

PARTICIPANT REFERENCE IN NORTHERN KHMER¹

Somkiet POOPATWIBOON

Srinakharinwirot University, Mahasarakham

The purpose of this paper is to offer a brief description of participant reference rules in Northern Khmer. The latter is spoken by some 550,000 people in six provinces of Thailand, namely, Surin, Buriram, Srisaket, Mahasarakham, Prachinburi, Trat, and Ubolratchathani (Dhanan and Chartchai, 1978), the densest concentration of speakers being in the first three.

My description is based on eighteen texts, specimens of the speech of Mrs Phen Piyaram, a forty-four-year-old native speaker of Buriram Northern Khmer. These were first recorded on magnetic tape, which was then transcribed with the help of two other native speakers, Mr Prathueng Piyaram and Miss Anong.

I shall confine myself to describing how participants are introduced, how they are reintroduced, and how reference to them is maintained.

1. *Initial introduction of participants*

Main, secondary, incidental secondary, and nonhuman secondary participants² are introduced in different ways at their first appearance.

1.1. *Main participants*

Main participants of the text or episode are usually introduced in an existential *miən* clause with the numeral phrase *muuