.

These points will be illustrated in the study of the definitions of cutting words in Thai from three existing dictionaries in section 2.5.

There is a need for more detailed study into the semantic structure of the lexical items in a language. It is important to study the way the language is affected by the creation of new words, how it regulates the relations of meaning between similar words and assigns to each one its special value and function. A lexicographer who has a more systematic knowledge of the semantic structure of the language he is working on will carry out his work more efficiently, and as a result the dictionary will be more useful to the users. What I attempt to do in this study is therefore to base the lexicon on a clear semantic theory to make it less arbitrary. This follows Weinreich (1980), Chapters 2-5 and 7-10.

1.3 Semantic fields and componential analysis

Componential analysis is an approach which defines the meaning of a word in terms of semantic components. The meaning of a word is considered as a complex of semantic components connected by logical constants. These components are not part of the vocabulary of the language itself, but rather theoretical elements, postulated in order to describe the semantic relations between the words of a given language. It is a paradigmatic analysis of the semantic structure of word meaning, viewing the words in sets, studying contrasts within a frame or field of selection. On the other hand syntagmatic analysis views the words in all possible contexts, analysing their co-occurrence or combinatory possibilities.

The development of field theory, as pointed out by Lehrer (1974:15), stems from the work of German linguists, among whom Trier is the most important and most influential, and from that of American anthropologists who are influenced by Humboldt via Boas and Sapir, and by Saussure's notion of association. Most large semantic fields contain more than just synonyms. The notion of semantic field is based on the observation that the meaning of lexical elements is specified only by their relatedness to and their difference from other relevant elements. Gething (1972:29) mentions the relations between items in a set. Meaning exists only where systematic sets of contrasts exist. A word acquires its meaning by its opposition to its neighbouring words in the system.

By applying this conception of the semantic field based on semantic components, we may indicate precisely the organisation of particular fields and the relations among their members. In a semantic field overlaps and gaps will have to be

considered, together with general and specific senses of words, partial synonymy and partial class inclusion, and indeterminacies as to whether a component is part of the meaning of a word or just a related fact. Some linguists suggest that the organisation of words into sets is so fluid and ever-changing that perhaps a field is much too rigid a model. Actually speakers can categorise and classify words in many ways and organising words into a semantic field is to some extent an arbitrary way to do structural semantics.

Lehrer (1974:7) believes that a semantic field constitutes a psychological reality. She quotes Fromkin, Bierwisch and Weigl who say that the mistakes made by patients with a certain kind of aphasia and performance errors of normal speakers tend to support field theories since the wrong word often belongs to the same semantic field as the correct one. For the normal speaker, the problem of selecting the proper word for a speech situation is essential. The misuse may cause misunderstanding, especially when dealing with the items involving social strata or culture. The proper use of language in terms of the right choice of words for the right situation brings about adequate and efficient communication. In the study of semantic fields, besides the cognitive aspect, the emotive aspect can also be considered. A linguist's complete account should include the components of each word at each level.

1.4 Semantic units

Words do not stand directly for things, actions, qualities, relationships, etc. in a universal way, but the content side or meaning side of a specific language is to a great extent 'arbitrary' and specific for that language.

According to Hammarström (1976:86-91) semes are the exact meanings of morphs and lexes appearing in various contexts. Sets of semes form allosemes. The dictionary provides allosemes of lexemes whether these are explained in words from the same language (monolingual dictionary) or in words from another language (bilingual dictionary). He stresses that a word often has more than one meaning, or more than one alloseme. (In other words each meaning is an alloseme of a lexeme sememe.) The 'cutting' meaning of the following cutting words may not be the sole alloseme of each word but it is the meaning on which we will concentrate in this study.

A semantic field, according to Hammarström (1976:96-106) is defined as a field formed by associable allosemes. Using this wide definition, there are four kinds of fields:

1. Semantic systems of the language in question.

2. Semantic subdivisions for a systematic account of the allosemes of some particular lexeme sememe (or of some morpheme sememe) which is a problem authors of dictionaries have to tackle.

3. Semantic groups which are formed by a number of allosemes having one or more components in common, but not being a subsystem.

4. Semantic classes which are defined as a number of allosemes which can occur in some particular place in some particular syntactic construction.

Within the overall semantic system of the language there is a huge network of subsystems and subsystems of subsystems. The overall system consists above all of:

       (a)   the system of bound morpheme allosemes

       (b)   the system of lexeme allosemes.

Usually a language has more lexemes and lexeme allosemes than morphemes and morpheme allosemes. Since Thai and Khmu are languages that have mainly lexemes consisting of one morpheme, one would basically only speak of the system of lexeme allosemes. The morpheme alloseme becomes an almost superfluous notion. The area with which the following study deals is not only a 'semantic group' but it is also a 'semantic system'. Both are considered as 'fields' by Hammarström. Below the term usually used will be 'field'.

The cutting variants in the field are properly speaking word allosemes. However in a simplified terminology I shall call them 'words'.

In a discussion of semantics it may seem to be a problem that we have to use words to explain the meaning of words. We establish a correspondence between two (language) expressions supposedly having such meanings that one can explain the meaning of the other. There seems, however, to be no reasonable way to escape from language. Ullman (1962) says that the search for an explanation of linguistic phenomena in terms of what is not language is as vain as the search for an exit from a room which has no doors or windows, for the word 'explanation' itself implies a statement in language. He then suggests that the remedy is to be content with exploring what we have inside the room. That is to study relations within language such as paraphrase or synonymy.

The components of meaning of Thai and Khmu cutting words are presented below in English by means of paraphrasing. However, for presenting the proposed definitions for the concise dictionary synonyms are sometimes used. Since the definition is presented in English (a sort of a bilingual dictionary) the use of a single word is sometimes reasonably efficient. However, if a definition is intended for a monolingual dictionary a synonym will be less useful than a paraphrase.

## 1.5 Diagrammatic forms of semantic fields

Many kinds of diagrams can be used. Each has its specific limitations. The differences depend on the organisation of the components and the word meanings. The tree diagram shows clearly the structure of the differences and internal relationships. It is easily applicable when the components of the set form contrastive pairs. This kind of diagram illustrates well the hierarchial order of the components and the meaning as shown in section 4.1 below.

In addition to tree diagrams, three other kinds of diagrams have been used for the description of sounds and can be adopted for semantics.

1. *Prague school phonological systems*

This is the kind of system used in N.S. Trubetzkoy's (1969) *Principles of Phonology* in which all the phonological units, the phonemes, are presented in the chart itself. However this type of diagram is two-dimensional.

Hammarström (1976:101), influenced by further multidimensional developments of this type of system, presents a semantic subsystem with three dimensions. He shows not only the age differences but also sex difference of a small system of nouns:
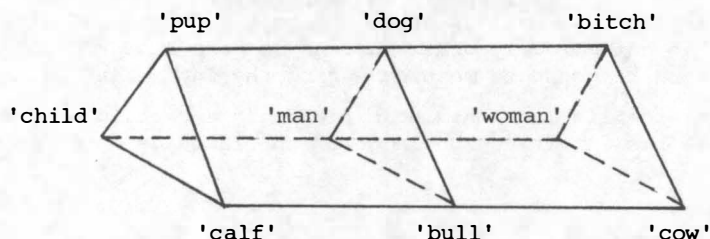
This kind of diagram enables us to see clearly the relation between the meanings and where they stand in relation to each other. However, it works best only for presenting a small field. Many meanings with many 'dimensions' would be difficult to portray.

2.   *The IPA chart*

This type of diagram makes use of two axes which both list components. The phonetic symbols are shown in the chart. This diagram works well when there are few components. However for an attempt to study the whole system of a rather complex semantic field where many components are to be shown in the chart, the chart will become too big and difficult to handle because it requires the repetition of the components in many places.[2]

3.   *The phonological matrix of Jakobson, Fant and Halle (1951)*

In the matrices described in *Preliminaries to speech analysis* all relevant features (components) are listed on the vertical axis while the phonemes are listed on the horizontal axis. The features which are binary are shown by + or - in the matrix.

This type of diagram seems to be the best among the three we are considering. For illustrating the complex structure of a semantic field such as 'cutting' it is the most compact. All relations and relevant components can be fully represented and shared features effectively marked. This type of diagram is also used by some semanticists such as Lehrer (1974).

1.6 Problems concerning the semantic field

It is sometimes difficult to delimit the correct boundary of the semantic field, especially when dealing with a comparatively open field such as 'cutting', while the boundaries are clearer for a closed field such as 'kinship'. It is hard for the investigator to be sure whether he has found all the words belonging to the field and he is not quite sure whether the components he is analysing are the correct components.

The main reasons for these difficulties are:

  (a) Different persons may perhaps have slightly different meanings for the same word. The detailed meaning of each word can vary because of many factors, such as the social and geographical background. Difficulties occur especially in the situation where some of the lexical items in question are not in one's active vocabulary.

(b) The meaning, as well as other things, is changing and not static. But this is not directly what concerns us here as we do not assume that any word has changed meaning during the investigation.

Therefore, when establishing a semantic field, to a certain extent the investigator has to use his intuitive knowledge of the language when making his decision.

2. THAI CUTTING WORDS

2.1 Scope of the present study

In this section some aspects of my investigation into both Thai and Khmu cutting words will be dealt with (although the result concerning Khmu will only be provided in the following section). The objective of the present study is to deal with the meaning of 'cutting' by gathering all the words belonging to the field and showing their semantic components and relationships. This is to explore and illustrate the properties of the semantic field and the nature of its organisation, which reveals some facts about the semantic structure of the language investigated. From a more practical point of view, the goal is to show a systematic way of describing the meaning of certain words, to introduce a consistent method of describing the meaning in a lexicon and to discuss in a useful way the place of paraphrases. A study of Khmu and Thai cutting words with corresponding meanings (in section 4 below) elucidates some points about related words in different languages. The shades of meaning (the 'semes', see section 1.4 above) in different contexts will be outside the scope of this study.

The method used is componential analysis. The words belonging to the 'cutting' field are defined in terms of their components. The meaning of the word is analysed not as a unitary concept but as a complex made up of components of meaning which may be themselves semantic primitives in the sense that they are difficult or impossible to define. The meaning of the word is therefore described in terms of distinctive components which can only be established on the basis of systematic research into semantic systems as mentioned above.

A semantic field can be small or large. The current study is an attempt to investigate the whole organisation of the 'cutting' field. The selection of the words is made on the basis that they all involve a human manual activity to divide an object into parts with the help of a sharp-edged instrument. Therefore not only the actual meaning of the word 'to cut' in English or 'tàt' in Thai is examined, but words like 'to chop', 'to peel', 'to stab', 'to grate', 'to dig', etc. are also included in the field because they all have the 'cutting' component in common.

In my investigation, I shall confine myself to describing the cutting field in two languages:

(a) Bangkok Thai which is the official language of Thailand and

(b) the Khmu dialect which is spoken in Barn Muangkarn, Chiengkhong district, Chiengrai province, Thailand.

The reasons for selecting cutting words are the following:

1. It is a basic set of words used in every day life.

2. There is a comparatively high number of words with slightly different meanings. Therefore they form an interesting lexical field.

3. In this lexical field there are fairly clear reference relations.

4. The words in this set do not normally carry strong connotations, so we can concentrate on the cognitive meaning.

5. The set seems to contain many of the subtleties and asymmetries which are characteristic of a lexical field.

6. Southeast Asian languages are known for having a very rich collection of words in this area.

2.2 Data collection

In order to collect 'cutting' words and their meaning components in Thai I used:

1. My own intuition as a native speaker of the language.

2. Existing monolingual and bilingual dictionaries.

3. A discussion of the contrastive characteristics of the words by a group of Thai male and female graduate students of various disciplines at Monash University.

4. Questionaires and answers from 50 native speakers of Bangkok Thai.

The information collected from the dictionaries is not always sufficient to distinguish one word from another. The data from the discussion group however, proved to be valuable. The method used was to present to the group questions on the characteristic features of each word, and on the situation in which that particular word would occur. The meaning of some words (allosemes) was made clear due to the particular experience and knowledge of the native speakers. Comparison with other related words was also important. This procedure helped establish most characteristic components of related words. The next step was to write down each word with its suggested components based on the component classes in the form of questionaires[3] and let Bangkok Thai speakers judge them in a more definite way. Answers from 50 informants were received.

2.3 Data presentation

The 'cutting' words and their components are presented below (p.153-154) in a matrix of the Jakobson, Fant and Halle type by showing the components of meaning on the vertical axis and various 'cutting' allosemes on the horizontal axis. However shading is used to indicate the distinctive components of each alloseme instead of plus signs. There are two possibilities:

1. ▨▨▨▨▨▨ indicates the very general type of opposition which in phonology is called equipollent. Here the distinguishing components are equivalent, i.e. they are neither in a gradual nor in a privative relationship. In other words they are neither components involved in different degrees of one property nor do they concern the absence or presence of a property. As a result no particular order can be established from the way a component is distinguished from all others.

2. A blank indicates that there is no clear component of the kind that could fill the blank.

One advantage of this type of diagram is that we can quickly and easily pick out all possible subsets as larger subsets are characterised by one given component while smaller subsets can be established on the basis of two or more components.

In filling out the componential grid a 'broad' description of allosemes will be used. Thus only major components, which must include all those used for distinguishing the meanings of the words, will be marked and all imaginable minor details that have no 'distinguishing' function will be neglected. However, our broad description is not absolutely 'minimal' because the chart above contains components which are not necessarily for a minimal description but which seem to be intuitively necessary to describe the meaning well. If the purpose had been only to distinguish all meanings in a minimal way, it would for instance be possible to disregard the existence of all components below the three first of the word /bàːk/ (see the chart).

Bever and Rosenbaum (1971) take a somewhat similar approach, although they believe a smaller number of distinctive features are required. In their opinions the most highly valued semantic analysis is the one which uses the smallest number of symbols. Semantic data therefore are accounted for when they are a part of some contrast in the lexical structure.

Not everything known can be accounted for in semantics. (An encyclopaedia, on the other hand, contains more detailed information than that contained in the 'distinctive' semantic components which form the basis for a dictionary.)

Principles used in marking components are:

1. The distinguishing or 'distinctive' components are generally marked.

2. If more than one type of cutting instrument and object to be cut are possible, they are all marked.

3. Despite my principle of a 'broad' description, I mark for certain words components which could be considered as redundant. Such components are, however, required to distinguish other words in a non-redundant way.

4. Some components are perhaps established in a more impressionistic way than others because they refer to qualities which are not clearly delimited such as 'rapid' or 'rough'.

The following is the chart showing the semantic field of Thai cutting words. It is followed by the definitions of these words.

# of Thai Cutting Words

Column headers (1–55):

1 bàk · 2 bàn · 3 bàt · 4 càk · 5 cam · 6 cɔ̀ɔ · 7 cùak · 8 cian · 9 cìan · 10 cìaranaj · 11 cùak · 12 cɔ́ɔ · 13 c'Tat · 14 c'an · 15 c'ali:p · 16 c'ali? · 17 c'aml? · 18 daj · 19 fan · 20 fă:n · 21 hàn · 22 kɛ̀?/kɛ̀?salàk · 23 ko:n · 24 kìaw · 25 k'ɔ́:t · 26 k'ù:t · 27 k'ù:t · 28 k'ɔ́:n · 29 k'ìp · 30 k'ìp · 31 k'wàn · 32 k'wàn · 33 li: · 34 lɛ́? · 35 lem · 36 lɛ̀w · 37 fĕn · 38 pàt · 39 pà:k · 40 ràn · 41 sìn · 42 sàj · 43 sàp · 44 sɔ́p · 45 sɔ́p · 46 sɔ́j · 47 siam · 48 sakàt · 49 lăt · 50 t'ɔ̀n · 51 rlâŋ · 52 rlâk · 53 t'ɔ̀ŋ · 54 rlǎ · 55 rla

Row labels (1–78):

1 a sharp narrow single blade
2 a sharpe broad single blade
3 a tooth-edged blade
4 a curved-edged blade
5 scissor-like blades
6 pointed blade
7 razor-sharp blade
8 bevelled or spade blade
9 blunt blade
10 any appropriate instrument
11 tip of the blade
12 thin,flat object (paper, cloth, leaves)
13 fibre, hair, rope, small plants
14 meat
15 fruit or vegetable
16 soil
17 stone
18 iron
19 tree
20 wood
21 outer casing (animal or human head, shell of fruit such as coconut)
22 fish scale
23 living animal (including human)
24 complete entity (dress, animal body)
25 an end
26 the top or head
27 the base
28 the edge
29 the surface
30 the inner part
31 the life centre (neck or wrist artery)
32 the connecting part
33 the limb
34 along the grain (lengthwise cut)
35 across the grain (crosswise cut)
36 diagonal cut
37 vertical
38 horizontal
39 circular
40 forceful
41 rapid
42 repeated (on the same spot)
43 sawing
44 scraping
45 precise
46 approximate (roughly cut)
47 little by little
48 humorous
49 annoyed
50 violent
51 unintentional
52 to cut apart
53 to cut an opening (incision)
54 to make an intrusion
55 to halve
56 to cut a portion out
57 to cut a part from the whole
58 to cut into pieces of any size
59 to cut into small pieces or chunks
60 to cut into thin slices
61 to cut into strips
62 to cut slivers off
63 to cut into very fine pieces
64 to cut square
65 to notch
66 to shape (in various ways)
67 to decorate
68 to neaten
69 to cut a design
70 to smooth
71 to remove blemish
72 to clear
73 to make an adjustment
74 to reduce size
75 to shorten
76 to sharpen
77 to make a straight groove
78 to make a channel (waterway)

2.3.2 Definitions of cutting words (for a concise dictionary)

1. bà:k — To score or scratch a mark, or to carve a recess or a slot in a piece of wood or in a tree, etc.

2. bàn — To cut off a person's head, limb, etc.

3. bà:t — To accidentally cut one's finger, arm, etc. (a wound)

4. càk — To cut lengthwise strips or slivers of bamboo, or decorative cutting of vegetables, using a lengthwise cut (e.g. spring onions, chili, etc.) or jagging (e.g. cucumber, etc.)

5. ca:m — To split with full strength a stump, a piece of wood or a person's head, etc., using a heavy sharp instrument.

6. cɔ̀ʔ — To cut a hole using the point of a sharp-edged instrument.

7. clǝk — To cut a piece of wood lengthwise into kindling.

8. ciǝn — To cut in a curve the edge of a thin object (a piece of paper, cloth, banana leaf, betel leaf, betel skin, etc.) with a knife or scissors for decorative purposes.

9. cǐǝn — To cut off a part of a person's body (usually said in a humorous or mocking tone).

10. ciǝranaj — To cut facets on a stone or glass.

11. cùǝk — To violently stab or cut up an object with a sharp knife.

12. cʰɔ̀ʔ — To chop and flick open unripe mangoes, coconut shells, etc., using the tip of a chopper.

13. cʰɨ̌ǝn — To roughly cut off pieces of an object.

14. cʰɨ̂ǝt — To violently cut in a life center of man or animal (such as wrist, throat, artery, etc.) using a sharp blade, and with a sawing action.

15. cʰalɛ̀:p — To trim thin slivers from pieces of fruit, vegetables, meat, paper, etc. for decorative purposes or to remove blemishes or neaten surfaces or to use as taste samples.

16. cʰalù:ʔ — To cut a pattern through thin materials such as wood, cloth, etc.

17. cʰamlɛ̀ʔ — To butcher a human or animal body dividing the main components of the body.

18. da:j — To trim the grass with a large curved instrument.

19. fan — To slash a part or parts of an object using a large sharp instrument.

20. fǎ:n — To cut thin slices of fruit or vegetables using a horizontal action.

21. hàn — To cut slices or chunks of meat, fruit, vegetables, using a vertical action.

22. {kɛ̀ʔ / kɛ̀ʔsalàk} — To carve wood or cut designs on the surface of fruit and vegetables (unripe papaya, sweet potatoes, etc.)

23. ko:n — To shave hair.

24. kìəw   To reap ears of paddy rice or cut grass, using a sickle.

25. krì:t   To make a long cut with a sharp blade through thin material or
                 into the surface of an object.

26. kʰɔ́:t   To scrape off fish scales.

27. kʰùt   To dig a hole or hollow out a log for use as a boat, mortar, etc.

28. kʰù:t   To scrape the surface off an object (the skin of fruit and
                 vegetables, paint from the wall, or the flesh out of a coconut).

29. kʰô:n   To cut down a tree.

30. kʰlìp   To snip a soft or thin object using the tip of the scissors,
                 usually for fine adjustment.

31. kʰwân   To cut through cylindrical objects by first scoring around the
                 circumference then cutting.

32. kʰwá:n   To cut and remove the centre of fruit or human viscera with a
                 pointed knife, using a circular action.

33. lɾ́t   To cut away twigs, leaves or shoots from the stems or branches
                 of plants.

34. lê: To horizontally cut a piece of meat into thin slices, or cut
                 gristle or flesh from the bone.

35. lem   To trim edges or shape thin materials (can be used for trimming
                 hair).

36. lǎw   To pare a stick in order to make it smooth or to reduce it to a
                 regular shape or size.

37. lɔ́ʔ   To carefully cut the material joining sections of an object such
                 as the cotton in a seam or the membrane between flesh and bone.

38. lɾ̂əj   To saw a block of wood into pieces.

39. pà:t   To rapidly slice some pieces from a lump of meat, fruit or
                 vegetables or remove the head of a large domestic animal,
                 using a long and very sharp knife.

40. pɔ̀:k   To peel fruit or vegetables.

41. pʰà: To split a piece of wood along the grain or halve fruit or
                 vegetables, using a sharp instrument.

42. ra:n   To lop off the branches or top of a tree.

43. sɾ̌n   To cut the end of a piece of wood square.

44. sǎj   To plane a piece of wood, grate food, or shave ice.

45. sàp   To chop materials finely using rapid and repeated strokes or
                 hack a bone into pieces.

46. sɔ́ʔ   To gradually cut a straight groove along the long axis of an
                 object or dig a long narrow channel in the ground.

47. sɔ:j   To carefully cut fruit or vegetables into very fine pieces,
                 using a rapid action, or style hair snipping off small pieces
                 at a time.

48. sɾ̂əm   To sharpen the end of a stick to use as a skewer or stake.

49. sakàt   To chisel stone or hard wood.

50. tàt   To cut an object with a sharp edged instrument (not normally applied to food items).

51. tʰɛ:ŋ   To stab (with a sharp instrument).

52. tʰà:k   To cut a thin layer from the surface of a hard material (separating bark from a tree, removing turf or cutting a piece of wood down to size).

53. tʰǎ:ŋ   To cut away grass and shrubs to clear land or a path.

54. tʰɔ:n   To shorten a long piece of wood or cut a length of timber into sections.

55. tʰɨ̌ə   To forcefully saw with annoyance a piece of tough meat with a blunt knife.

2.4 Relationships shown by the cutting field

2.4.1 Hierarchical order of the components

In an attempt to show the organisation of a semantic field, semantic components have been ordered hierarchically where possible.

The classification of the words in a semantic field in order to determine the hierarchy in the lexical structure is assumed to have cultural-cognitive validity: that is to represent a speaker's conception of how the world is organised. Nida (1975a) points out that the taxonomy of semantic features is not as systematic and regular as a scientific taxonomy. When words are missing for certain class distinctions, there is a tendency to make word forms serve for different meanings. This is seen clearly when two languages are compared. The depth of a taxonomy depends primarily on the degree of diversification of the corresponding referents in the particular culture. However in treating any type of semantic taxonomic structure, it is essential to have constantly in mind that meanings, not objects, are being classified. The aim is not to analyse the things designated by the terms, but rather to elicit the sets of semantic components that are relevant to the speakers of the language.

The following tree diagram gives an idea of the relation of the semantic field of 'cutting' to the larger fields whereby the components, which establish the sets, are shown hierarchically from higher to lower.

```
                                        Verb Meaning
                                       /            \
                                 Activities          etc.
                                /          \
                   Human Activities    Animal Activities    etc.
                   /           \
          Manual Activities    etc.
            /         \
      Dividing          etc.
        /    \
   Cutting    etc.
```
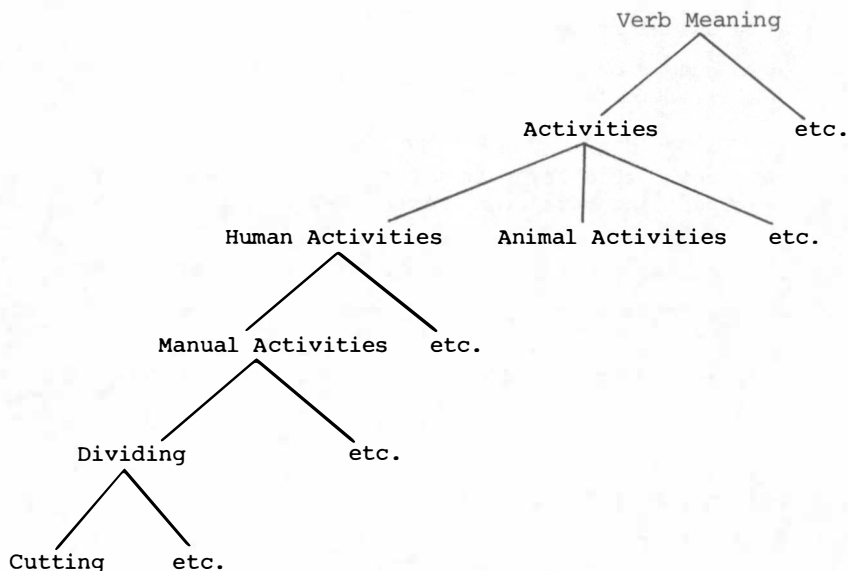
The cutting words here are defined as words which have the meaning 'a dividing action by a human being with the help of a cutting instrument'.

The semantic field shown in the chart belongs to a series of dominating allosemes with their dominated allosemes. The 'cutting' field contains 55 different allosemes at the lowest level of the hierarchical order in which the 'verb' component is at the highest level. There are probably altogether four levels above the actual 'cutting' words: 'activities', 'human activities', 'manual activities' and 'dividing things into parts'. Each of these is named by the common component of the allosemes opposed to one another at a particular level. A common component at one particular level becomes a distinguishing component at the next higher level and inversely a distinguishing component at one level is a common component at the next lower level. Considering each level of allosemes a 'higher' component, which forms a larger set of allosemes, dominates the allosemes on the next lower level. The component 'Activities' (as standing against 'State') forms the set of words dominating 'Human action' (cutting, speaking, laughing, kissing, etc.) 'Human action' dominates 'Manual activity' (cutting, pressing, holding, etc.). 'Manual activity' dominates 'Dividing things into parts' (cutting, tearing, ripping, etc.) which in turn dominates 'Cutting' (dividing things by instruments): cutting, slicing, chopping, slashing, splitting, etc.

2.4.2 Relationships of the components

The analysis of the cutting words with a discussion of cutting components takes into account:

1. *Basic classes* of distinguishing components. A word may have components from several such classes.

2. *Distinguishing components* (of which each word has a certain number). Each word has a unique combination of these components.

The cutting field in Thai requires 89 components of meaning which can be grouped into four basic classes:

    1. Characteristics of the cutting instruments.
    2. Characteristics of the objects being cut.
    3. Characteristics of the cutting actions.
    4. Purpose or result of cutting.

They are all important for each 'cutting' variant, and independent of one another. Therefore it is difficult to put them in hierarchical order. The most plausible way is however to arrange them in a sort of logical-temporal order which Nida (1975a:34) considers as the most common order for showing internal relations. Thus the most natural order which also seems to be psychologically relevant is the order mentioned above.

Classes of components may have subclasses. Note that the classes and subclasses can only be ordered in an arbitrary way. Changing the order would not make any significant difference.

    1. Characteristics of the cutting instruments are divided into

        1.1 Kind of instrument, and
        1.2 Part of instrument

    2. Characteristics of objects being cut are divided into

        2.1 Substance and shape, and
        2.2 Area to be cut

    3. Characteristics of cutting actions are divided into

        3.1 Direction
        3.2 Movement, and
        3.3 Emotional attitude

    4. Purpose or result of cutting is divided into

        4.1 Physical result (effect), and
        4.2 Purpose (use)

In one case even subclasses are divided as in the case of Khmu (see Chart 3.2). The subclass 2.1 is further divided into 'plant', 'fibre', 'food items', etc. before distinguishing components.

Each word (alloseme) is characterised in relation to the four basic classes: characteristics of the cutting instruments; characteristics of the objects being cut; characteristics of cutting action and purpose or result of cutting, but the exact combination of components is obviously different for each alloseme.

In addition to distinguishing components, 'characterising' components and 'subcomponents' can be considered (although few details are provided here).

For individual words, one of the components seems to be intuitively more important than the others. This component could be called 'characterising' and it is not the same for all words in the field. Although it is not my aim to investigate this aspect in detail some preliminary results from a test with about ten speakers are as follows.

The circular action of cutting into the inner area of an object characterises the word /kʰwǎːn/. The word /klÌəw/ is applicable only when a sickle is used as the cutting instrument. The purposes or expected results determine the use of

the words /tʰǎːŋ/, /bàːk/ and /fǎːn/. /tʰǎːŋ/ has the purpose of clearing the land, /bàːk/ refers to the making of a mark, a recess or a slot on a piece of wood, and /fǎːn/ is characterised by thin slices of fruit or vegetable. /cɤ̌ən/ and /tʰɤ̌ə/ are cutting words with emotional overtones. /cɤ̌ən/ has an element of mocking or humorous attitude while /tʰɤ̌ə/ has an element of annoyance. The words /cìəranaj/ and /sakàt/ apply only to a specific object. /cìə/ is used with glass and iron. /cìəranaj/ is used with precious stones and /sakàt/ with stone or hard wood. This supports the idea that the four basic classes of components of the cutting field are equally important, as they are all represented.

'Components' of meaning in the chart are just 'labels' or 'names' (to give the general idea of what they are). Each may be specified and broken down into 'subcomponents'. For example, the component labelled as an instrument with 'a sharp narrow single blade' may refer to different kinds of knives: knives used for cutting meat are usually very sharp and bigger or heavier than knives for peeling fruit and vegetables. The component 'fruit' may refer to all sorts of fruit. These types of subcomponents are impossible to present in the chart. Subcomponents add details, within the distinguishing components, of the kind that speakers are aware of when they speak or of the kind one would be more likely to find in an encyclopaedia than in a dictionary. They may be considered as the components of semes.

In different languages, components and classes of components may function at different levels. For example, in Khmu there is a subsubclass 'wood' ('stick', 'bamboo stem', 'block of wood', and 'log or timber') while in Thai 'wood' is a distinguishing component. Other examples can be seen on the charts. Things of the same substance but different in size and shape in Khmu are labelled as separate components while in Thai this is not necessary.

Vertically in the chart appear the components of meaning of each word alloseme indicated by shading. Since all the word allosemes belonging to the same semantic semantic field are shown on the same chart we can see immediately how word allosemes are distinguished from one another in terms of different components. The attempt to establish the order of the components of the meaning in a hierarchical way contributes to the systematic way of describing the meanings of a word. This is important for dictionary definitions. For example, the word /hàn/ can be defined on the basis of components as follows:

/hàn/ is a manual activity (implies 'human action') for dividing things into parts by using an instrument with a single sharp narrow blade to cut especially food items such as meat, vegetables or fruit, with a vertical motion into slices or chunks.

2.4.3 Subsets

Horizontally the frequency of the occurrence of each component in the field can be seen.

Words can be grouped by appropriate components to represent different types of subsets. Three kinds of examples will be given.

1. Subsets formed by one particular component.

   1.1 an instrument with a single sharp broad blade forms a subset of 21 words: /bàːk/, /bàn/, /caːm/, /cìək/, /fan/, /pʰàː/, /raːn/, /lɨ́t/, etc.

1.2 'scissors-like blades' forms a subset of three words:
/kʰlìp/, /lem/, /sɔ:j/.

1.3 'meat' forms a subset of ten words:
/cɰ̌ən/, /cʰalɛ̀:p/, /hàn/, /lɛ̂:/, /sàp/, /tʰɰ̌ə/, /krì:t/, /pà:t/,
/tʰɛ:ŋ/, /cʰamlɛ̀ʔ/.

1.4 'wood, tree, etc.' forms a subset of 19 words:
/bà:k/, /càk/, /cìək/, /kɛ̀ʔ (salàk)/, /kʰùt/, /kʰù:t/, /kʰwân/, /lít/,
/lɨ̂əj/, /ra:n/, /sɰ̌n/, /sǎj/, /sɰ̂əm/, /sakàt/, /tʰà:k/, /tʰɔ:n/, etc.

1.5 'stone and iron' forms a subset of four words:
/ciəranaj/, /kɛ̀ʔ (salàk)/, /sakàt/, /sɔ́ʔ/.

1.6 'the surface' forms a subset of 11 words:
/bà:k/, /bà:t/, /ciəranaj/, /cʰalɛ̀:p/, /kɛ̀ʔ (salàk)/, /ko:n/, /krì:t/,
/kʰù:t/, /pà:t/, /pɔ̀:k/, /tʰà:k/.

1.7 'the connecting part' forms a subset of four words:
/cʰamlɛ̀ʔ/, /lɔ́ʔ/, /kʰɔ́:t/, /lɛ̂:/.

1.8 'the inner part' forms a subset of six words:
/cɔ̌ʔ/, /cùək/, /kʰùt/, /kʰwá:n/, /tʰɛ:ŋ/, /cʰalù:ʔ/.

1.9 'vertical' forms a subset of 14 words:
/ca:m/, /cìək/, /cʰɔ̌ʔ/, /cʰalù:ʔ/, /fǎ:n/, /hàn/, /lɛ̂:/, /pʰà:/, /sɰ̌n/,
/sàp/, /sɔ:j/, /tàt/, /tʰɔ:n/, and /tʰɰ̌ə/.

1.10 'rapid' forms a subset of six words:
/cɰ̌ən/, /cùək/, /fan/, /pà:t/, /sàp/, /sɔ:j/.

1.11 'violent' forms a subset of six words:
/ca:m/, /cùək/, /cʰɰ̌ət/, /fan/, /tʰɛ:ŋ/, /bàn/.

1.12 'to halve' forms a subset of one word:
/pʰà:/.

2. Subsets formed by a group of components.

The components 'an instrument with a single sharp narrow blade', object of
'solid' shape especially 'meat', 'fruit and vegetables' and 'cut into slices'
form a subset of four words: /hàn/, /sɔ:j/, /fǎ:n/ and /lɛ̂:/.

3. Subsets formed by components which refer to major activities in the community.
Note that some words can be grouped according to more than one activity.

3.1 'Plant cutting and farming' forms ten words:
/kʰùt/, /sɔ́ʔ/, /tàt/, /da:j/, /tʰǎ:ŋ/, /tʰà:k/, /kʰô:n/, /ra:n/, /lít/
and /kìəw/.

3.2 'Wood cutting for carpentry and basketry' forms 15 words:
/tàt/, /tʰɔ:n/, /lɨ̂əj/, /sɰ̌n/, /sǎj/, /bà:k/, /tʰà:k/, /sakàt/, /pʰà:/,
/sɰ̂əm/, /lǎw/, /cɔ̌ʔ/, /càk/, /kʰùt/, and /kʰù:t/.

3.3 'Food preparation' forms 21 words:
/cʰɔ̌ʔ/, /pɔ̀:k/, /kʰwân/, /kʰwá:n/, /pà:t/, /sǎj/, /kʰù:t/, /pʰà:/,
/hàn/, /fǎ:n/, /sɔ:j/, /cʰɰ̌ən/, /lɛ̂:/, /sàp/, /cʰámlɛʔ/, /kɔ̀:t/,
/tʰɰ̌ə/, and /cìək/, etc.

3.4 'Decorative or neatening' forms ten words:
/kɛ̀ʔ (salàk)/, /càk/, /ciən/, /cʰalù:ʔ/, /kʰlìp/, /lem/, /lɔ́ʔ/,
/cʰalɛ̀:p/, /ko:n/, and /sɔ́ʔ/.

2.5 Cutting definitions in dictionaries

2.5.1 Thai cutting words in three existing dictionaries

The three dictionaries used for this discussion are:

1. The monolingual (Thai) dictionaries by the Royal Academy of Thailand (D_1): 1950 version (D_{1a}) and 1982 version (D_{1b}).

2. The bilingual (Thai-English) dictionary, Mary Haas (1964) (D_2).

3. The bilingual (Thai-English) dictionary, McFarland (1944) (D_3).

All of them illustrate the deficiencies mentioned by Nida (1975a) and quoted above in section 1.2, though in different degrees. They also illustrate other deficiencies which will be discussed below. In general the monolingual dictionary (1950) is the least adequate and consistent. Many of the definitions are not intelligible, or are only partly acceptable to Thai speakers who were asked to read and comment. The bilingual dictionary, McFarland (1944), is the most detailed. Generally, they all have similar weaknesses. Examples from each of the existing dictionaries are provided below.

1. Some of the definitions are too concise and miss distinguishing components.

   1.1 /lê:/ in D_{1a} To horizontally cut_{13} (c^hɣ̌ən) off thin slices.[4]

   1.2 /c^hɨ̂ət/ in D_{1b} To cut into the flesh using razor-like blade.

   1.3 /sakàt/ in D_2 To cut off.

   1.4 /fǎ:n/ in D_3 To slice or cut into thin pieces (slantingly).

One of the distinguishing components that should have been specified here is the type of the object or material on which the cutting action is performed. The word /lê:/ is used only with meat. /c^hɨ̂ət/ is used with emotion and destructive purposes. /sakàt/ is used only with hard objects such as wood or stone. /fǎ:n/ is used with fruit or vegetables.

2. Many definitions are merely synonyms. This is circular and sometimes it does not help the reader to understand the word better. The combination of two or more synonyms given does not necessarily work either although it should be recognised that the explaining synonyms are often more frequent words than the explained word and may therefore be of some use.

   2.1 /c^hɣ̌ən/ in D_{1a} To cut_{14} /c^hɨ̂ət/, cut_{55} /t^hɣ̌ə/.

   2.2 /c^hɨ̂ət/ in D_{1a} To cut_{39} /pàt/, cut_{34} /lê:/, cut_{55} /t^hɣ̌ə/.

   2.3 /c^hamlɛ̀ʔ/ in D_{1a} To cut_{34} /lê:/, cut_{14} /c^hɨ̂ət/.

As can be seen cut_{14} is used for (2.1) and (2.3), cut_{55} /t^hɣ̌ə/ is used for (2.1) and (2.2) and cut_{34} /lê:/ is used for (2.2) and (2.3). Even the combined information of the three definitions does not provide a sufficiently clear picture.

Some of the synonyms given are even less informative because they are obsolete or rare and are here marked by 'cut_0'.

   /bàn/ in D_{1a} To cut_{50} /tàt/, cut_{54} /t^hɔ:n/, cut_0 /rɔ:n/.

   /p^hà:/ in D_{1a} To cut_0 off /lê:/, cut_{17} off /c^hamlɛ̀ʔ/.

The use of largely uninformative synonyms also appears in the Thai-English dictionaries such as:

/fan/ in D_2 To slash, cut, chop, sever (with sharp edged object).

/fan/ in D_3 To cut, chop or slash with a knife or a sword.

3. Some definitions do not cover all possible cutting meanings of the words or possible ranges of components.

3.1 /sàp/ in D_{1a} To cut$_{19}$ /fan/ with a sharp edge of a knife.

3.2 /krì:t/ in D_{1b} To sharpen the edge on a hard object.

3.3 /sǎj/ in D_2 To plane.

3.4 /ca:m/ in D_3 To slash with a large knife.

/sàp/ refers to a rapid and repeated series of cutting performed by a heavy sharp blade to turn the meat or other material into very fine pieces, or to cut a hard object such as bone into pieces, while D_1 mentions only the use of a knife and the type of cut which requires forcefulness and rapidity.

/sǎj/ can be applied to both planing wood and shaving or grating food, but in D_2 only the first cutting meaning is given.

/ca:m/ refers to a very forceful and vertical action of cutting on a piece of wood, while in D_3, though the distinguishing components imply the forceful cutting, the vertical movement has not been mentioned.

4. Some definitions are too general and do not distinguish themselves from others, such as:

4.1 /pà:t/, /fǎ:n/ and /lɛ̂:/ in D_{1a}

4.2 /hân/, /cʰɨ̌ən/ and /cʰamlɛ̀ʔ/ in D_2

4.3 /cʰɨ̂ət/ and /tʰɨ̌ə/ in D_3

D_{1a} /pà:t/   To horizontally cut thin slices.

/fǎ:n/   To cut$_{39}$ /pà:t/, cut$_{14}$ /cʰîət/ cut$_{13}$ /cʰɨ̌ən/ into thin slices.

/lɛ̂:/   To horizontally cut$_{13}$ /cʰɨ̌ən/ off thin slices.

D_2 /hân/   To cut (into pieces), slice.

/cʰɨ̌ən/   To cut off, slice off.

/cʰamlɛ̀ʔ/ To cut, slice (especially meat).

D_3 /cʰɨ̂ət/   To cut, to carve, to slice roughly.

/tʰɨ̌ə/   To cut, to carve, to slice roughly.

5. Some definitions are misleading and not acceptable:

/lɔ̀ʔ/ in D_{1a} = cut$_{33}$ /lít/

/tʰɨ̌ə/ in D_{1a} = to cut$_{14}$ /cʰɨ̂ət/ forcefully with a knife.

/cʰɨ̂ət/ in D_2 = to carefully cut with a sawing motion (using a knife or similar implement).

/cʰɨ̂ət/ in D_3 = to cut, to carve, to slice roughly.

6.   Some common words are missing, such as:

/cʰɔ̌ʔ/, /kɛ̀ʔ/ or /kɛ̀ʔsalàk/, /kʰlìp/, /kʰwân/, /pɔ̀:k/ and /sǎj/ in D_{1a}
/cɨ̌ən/, /cʰalɛ̀:p/, /krì:t/ and /lɔ̌ʔ/ in D_{1b}
/bà:k/, /kʰlìp/, /lít/ and /pà:t/ in D_2
/cìək/ and /cʰalɛ̀:p/ in D_3

2.5.2 Proposed dictionary definitions based on semantic field and componential analysis

In this type of dictionary the meaning of a word is described in a clear way on the basis of distinguishing components. Though the boundary between a dictionary and an encyclopaedia is not sharp, I think that the detailed information about relevant components of meaning of each word presented in the semantic field chart is what a reasonably complete dictionary should contain. The (comparatively) complete definitions of eleven cutting words for a dictionary will be provided below as examples to compare with existing dictionaries (the information for the rest is found in the chart). However, I have also attempted to provide definitions for a concise dictionary. All 55 cutting words presented as dictionary entries are given in section 3.2 and complete definitions will also be presented for the comparisons in section 2.5.3.

In the complete dictionary, the labelled components are given with some specific details, while in the concise dictionary sometimes only the specific details (rather than the most general component) are given, because it is easier for the reader to understand the meaning of the simple concrete word right away (see the definitions). On the other hand, some of the components that would be included in a more complete dictionary have been left out according to the following principles:

1.   Some components that are felt to be less important are not mentioned.
     However, a characterising component cannot be left out.

2.   The components are described in less detail. Instead of giving the
     labelled components, perhaps with specific details or 'subcomponents'
     and all relevant examples, sometimes only a specific example which
     represents the component well is given.

3.   Synonyms are used wherever possible.

In referring to the cutting instruments in the concise dictionary the following principles are therefore used.

1.   If the English verb implies cutting, then generally the instrument
     used will not be mentioned.

2.   If the English verb does not imply 'cutting', then the instrument used
     will be referred to, for instance, 'sharp instrument' but it is not
     necessary to describe the instrument in detail. If the verb implies
     cutting then a specific word such as 'a knife' is given.

3.   If there are two verbs for cutting the same thing in a similar way,
     but the difference is that the instruments used are different, then
     the instruments will be described.

Consequently, it seems unavoidable that the concise dictionary sometimes involves somewhat arbitrary decisions. However, it is usually more readable because it is comparatively short and contains only the most important distinguishing components.

2.5.3 Comparison of dictionary definitions

In order to discuss matters of principle, eleven cutting definitions from each of the five dictionaries have been selected and are presented below in the following order:

D_{1a}, D_{1b}, D_2 and D_3: the monolingual and bilingual dictionaries
mentioned before;

D_4: the concise dictionary proposed by the author;

D_5: the complete dictionary proposed by the author.

Item 1 no.15 /c^halɛ̀:p/

D_{1a} To /tàt/ on the surface (ตัดไปบนผิวๆ)[5]

D_{1b} —

D_2 To slice (e.g. meat) slantwise.

D_3 —

D_4 To trim thin slivers from pieces of fruit, vegetables, paper, etc. for decorative purposes or to remove blemishes or neaten surfaces or to use as tasting samples.

D_5 To cut - with an instrument with a single sharp narrow blade
- meat, fruit, vegetable, paper, etc.
- on the surface or at the edge
- diagonally
- precisely
- thin slivers off a big piece
- for decorative and neatening purposes, or for using as tasting samples.

D_{1a} and D_2 give too few components and therefore cannot well describe the meaning of the word. It is not clear how the word differs from other words such as /lɛ̂:/ and /fǎ:n/. D_{1b} and D_3 do not have this word as a cutting word.

Item 2 no.13 /c^hɤ̌ən/

D_{1a} To /c^hɤ̂ət/, to /t^hɤ̌ə/ (เชือด, เถือ)

D_{1b} To /c^hɤ̂ət/ off some part (เชือดเอาแต่บางส่วนออก)

D_2 To cut off, slice off

D_3 To carve, to cut, to cut up meat, to cut into slices, to shave off (as when trimming horse hoofs)

D_4 To roughly cut off pieces of an object

D_5 To cut - with a single narrow blade
- any object: meat, fruit, leather, etc.
- roughly (without precision or neatness)
- slivers off.

D_1, D_2 and D_3 do not well describe the word. D_{1a} and D_{1b} give uninformative synonyms. D_2 gives too few components and therefore cannot distinguish this word from the word like /sakàt/ 'to cut off'. /c^hɤ̌ən/ actually differs from /sakàt/ in many ways: the type of object to be cut, type of instrument used and

also type of cutting action. D_3 misses the component 'rough (or cut without precision or neatness)' which distinguishes this word from the words like /lê:/ /hàn/, and /fǎ:n/.

Item 3 no.14 /$c^h\hat{i}\partial t$/

D_{1a} To /pà:t/, to /lê:/, to /$t^h\check{i}\partial$/ (ปั ค, แล่, เถือ)

D_{1b} To /tàt/ into the flesh using razor-like blade
(ใช้ของมีคม เช่น มีดโกนตัดให้ลึกเข้าไปในเนื้อเชือดคอ)

D_2 To carefully cut with a sawing motion (using a knife or similar implement)

D_3 To cut, to carve, to slice roughly

D_4 To violently cut in a life centre of human or animal such as throat or wrist using a sharp blade and cutting with a sawing action

D_5 To cut - with a sharp narrow or single broad blade or razor-like blade
        - a life centre of an animal (including a human being) such
          as throat or wrist artery
        - crosswise
        - violently
        - with a sawing action
        - with destructive purposes (to kill).

Again D_{1a} gives uninformative synonyms. D_{1b} and D_2 give too few components and cannot cover all of the components of meaning as presented in D_4 and D_5. D_3 does not give distinguishing components of the meaning of this word at all. The definition given is very similar to that for /c^hamlè?/.

Item 4 no.17 /c^hamlè?/

D_{1a} To /lê:/, to /$c^h\hat{i}\partial t$/ (แล่, เชือด)

D_{1b} To /lê:/, to /$\underline{t}^h\check{i}\partial$/ into thin slices, to /$c^h\hat{i}\partial t$/
(แล่, เถือให้เป็นชิ้นบ งๆ เชือด)

D_2 To cut, slice (especially meat)

D_3 To cut or carve, to slice roughly (as butcher)

D_4 To butcher an animal body (including a human body dividing the main components of the body)

D_5 To cut - with some appropriate sharp instrument
        - a carcass
        - at the connecting parts of the organs
        - precisely
        - to divide the main components of the body.

D_{1a} and D_{1b} give another set of uninformative synonyms. D_2 cannot be accepted as an adequate definition. It does not distinguish this word from other words such as /hàn/ and /lê:/. D_3 does not state clearly the distinctive components of the word, though it implies them by the phrase '(as butcher)'.

Item 5 no.21 /hàn/

D_{1a}/ To put an object on the board and /tàt/ into small pieces
D_{1b} (เอาของวางลงบนที่รองรับแล้วตัดเป็นชิ้นเล็กๆ   )

D_2 To cut (into pieces), slice

D_3 To slice

D_4 To cut slices or chunks of meat, fruit or vegetables using vertical direction

D_5 To cut - with a single sharp narrow blade
              - meat, fruit, vegetables, etc.
              - in a vertical direction
              - into slices or chunks.

Since this word can be used only with food, this fact must be indicated. However none of the three dictionaries (D_1, D_2 or D_3) mention it. The vertical type of direction which distinguishes /hàn/ from other cutting words for food items such as /lê:/ and /fǎ:n/ should also have been mentioned.

Item 6 no.20 /fǎ:n/

D_{1a} To /pà:t/, to /ch\hat{\dagger}ət/, to /ch\dagger ən/ slantingly into thin pieces
(ปาด, เชือด, เฉือนแฉลบบางๆ   )

D_{1b} To /tàt/, to /ch\dagger ən/, to /chalê:p/ into thin slices, pieces or chunks, e.g. to /fǎ:n/ bananas, to /fǎ:n/ mangoes, etc.

D_2 To slice, cut thin (using a horizontal motion)

D_3 To slice, or cut into thin pieces (slantingly)

D_4 To cut thin slices of fruit and vegetables using either horizontal or vertical action

D_5 To cut - with a single sharp narrow blade
              - fruit and vegetables
              - either across or along the grain
              - in either a horizontal or vertical direction
              - into thin slices.

Another set of uninformative synonyms are given in D_{1a} though there is a useful additional description: 'slantingly into thin pieces'. The same thing also holds true for D_{1b}. D_2 gives a similar definition to that of /lê:/. The object being cut should have been mentioned, because this word can be applied only to fruit and vegetables. D_3's definition is also inadequate. The object being cut must be specified here.

Item 7 no.34 /lê:/

D_{1a}/ To horizontally cut off /ch\dagger ən/ thin slices
D_{1b} (นอนมีดเฉือนเป็นแผ่นบางๆ)

D_2 To slice (with horizontal motion)

D_3 To carve or cut (as meat or fowl), to dissect, to dress (by removing the entrails)

D_4 To horizontally cut a piece of meat into thin slices or cut gristle or flesh from the bone

D_5 To cut - with a single sharp narrow blade
                    - in either a diagonal or horizontal direction
                    - carcass
                    - into thin slices (the flesh), or separating the flesh or
                      gristle from the bone
                    - precisely.

The definition of D_1 is not distinguished from /fǎ:n/. The definition of D_2 is almost exactly the same as /fǎ:n/. D_3 cannot distinguish this word from /cʰɨ̆ən/, /cʰamlɛ̀ʔ/ and /tʰɨ̆ə/.

Item 8 no.37 /lɔ́ʔ/

D_{1a} To /lít/ (ลิด)

D_{1b} —

D_2 To chip off, break off little by little

D_3 To chip or break off in small pieces by striking with little
          rapid strokes

D_4 To carefully cut the material joining sections of an object such as
          the cotton above a seam, or the membrane between flesh and bone

D_5 To cut - with a single sharp narrow blade or razor-like blade
                    - non-living thing such as a part of an animal body or a dress
                    - connecting parts
                    - precisely
                    - little by little
                    - with the purpose to divide the object into component parts

All definitions in D_{1a}, D_2 and D_3 are misleading though D_2 is almost acceptable while D_{1b} does not give the cutting meaning to this word.

Item 9 no.39 /pà:t/

D_{1a} To horizontally cut off thin pieces (ฝานบางๆ ตามแบน)

D_{1b} To slice off thin pieces (to slash off some part), e.g.
          To /pà:t/ head off with a sharp blade (เอาส่วนที่ไม่ต้องการออกโดย
          วิธีฝานบางๆ หมายความว่าเอาของมีคมฟัน ฟันแฉลบๆ เช่น เอามีดตัดหัว)

D_2 To make smooth and level (with the edge of a blade)

D_3 To slice, shave, pare or prune diagonally, to excise (when removing
          a defect from fruit)

D_4 To rapidly cut off one or two pieces from a lump of meat, fruit or
          vegetables, or remove the head of a large domestic animal, using a
          long and very sharp knife

D_5 To cut - with a sharp long blade such as a long knife
                    - meat, fruit, vegetables, a part of an animal
                    - at the edge, top, or on the surface
                    - with diagonal or horizontal direction
                    - rapidly
                    - a part from the whole.

D_{1a}, D_{1b}, D_2 and D_3 give too few components and do not clearly describe the meaning.

Item 10 no.44 /sǎj/

D_{1a} —

D_{1b} —

D_2 To plane

D_3 To plane

D_4 To plane a piece of wood, grate food, or shave ice

D_5 To cut - with a sharp blade: a tooth-edged blade such as grater (for fruit and vegetables), a straight sharp edge (for ice), or a plane (for wood)
- fruit, vegetable, ice, wood
- into very fine pieces (for fruit, vegetable, ice) or to neaten or reduce the size (for wood).

D_{1a} and D_{1b} do not include this word as a cutting word. D_2 and D_3 mention only one aspect of the word which is the wood cutting and miss the food cutting.

Item 11 no.55 /tʰɨ̌ə/

D_{1a} To /chɨ̂ət/ forcefully with a knife (เชือดลงไปแรงๆด้วยมีด)

D_{1b} To /chɨ̌ət/ violently with sharp blade, e.g. the skin is too tough to /tʰɨ̌ə/ (เชือดเถือนลงไปอย่างแรงด้วยของมีคม เช่น หนังเถือไม่เข้า)

D_2 To cut with a knife using a seesaw motion to hack away (at something, e.g. as with dull knife)

D_3 To cut, to carve, to slice roughly

D_4 To forcefully saw with annoyance a piece of tough meat with a blunt knife

D_5 To cut - with a single sharp narrow blade which is not very sharp
- (tough) meat
- forcefully
- repeated on the same spot (sawing motion)
- with annoyance
- into pieces of any size.

All of the definitions given by D_{1a}, D_{1b}, D_2 and D_3 lack at least one important distinguishing component of meaning of this word, the 'annoying' emotional attitude, let alone other components.

In general the definitions given by the existing dictionaries D_{1a}, D_{1b}, D_2 and D_3 are inadequate. They are not informative enough because they give too few components.

In many cases the type of object being cut, and the purpose or the result of the action are not mentioned. As a result, meanings are not well described and, worse, some definitions do not distinguish different cutting words.

The types of definitions given for a concise dictionary (D_4) and for a (comparatively) complete dictionary (D_5) based on the investigation into the cutting semantic field and presented in the chart are capable of providing better information for describing cutting words in the language than the definitions of existing dictionaries.

3. KHMU CUTTING WORDS

3.1 General statement

To establish Khmu cutting words the principles established for the investigation into Thai cutting words have been applied when appropriate.

Steps taken when collecting the words belonging to the field have been:

1. Using direct questioning.

2. Pointing at cutting activities taking place.

3. Extracting from text materials.

4. Eliciting words from the informants using the four underlying basic components as guidelines, especially when establishing the components of meaning of each word.

5. When a preliminary chart had been obtained, many words were checked again. New questions about particular words could then be formulated on the basis of the components already established.

Eventually 72 words from various areas of cutting were collected.

The data are presented in the same sort of chart as the Thai cutting words, although the size of the field is bigger (72 words versus 55 for Thai). The horizontal axis presents 72 cutting variants, while the vertical axis presents the same major components as Thai: characteristics of cutting instrument, characteristics of object being cut, characteristics of cutting action and purpose or expected result. There are, however, differences in detail concerning distinguishing components which are determined by the culture as mentioned before.

In Khmu there are altogether 100 components. The proposed definitions for all Khmu cutting words based on components presented in the chart have been worked out and are given below in the form of concise dictionary definitions. Eleven proposed (comparatively) complete dictionary definitions based on the components in the chart have been selected and listed below as examples. In this case all components of the chart are taken into account.

Subsets can be formed in the same way as was done in Thai. The following are the subsets referring to major cutting activities in the Khmu community.

1. 'Plant cutting and farming' form 16 words:

/bák/, /bòk/, /hɛ́:l/, /kàl/, /kíəw/, /klàh/, /kʰfəŋ/, /kʰrɛ́h/, /{$^{nà:m}_{pʰrɛ́:}$}/, /pɛ̀ŋ/, /pàt/, /pát/, /póh/, /pòk/, /rfəm/, /sɛ́h/.

2. 'Wood cutting for carpentry or basketry' form 27 words:

/bák/, /há:t/, /hɔ́:c/, /kóh/, /kwàt/, /kwà:t/, /lɨ̀:p/, /lɨ̀əj/, /ŋè:l/, /pɛ́h/, /pnpúʔ/, /pʌ̀:k/, /pà:t/, /pòŋ/, /{$^{pɔ́:t}_{tʰá:k}$}/, /plàʔ/, /pɔ̀:t/, /plíət/, /próh/, /sɛ́k/, /{$^{sŋkríh}_{tʰɔ́:}$}/, /sríc/, /tò:n/, tòh/, /tráp/, /wʌ̀:k/, /wàh/.

3. 'Killing and wounding' form six words:

/hɛ́:k/, /wát/, /kɨ̀t/, /ràk/, /tò:n/, /kèɲ/.

Purpose or Result		Characteristic of Cutting Action		Characteristic of Object being cut		Characteristic of Cutting Instrument	
Purpose (Use)	Physical Result (Effect)	Movement	Direction	Area to be cut	Substance, Size and Shape	Part	Kind of Instrument

Column descriptors (numbered):

100 to make a preliminary cut
99 to kill or destroy completely
98 to use as building material
97 to make a hole
96 to divide into component parts
95 to mark
94 to skin
93 to bone
92 to adjoint
91 to hollow (a mortar)
90 to make a recess or a slot
89 to make a hole
88 to make a long, narrow channel (waterway)
87 to sharpen
86 to tighten
85 to sharpen
84 to clear
83 to clear or finish
82 to smooth or finish
81 to reduce size
80 to shape
79 to cut a shallow, long scallop
78 to cut a normal scallop
77 to cut square
76 to cut a wedge shape
75 to cut into very fine pieces
74 to cut into thin slices
73 to cut slivers off
72 to cut a portion out
71 to cut into small pieces or chunks
70 to cut into pieces of any size
69 to cut a part from the whole
68 to have
67 to make an intrusion
66 to cut into
65 to cut a line
64 to cut a part (an opening, incision)
63 to cut apart
62 to cut (roughly cut)
61 little by little
60 unintentional
59 violent
58 forceful
57 repeated (on the same spot)
56 rapid
55 repeated
54 scraping
53 sawing
52 horizontal
51 slanting down
50 slanting up
49 vertical (upward motion)
48 vertical (downward motion)
47 across the grain (crosswise cut)
46 along the grain (lengthwise cut)
45 the instrument
44 the limb
43 the connecting part
42 the surface
41 the edge
40 an end
39 the base
38 the upper part
37 the top or head
36 inanimate object — a net, a dress, etc.
35 skin
34 head
33 throat
32 human parts (body)
31 animal parts (body)
30 animal body
29 food items — meat
28 fruit and vegetables
27 pig bristle or fowl's feather
26 cow or dog bristle
25 human hair
24 finger nail
23 bamboo shoot or rattan, etc.
22 paper, cloth, leaves, cotton
21 cotton thread or membrane
20 fibre
19 grass or weeds
18 block of wood
17 log or timber
16 bamboo stem
15 high grass, etc.
14 small trees or plants
13 trees
12 plant
11 soil
10 small seed-like object
9 bottom part of the blade
8 to the base
7 any appropriate instrument
6 specific instrument
5 sharp long blade with pointed end
4 a wedge-like blade
3 an axe-like blade
2 a sharp broad single blade
1 a sharp narrow single blade

4. 'Food preparing' forms 26 words:

/cáh/, /há:k/, /há:l/, /kèɲ/, /ká:t/, /kú:t/, /kóh/, /{krùə / krús}/, /kwèc/, /khɔ́ʔ/, /pɛ́h/, /pá:t/, /phá:/, /plà:/, /plà:k/, /plúh/, /sŋkríh/, /srɔ̀:j/, /tá:l/, /wàh/, /ràk/, /lɨ̄ə/, /chrɛ́h/, /klɛ̀h/, /khrɛ́h/, /rlàh/.

The chart of the semantic field of cutting words in Khmu is presented on pages 171-172. Definitions of Khmu cutting words for a concise dictionary are presented below.

3.3 Definitions of Khmu cutting words

1. bák — To cut a recess or a slot in a piece of wood.

2. bòk — To dig the ground using a hoe or /kbók/.

3. cáh — To pare the skins or the hard covering part of some kind of bamboo shoot, rattan, etc. using a big knife.

4. cɔ́hcɔ́h — To chop up objects (usually without any purpose).

5. chrɛ́h — To carefully disjoint and bone using a knife.

6. hɛ́:k — To accidentally cut oneself with a small sharp knife.

7. hɛ́:l — To trim the grass or weeds using /wʌ̀:r/ (a curved sharp instrument).

8. há:k — To carefully pare pieces from the surface part of fruit, bamboo or trees, or slice off pieces of fruit.

9. há:l — To peel fruit of vegetables.

10. há:t — To sharpen a stick using a knife.

11. hɔ́:c — To pare a stick to a particular shape or size.

12. {kɛ́c / kán} — To trim hair using the tip of the scissors.

13. kɛ́p — To trim the edge of thin materials such as paper, cloth, finger-nails, leaves, hair, etc. for decorative purposes.

14. kɛ́ɲ — To stab soft material using a long, sharp and pointed instrument.

15. kɨ̄t — To slash a part or parts of materials using a sharp instrument which is either large or long.

16. kàl — To lop the branches or the top of a tree.

17. ká:t — To shave the hair of big domestic animals such as a cow, dog, etc., or scrape off the skins of fruit or plants, using a knife.

18. kú:t — To shave human hair or the soft hair of vegetables.

19. kóh — To vertically cut small pieces or chunks of food items or other materials (usually done on a board or on the ground).

20. kíəw — To reap ears of paddy rice or cut grass, using a sickle or /krnìəw/.

21. klɛ̀h — To carefully remove flesh from a bone or gristle from meat, using the tip of a knife.

22. klàh   To cut lengthwise strips off a piece of bamboo (for tying things) using a horizontal motion.

23. {krùə}   To shave a pig's bristles or chicken's feathers, using a sharp
    {krùs}   edged wooden instrument or /ntrús/.

24. kwéc   To remove small things such as seeds of fruit or animal eyes, using the tip of a knife.

25. kwàt   To carve a hole, or carve the end of the bamboo to a particular shape, using the tip of a knife.

26. kwà:t   To carve the inside part of a log to a particular shape, using a special instrument /krwà:t/.

27. khɔ́ʔ   To grate food such as coconut, or scrape off the paint from an object.

28. khɨəŋ   To dig a hole using a spade or a hoe.

29. khrɛ́h   To trim off branches, twigs, or shoots from bamboo stalks, to trim flesh from a bone, or scrape off fish scales.

30. lɨ:p   To cut a small slit along the grain, at the end of a piece of wood (especially bamboo) and peel it downwards into strips.

31. lɨə   To skin big domestic animals such as buffaloes, cows, etc., using a big knife.

32. lɨəj   To cut a block of wood into pieces, using a saw.

33. ŋè:l   To score around the circumference of a cylindrical object before breaking it up.

34. {ŋà:m }   To cut away or level off high grass or shrubs to clear the path.
    {phrɛ:}

35. pèŋ   To chop down a tree.

36. pɛ́h   To slit the skin of bamboo or coconut, using the tip of a chopper.

37. pnpúʔ   To cut using the tip of a heavy knife to open the grain of pieces of bamboo (bamboo to be used for flooring), with rapid vertical action.

38. pλ:k   To cut a long shallow scallop along the grain of a piece of wood (especially bamboo).

39. pàt   To slash down plants.

40. pát   To slash plants with an upward motion.

41. pà:t   To cut a wedge shape at the end of a thin and broad piece of wood.

42. pá:t   To vertically cut off a part, parts or pieces of ripe fruit, meat, or an animal body; usually down with a slow, careful action.

43. póh   To lop the upper part of bushes or bamboo stalks.

44. pòk   To cut a tree for building purposes.

45. pòŋ   To cut a hole in a big bamboo stem using a knife or an axe.

46. pɔ̀:t   To score thin materials using the tip of a sharp instrument.

47. {pɔ́:t }   To pare or trim a stick or a big piece of wood and smooth to a
    {tʰá:k}   particular shape or size (using both hands to handle the tool).

48. pʰà: To halve fruit or vegetables using a knife.

49. plà: To chop meat into very fine pieces, with rapid and repeated
                strokes.

50. plá?   To split a log (along the grain).

51. plà:k   To slice some vegetables such as bamboo shoots along the grain,
                using the middle and bottom part of the sharp blade (usually done
                on a palm).

52. plúh   To cut a hole in the wall, paper, or fruit using the tip of a
                knife.

53. plíət   To shorten a long piece of wood using a knife or an axe.

54. pʰrŏh   To cut a narrow channel in the ground or in a bamboo stem for a
                waterway.

55. rɔ̀k   To kill a pig by slitting its throat with a sharp pointed knife,
                using an upward motion.

56. {rɛ̀h}   To cut the adjoining section of an object (the cotton holding
    {rɔ̀h}   weights in a net, the membrane holding bone and flesh), or cut
                open the seam or fold in thin materials such as paper or cloth,
                using blade upwards action away from the body.

57. rɨəm   To cut down plants to clear the land for cultivation.

58. rlàh   To butcher an animal, dividing the main components of the body.

59. sɛ́k   To shorten, or cut apart, or cut into pieces a rope-shaped object.

60. sɛ́:   To cut a hole in or puncture a thin piece of wood, paper, or a
                tin, using /srnɛ́:/.

61. sɛ́h   To cut away weeds or young plants.

62. {sŋkríh}   To plane, finish, or smooth a piece of wood, or grate food.
    {tʰɔ́:}

63. saríc   To scrape the end of a stick to a very sharp point, using a knife.

64. srɔ́:j   To vertically cut meat, fruit or vegetables into small pieces.

65. tá:l   To cut fruit or vegetables into thin pieces.

66. tò:n   To vertically chop with full strength a log or the head of a
                large domestic animal such as a buffalo, using a big, heavy,
                sharp instrument.

67. tɔ̀h   To make a hole in timber, using a chisel /trnɔ̀h/.

68. {tʰɔ́:n}   To style hair using scissors (usually used with women's hair).
    {sɔ̀:j}

69. trá ŋ   To square off the end and smooth it.

70. wʌ̀:k   To cut a scallop (across the grain) in the end of a piece of
                wood, using the tip of a knife.

71. wàh   To split a piece of wood or halve fruit or vegetables, using a
                 vertical motion

72. wàt   To cut and wound someone (including an animal) with a big sharp-
                 edged instrument.

Item 1 no.43 /póh/

    To cut - with a single sharp broad blade or an axe-like blade
            - trees, bamboo stalks or bushes
            - the upper part
            - apart.

Item 2 no.37 /pnpú?/

    To cut - with a single sharp broad blade
            - with the tip of the blade
            - bamboo stem
            - vertically (downward motion)
            - rapidly
            - precisely
            - opening (incision)
            - to be used as building materials.

Item 3 no.33 /ŋè:l/

    To cut - with a single sharp broad blade
            - (around) cylindrical object, especially
            - on the surface
            - precisely
            - a line
            - to mark
            - to make a preliminary cut.

Item 4 no.13 /kép/

    To cut - with scissor-like blade
            - thin, flat object (paper, cloth, leaves, fingernail, cotton
               thread, or membrane, human hair, etc.)
            - the edge
            - precisely
            - little by little
            - to shape, to neaten, or decorate.

Item 5 no.19 /kóh/

    To cut - with a single sharp narrow blade
            - fruit, vegetable, meat, animal parts, stick, etc.
            - vertically (downward motion) usually done on a board or on the
               ground
            - into small pieces or chunks (roughly cut).

Item 6 no.22 /klàh/

    To cut - with a single sharp broad blade
            - bamboo stem
            - along the grain
            - horizontally
            - precisely
            - into strips
            - to tie things.

Item 7 no.26 /kwà:t/

    To cut - with an instrument called /krwà:t/
            - log
            - inner part
            - precisely
            - a portion out
            - to neaten or to shape.

Item 8 no.59 /sɛ́k/

    To cut - with any appropriate sharp instrument
            - cylindrical object such as a rope, stick, etc.
            - crosswise
            - to cut apart or to shorten.

Item 9 no.39 /pàt/

    To cut - with a single sharp broad blade
            - small trees or plants
            - the upper part
            - with slanting-down direction
            - rapidly
            - apart.

Item 10 no.40 /pát/

    To cut - with a single sharp broad blade
            - small trees or plants
            - the base
            - with slanting-up direction
            - rapidly
            - apart.

Item 11 no.56 /{ròh / rèh}/

    To cut - with a single sharp narrow blade
            - a thin, flat, fibre object such as paper, cloth, cotton, etc.
              at the connecting parts or folded parts
            - vertically (upward motion)
            - apart or into component parts.

4.   COMPARISON OF SOME ASPECTS OF KHMU AND THAI CUTTING WORDS

Even though there is no exact correspondence between the words of similar meanings in two languages, the field and componential semantic approach can be used for comparisons, as acceptable correspondences can be established. This is not to say that this task is an easy one. It is generally true that many of the meanings into which we classify our experience are culturally determined or modified, and therefore they vary considerably from culture to culture. Some meanings found in one culture may not exist in another. A particular meaning exists when the corresponding reality is available to the culture. Different languages, there-fore, classify their meanings differently. For 'cutting', the classification represented by variants of 'cutting' words varies from language to language. To my knowledge there are 55 cutting words in Thai and 72 in Khmu. Both languages have the same basic classes of components, involving the instrument, object, action, and purpose or result. (The subclasses are also basically the same, the only important exception being that Thai has a subclass 'Emotional attitude'.) The classes are related to aspects of culture, such as the specific type of instrument used in cutting and the type of material of the object to be cut which are mainly determined by what is available in that living area, and the type of action used and the type of cut intended, which are mainly determined by what the tradition and culture require in that community. This can be seen clearly as far as the cutting activities are concerned. In Thai the main area seems to be food preparation. There are 27 words out of 55 cutting words used for describing specific activities in detail. In Khmu plant and wood cutting is the most developed area; more than half of the words in the field belong to this area (43 out of 72 words).

When comparing the two languages, the notion of 'correspondence' is basic (Hammarström 1976:23). A unit in one system may be corresponding or not corresponding in relation to a unit in another system. The relation of 'correspondence' is considered by him as a relation between units which show 'sufficient similarity'. Below, the interest will be concentrated on allosemes. If allosemes from two languages are compared there basically are five possible relations:

        (a)   one-to-one correspondence
        (b)   one-to-two (or many) correspondence
        (c)   two (or many)-to-one correspondence
        (d)   one-to-∅ correspondence[6]
        (e)   ∅-to-one correspondence

It should be noted that some of the cutting words may have more than one alloseme. Some may have another cutting alloseme or allosemes concerning some activity outside the cutting field, such as /pà:t/ and /cʰalɛ̀:p/; and some may have more than one cutting meaning such as /sǎj/ and /càk/. Besides the cutting meaning, /pà:t/ also means 'to level off the surface' and /cʰalɛ̀:p/ means 'to move, slide, fly, be blown along a tilted position, or in a direction slanted from the perpendicular' (Haas 1964). /sǎj/ may mean (1) 'to plane (wood)', (2) 'to grate food', or (3) 'to shave ice'. /càk/ may mean (1) 'to cut lengthwise strips or slivers of bamboo', (2) 'to do a decorative cutting of vegetables using a lengthwise cut' (e.g. spring onions, chilis, etc.), (3) 'to jag' (e.g. cucumber, etc.). (/càk/ also has another alloseme outside 'cutting' which is a formal form of the auxiliary /cà?/ 'shall, will'.)

A particular alloseme of a word in a language may correspond with a particular alloseme of a word in another language in the five ways mentioned above. Examples of correspondences between some of the Khmu and Thai cutting words (= cutting allosemes) are provided below.

4.1 Cutting words concerning food preparation

For food preparation, there are 27 words in Thai and 22 in Khmu. The description of some aspects of these words will be given, followed by some correspondences between the two languages.

The words used for meat and fish preparation in Thai are /cʰɨ̂ət/, /cʰamlɛ̀ʔ/, /pà:t/, /lɛ̂:/, /lɔ́ʔ/, /hàn/, /sàp/, /sɔ́ʔ/, /kʰɔ̀:t/, /tàt/, /krì:t/, /cʰɨ̌ən/, and /tʰɨ̌ə/ (see the chart and the definitions). /cʰɨ̂ət/ is used for killing small domestic animals such as chickens while /pà:t/ is used for large domestic animals such as cows.

/cʰamlɛ̀ʔ/ refers to butchering action, to cutting up the animal body into parts while /lɛ̂:/ is used for separating the flesh from the bone or cutting gristle off the flesh. /lɔ́ʔ/ can be used interchangeably with /lɛ̂:/ but with more care to keep to the original form of the parts. /kʰɔ̀:t/, /sɔ́ʔ/, /tàt/, and /krì:t/ are used mainly for fish preparation. /kʰɔ̀:t/ is for scraping off the fish scales, /sɔ́ʔ/ for removing the fin. /krì:t/ is usually used for a long cut on the surface through the skin to make the cooking easier and quicker. /lɛ̂:/ can also be used with fish referring to the removal of the flesh from the bone.

/lɛ̂:/, /hàn/ and /sàp/ are different ways of cutting up flesh. /lɛ̂:/ implies thin slices cut with horizontal action, while /hàn/ cuts either small or large and thin or thick, but with vertical action, and /sàp/ cuts very fine pieces. /sàp/ can also refer to chopping up bone.

/cʰɨ̌ən/ and /tʰɨ̌ə/ refer to rough ways of cutting meat. /cʰɨ̌ən/ is used for cutting pieces of meat without precision or neatness while /tʰɨ̌ə/ implies an 'annoying' emotional overtone because the cutting tool is not sharp enough to cut the tough meat.

For meat and fish preparation in Khmu there are words like /tɔ̀:n/, /rɔ̀k/, /krùə/, /pá:t/, /kwéc/, /lɨ̀ə/, /rlàh/, /cʰrɛh/, /klɛ̀n/, /pà:t/, /kóh/, /srɔ́:j/, and /plà:/.

/tɔ̀:n/ is used for killing a big domestic animal such as a buffalo by hitting with a sharp instrument on the head, while /rɔ̀k/ is for stabbing at the throat of either a pig or a cow to get the animal's blood. /krùə/ is used for removing pig bristles or chicken feathers, while /ká:t/ is for the hair of big domestic animals such as dogs or cows. /lɨ̀ə/ refers to skinning of big domestic animals, while /cʰrɛ́h/ is used for removing fish scales. /kwéc/ is used for removing some small things such as the eyes of the fish.

/rlàh/ is used for cutting up the whole animal body into component parts; /pá:t/ is used for cutting off some particular parts; /klɛ̀h/ refers to the removal of flesh from the bone or gristle from the meat; and /cʰrɛ́h/ is also used for disjointing or boning.

For preparing the flesh, /kóh/ is a common word referring to chopping the flesh into edible sizes, either big or small. /srɔ́:j/ is used for cutting into thin and small slices and /plà:/ is for chopping into very fine pieces.

The words for fruit and vegetable preparation in Thai are /pɔ̀:k/, /cɔ̀ʔ/, /fǎ:n/, /hàn/, /cʰɨ̄ən/, /pà:t/, /krì:t/, /sɔːj/, /kwân/, /kwǎ:n/, /pʰà:/, /sɔ́ʔ/, /sàp/, /sǎj/, /kʰù:t/, /cʰɔ̀ʔ/, /càk/, /cʰalɛ̀:p/, /kɛ̀ʔ (salàk)/, /kʰlìp/, /lem/, and /tàt/ (see the chart and definitions).

/pɔ̀:k/, /kʰù:t/, and /cʰɔ̀ʔ/ are used for removing the skin. /pɔ̀:k/ is used for peeling off and /kʰù:t/ is scraping off the skin. /cɔ̀ʔ/ is used for chopping the hard cover, such as a coconut shell.

/cʰɔ̀ʔ/ can also refer to the cutting up of the flesh of unripe mangoes or guavas. Other terms are /hàn/, referring to a cut of either a small or large piece of edible size, while /fǎ:n/ refers to thin slices and /sɔːj/ to very fine slices. For a hard, long, narrow cylindrical object like a stem of sugarcane, the word /kwân/ is used for cutting it into pieces across the grain after the preliminary marking cut. For the stem of some vegetables such as spring onions, /càk/ is used for a lengthwise cut into strips and also for jagging which both have decorative purposes.

For turning the flesh of fruit or vegetables into very fine pieces the word /sàp/ can be used as well as /sǎj/ and /kʰù:t/. /sàp/ is carried out by rapid strokes of a chopper, /sǎj/ by a grater or ice shaver, and /kʰù:t/ by a grater.

/pʰà:/ is used for vertical halving and /kʰwǎ:n/ for a circular cutting round the centre of fruit such as a seed. /cɔ̀ʔ/ is cutting a hole into an object, and /sɔ́ʔ/ is cutting a straight groove along the long axis of an object such as a cucumber for decorative purposes. /kɛ̀ʔ (salàk)/ refers to shaping or cutting a design on the fruit or vegetable. /cʰalɛ̀:p/, /kʰlìp/ and /lem/ are mainly for neatening. /pà:t/, /cʰɨ̄ən/ and /tàt/ are for cutting off a part from the whole for some particular purpose which is not necessarily decorative or neatening.

For fruit or vegetable preparation in Khmu there are words like /hǎ:l/, /hǎ:k/, /pɛ́h/, /wàh/, /plà:k/, /tá:l/, /srɔ́:j/, /kʰɔ̀ʔ/, and /kwéc/.
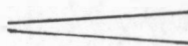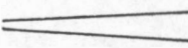
/hǎ:l/ is used for peeling the skin while /pɛ́h/ is used for slitting the skin of bamboo shoots or coconut shells. /wah/, and also a Thai loan /pʰà:/, is used for halving, while /hǎ:k/ is used for paring off pieces from the surface or to slice off pieces of fruit. /tá:l/ refers to slicing fruit or vegetables into thin pieces, while /srɔ́:j/ refers to small pieces. /plà:k/ is used only for cutting bamboo shoots, rattan, etc. into lengthwise pieces. /kʰɔ̀ʔ/ is used for removing small things like seeds.

In general the classifications of 'cutting' in the area of food preparation of Thai and Khmu are not very much different from each other. Both contain similar types of words for main activities. However in Thai a distinction is made between different shapes of objects such as horizontal, vertical, diagonal, or circular; and different physical results including decorative, shaping, or neatening purposes. In Khmu the emphasis is more on the practical purposes of dividing things into edible-sized pieces, or separating the edible part from the inedible part.
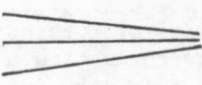
Some correspondences between Khmu and Thai food cutting allosemes are provided below. There are some allosemes in Thai that are in one-to-one correspondence with Khmu:

```
        Thai                        Khmu
    /cʰamlɛ̀ʔ/ _____ /rlàh/
    /fǎ:n/     _____ /tá:l/
    /pɔ̀:k/    _____ /há:l/
```

Some Thai cutting allosemes are in one-to-many correspondences with Khmu cutting allosemes. For example, the alloseme /kʰù:t/ in Thai corresponds with with two allosemes /krùə/ and /kʰɔ̀ʔ/ in Khmu. On the other hand each of these Khmu allosemes can be described as partly corresponding with the Thai alloseme /kʰù:t/. Another similar example is /hàn/.

```
        Thai                        Khmu
    /kʰù:t/  ⟨          ⟩  /krùə/
                           /kʰɔ̀ʔ/

    /hàn/    ⟨          ⟩  /kóh/
                           /srɔ́:j/
```

More common in the area of food preparation is the one-to-many correspondence between Khmu and Thai. /kóh/ in Khmu corresponds to /hàn/, /tàt/, and /sàp/ in Thai, and /srɔ́:j/ in Khmu corresponds to three allosemes in Thai: /hàn/, /lɛ̂:/ and /sɔ:j/.

```
        Thai                        Khmu
    /hàn/  ⟩
    /tàt/  ⟩──────  /kóh/
    /sàp/  ⟩

    /hàn/  ⟩
    /lɛ̂:/ ⟩──────  /srɔ́:j/
    /sɔ:j/ ⟩
```

/hàn/, /tàt/ and /sàp/ in Thai are in partial correspondence with /kóh/ in Khmu, and /hàn/, /lɛ̂:/, and /sɔ:j/ are also in partial correspondence with /srɔ́:j/ in Khmu.

In Khmu, special allosemes used only for decorating, shaping, or neatening food items are less common than in Thai and the allosemes with emotional overtones do not appear in my collection at all. Therefore the allosemes like /kɛ̀ʔ (salàk)/, /càk/, /kʰwǎ:n/ or /tʰɨ̵ə/ in Thai have no correspondence in Khmu.

```
        Thai                        Khmu
    /kɛ̀ʔ (salàk)/ _____  Ø
    /càk/         _____  Ø
    /kʰwǎ:n/      _____  Ø
    /tʰɨ̵ə/        _____  Ø
```

4.2 Cutting words concerning plant and wood cutting

More than half of the word allosemes in the Khmu cutting field belong to plant and wood cutting. There are altogether 43 out of 72 allosemes while in Thai there are 22 out of 55 allosemes. Khmu makes clearer distinctions between different kinds of materials, sizes, shapes or different areas of objects to be cut, and so on.

The 43 Khmu cutting allosemes concerning plant and wood cutting are /bák/, /hɛ́:l/, /háːk/, /hɔ́:c/, /kàl/, /kóh/, /kʰrɛ́h/, /kwát/, /kwàːt/, /lɨ:p/, /lɨ̵əj/, /ŋèːl/, /ŋàːm/ or /pʰrɛ́:/, /pɛ̀ŋ/, /pɛ́h/, /pnpúʔ/, /pʌ:k/, /pàt/, /pát/, /pàːt/, /póh/, /pòk/, /pòŋ/, /pɔ́ːt/, /pláʔ/, /pʰróh/, /rɨ̵əm/, /sɛ́ː/, /sɛ́h/, /sŋkríh/, /saríc/, /tò:n/, /tɔ̀h/, /tráɲ/, /wʌ̀:k/, /wàh/, /plɨ́ət/, /plúh/, /sɛ́k/, /kɨ̵t/ and /kíəw/ (see the chart and the definitions).

The 22 Thai cutting allosemes concerning plant and wood-cutting are /bàːk/, /càk/, /caːm/, /cʰɔ́ʔ/, /cìək/, /kɛ̀ʔ (salàk)/ /kʰùt/, /kʰwân/, /lǎw/, /pʰàː/, /raːn/, /lít/, /lɨ̵əj/, /sǐn/, /sǎj/, /sîəm/, /sakàt/, /tʰàːk/, /tʰɔːn/, /daːj/, /tʰǎːŋ/, and /kìəw/.

Though many words in Khmu reflect the emphasis on physical differences of the objects being cut, in many cases the use of particular kinds of instruments also determines the use of the words. Generally, for cutting plants of different sizes and at different parts there are many words. /pòk/ and /pɛ̀ŋ/ are used for cutting down trees. /pòk/ has the special component of building purposes which implies selected objects. For cutting different parts of trees, beside /pòk/ and /pɛ̀ŋ/ which are used for cutting the base, there are words like /kàl/ for cutting the top or branches, and /póh/ for cutting the upper part just above the middle part. Normally this word is used with bushes or bamboo stalks. There are two words for cutting small trees or middle-sized plants. /pàt/ is used for a downward cutting action, and /pát/ for upward cutting actions. /ŋàːm/ or /pʰrɛ́:/ is used for the cutting away of high grass or bushes (with the special component of clearing purpose), and /sɛ́h/ is for weeds. For this subset, there are some words that correspond directly to Thai words. /pɛ̀ŋ/ corresponds with /kʰôːn/, /kàl/ with /raːn/ and /ŋàːm/ or /pʰrɛ́:/ and /sɛ́h/ with /tʰǎːŋ/. However all of the eight words correspond with the general word /tàt/ in Thai while in Khmu no generic term as such exists.

For shortening or cutting wood into pieces for any purpose, shapes or sizes and type of cutting instrument are important. /sɛ́k/ is used for a stick, or any other material of that shape, or with any instrument, while /plɨ́ət/ denotes the use of a knife or an axe, and /lɨ̵əj/ the use of a saw. Again in Thai, though there are words that correspond with these mentioned words (that is /tàt/ corresponds with /sɛ́k/, /tʰɔ́:n/ with /plɨ́ət/ and /lɨ̵əj/ with /lɨ̵əj/), the general word /tàt/ can substitute for all of them.

For splitting a piece of wood /pláʔ/ is used for a big piece of wood, such as a log, and /wàh/ is used for smaller pieces. In Thai only the word /pʰaː/ is available for splitting. /pʰaː/ is also borrowed into Khmu but normally it is used only for cutting fruit or vegetables into halves.

There are four words referring to the action of making a hole in Khmu. /tɔ̀h/ is carried out on a big piece of wood such as a log, /pòŋ/ in a hollow piece of wood such as a bamboo stem, /plúh/ in a thin flat piece of wood or any other material and /sɛ́ː/ in the same sort of material as /plúh/ but with a special tool called /srnɛ́ː/. Again in Thai there is only one word available, /cɔ̀ʔ/.

There are several words for carving, shaping or neatening wood, such as /hɔ́:c/, /pɔ́:t/, /tràɲ/, /kwàt/, /kwà:t/, /pʌ̀:k/ and /wʌ̀:k/.

Examples for some of the correspondences between Khmu and Thai cutting words concerning plant and wood cutting are provided below.

One-to-one correspondences are:

Thai	Khmu
/lɨ̂əj/	/lɨ̀əj/
/lît/	/cʰrɛ́h/
/ra:n/	/kàl/
/da:j/	/hɛ́:l/

There are many cases of one-to-many correspondences as in:

Thai   Khmu

(a)   /pʰà:/ ⟨   /plà?/
                        /wàh/
                        /pʰà:/

(b)   /cɔ̀?/ ⟨   /tɔ̀h/
                        /pòŋ/
                        /plúh/
                        /sɛ́:/

(c)   /sîəm/ ⟨   /saríc/
                        /hɑ́:t/
                        /pà:t/

However, I have not come across similar many-to-one correspondences (from Thai to Khmu) in the case of wood cutting.

There are very few one-to-∅ correspondences between Thai and Khmu. (One of them is /cìək/.)

Thai	Khmu
/cìək/	∅

However, there is a number of one-to-∅ correspondences between Khmu and Thai as in:

Thai	Khmu
∅	/sɛ́k/
∅	/pnpù?/
∅	/plà:k/
∅	/póh/
∅	/pàt/
∅	/pát/

A word in either of Khmu or Thai can be in one-to-many relation to a word in the other language (both $x <^x_x$ and $^x_x> x$). This means that there are also various patterns of partial correspondences.

Correspondences in Khmu to the Thai word /tàt/ and some of its possible hyponyms are shown as follows:

Khmu	Thai₁	Thai₂
/pɛ̀ŋ/	/kʰ ô:n/	
/kà l/	/ra:n/	
/ŋà:m/	/t ʰǎ:ŋ/	/tàt/
/plíət/	/tʰɔ:n/	
/lɨ̂əj/	/lɨ̂əj/	
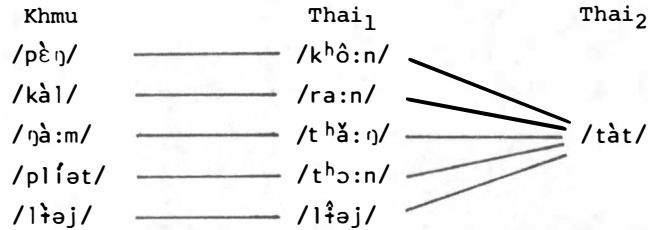
In this example one-to-many relations go 'both ways'. /pɛ̀ŋ/ is related to /kʰô:n/ and /tàt/, /kàl/ is related to /ra:n/ and /tàt/ and so on. On the other hand /tàt/ is related to five Khmu words.

To illustrate a more complicated difference in the structure of the lexicon between Khmu and Thai, diagrams of the two subsets of Khmu and Thai cutting words concerning plant cutting and wood cutting are presented:

Plant cutting

Khmu	Thai₁	Thai₂
/pɛ̀ŋ/	/kʰô:n/	
/pòk/		
/kàl/	(/ra:n/)	/tàt/
/póh/		
/pàt/		
/pát/		
/{ŋà:m / pʰrɛ́:}/	(/tʰǎ:ŋ/)	
/sɛ́h/		
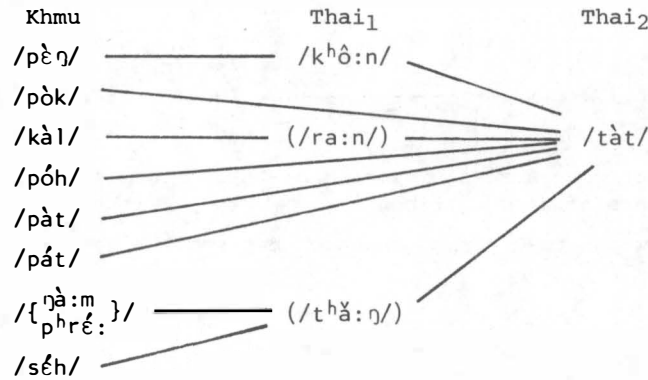
The Thai meaning /tàt/ corresponds to eight meanings in Khmu. These eight meanings cannot be summed up in one more general meaning in Khmu. It is also the case that four of the meanings in Khmu would sometimes be translated by Thai words with a more specific meaning and sometimes by the more general /tàt/.

Wood cutting (or shortening)

Khmu	Thai₁	Thai₂
/sɛ́k/		
/plíət/	(/tʰɔ:n/)	/tàt/
/lɨ̂əj/	/lɨ̂əj/	
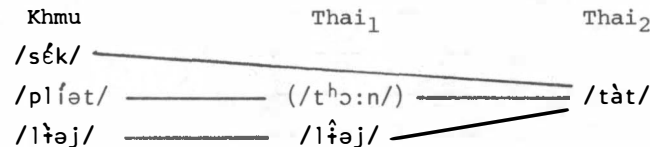
It can be noted that for a speaker of a language who learns another language, the convergent relations of many words in his own language corresponding to one in the target language will create difficulties. See, for example, the convergence of Khmu forms to Thai /kʰùːt/ and /hàn/, and to /pʰàː/, /cɔ̀ʔ/ and /sǐəm/, above; and the convergence of Thai forms to Khmu /kóh/ and /srɔ́ːj/. On the other hand Thai speakers learning Khmu and facing such divergent relations such as the plant and wood cutting examples above will have a still greater problem. This case is perhaps even more difficult than when an item in a target language corresponds to Ø in the speaker's own language, as for Thai /cìək/. In such cases the learners have to learn meanings that are unknown to their language.

5. CONCLUSION

Different languages have different semantic structures; Thai and Khmu, as shown above, have different structures of lexicon realised by different sets of words expressing cutting activities, one of the most important human activities. Khmu cutting words are much more numerous than in Thai. More than half of the words concentrate on the area of plant and wood cutting including preparing land for cultivation. This clearly illustrates Khmu culture, which is predominantly a swidden agriculture, basket weaving and bamboo culture. On the other hand, Thai cutting words concentrate more on the area of food preparation. There are words referring to different cutting actions for making fruit, vegetables and animals ready for eating. Apart from that neatness and decorative style have also been taken into account to a certain extent. This of course illustrates a different culture. It is the culture of a people who are more established and more well-to-do. There is a lot more food of various sorts and the people have more time to spend on artistic pursuits.

Some meaning units in one language may not appear in another language at all because it does not exist in that particular speaking culture. However, even for words with similar meaning, their semantic boundaries may not be exactly the same due to the different overall underlying semantic structure. This is one of the reasons why semantics is a difficult area in language study.

NOTES

1. 'A study of Thai and Khmu cutting words' is a revised form of a part of the author's Ph.D. thesis, 'A description of Khmu including comparisons with Thai', completed at Monash University, Melbourne. Many people have contributed to this form of the work. Some of those whom author would like to mention here are G. Hammarström, Keith Allen, William Hanna, friends in Bangkok who answered the questionnaire providing useful data on Thai cutting words, and the Khmu at the Huey Yen village, Barn Muangkarn, Chiengkhong district, Chiengrai province for Khmu data.

2. See how the third component (voice) in the IPA chart (1949 (reprint 1977), p.10) has to be represented over and over again (although in this particular chart, unlike other charts the terms voiced and unvoiced are not explicitly mentioned).

3. A copy of the questionnaire is deposited in the Department of Linguistics, Monash University.

4. The word 'cut' with a number underneath refers to the particular cutting word in the order it appears on the chart.

5. The definitions in this dictionary are given in English translation with the original Thai definitions in brackets.

6. Ø refers to the absence of an equally specific, precise verb in one language or the other.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BEVER, T. and P. ROSENBAUM

    1971   Some lexical structures and their empirical validity.   In D. Steinberg and L. Jakobovits, eds *Semantics*, 586-599.   London: Cambridge University Press.

BIERWISCH, M.

    1970   Semantics.   In J. Lyons, ed. 1970:166-184.

FILLENBAUM, S. and A. RAPOPORT

    1971   *Structures in the subjective lexicon*.   New York and London: Academic Press.

GETHING, T.

    1972   *Aspects of meaning in Thai nominals: a study in structural semantics*.   The Hague: Mouton.

HAAS, M.

    1964   *Thai-English student's dictionary*.   Stanford: Stanford University Press.

HAMMARSTRÖM, U.G.E.

    1976   *Linguistic units and items*.   Berlin: Springer.

    1978   On linguistic correspondences and non-correspondences.   In H. Birnbaum , et al, eds, *Studia linguistica Alexandro Vasilii filio Issatschenko a collegis amicisque oblata*, 155-160.   Lisse: The Peter de Ridder Press.

JAKOBSON, R., G. FANT and M. HALLE

    1951   *Preliminaries to speech analysis*.   Cambridge, Mass: M.I.T. Press.

LEHRER, A.

    1974   *Semantic fields and lexical structure*.   Amsterdam: North-Holland.

LYONS, J., ed.

    1970   *New Horizons in linguistics*.   Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

McFARLAND, G.

    1944   *Thai-English dictionary*.   Stanford: Stanford University Press.

MATISOFF, J.A.

   1978   *Variational semantics in Tibeto-Burman: the "organic" approach to
            linguistic comparison.* Philadelphia: Institute of the Study of
            Human Issues.

NICKEL, G., ed.

   1971   *Papers in contrastive linguistics.* London: Cambridge University
            Press.

NIDA, E.

   1975a   *Exploring semantic structure.* Munich: Wilhelm Verlag Fink.·

   1975b   *Componential analysis of meaning: an introduction to semantic
            structure.* The Hague: Mouton.

   1975c   *Language structure and translation.* Selected and introduced by
            Anwar S. Dil. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

OSGOOD, C., G. SUCI and P. TANNENBAUM

   1957   *The measurement of meaning.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF THAILAND

   1950,   *Thai-Thai dictionary.* Bangkok.
   1982

STEINBERG, D. and L. JACOBOVITS, eds

   1971   *Semantics.* London: Cambridge University Press.

TRUBETZKOY, N.S.

   1969   *Principles of phonology.* Translated by C. Baltaxe. Berkeley:
            University of California Press.

ULLMANN, S.

   1962   *Semantics: an introduction to the science of meaning.* Oxford:
            Basil Blackwell.

WEINREICH, U.

   1964   *Languages in contact.* The Hague: Mouton.

   1980   *On semantics.* Edited by W. Labov and B. Weinreich. Philadelphia:
            University of Pennsylvania Press.

INDEX

prepositional phrase   30, 45-46,
    66, 69

presyllable   5, 10, 17-18, 25

preverb   41

preverbal adverb   42

preverbal particle   81, 83-88,
    118-119, 137

procedural discourse   122-127

pronoun   32-33, 36-37

pronoun phrase   30, 36

propulsion   76, 78

purposive   75-79, 83

purposive conjoining   92

purposive embedded clause   75

purposive relationship   118

quotative   41, 73-75

reciprocal   65-66

reduplication   27-29, 118

reflexive pronoun   33

reflexive construction   65

register   19-23

relative clause   72

relative pronoun   33

repetition   27, 120, 136

responses   93-94

responsive   95, 103

result   79

resultative meaning   81

resultative sequence   83

self-expression   93-95, 103

semantic component   146, 157

semantic field   148-150, 164, 173

semantics   146-150

semantic unit   147-148

seme   147, 150

semitransitive   41, 45, 47, 51, 62

sentence   46, 72, 104

serial verb   53, 79

social expression   94-95, 101-102

statement   96

stop   8, 18, 21

stress   5, 24-25, 29

structural semantics   147

subcomponent   160, 164

subject   30, 46
    - postposed   62

subordinate clause   75-76

subordinate construction   83

subordinating   119

syllable   5, 18, 21, 24

synonym(y)   145-146, 148, 162, 164

taxonomy   157

teknonymy   38

temporal   45-46, 66, 83-84, 104

tense register   9, 20-23

transitional vowel   6

transitive   40-41, 47, 62, 77-78

transitive clause   57-61

tree diagram   149, 158

trisyllabic word   5

undergoer   47

variant   5, 11, 17, 24-25

verb   40

verbal descriptive   32

verbal phrase   39-45

vocative   38, 72, 93, 102, 136

voice quality   19

vowel   12-19

word   148

word alloseme   148, 160, 187

word semantics   145

word structure   5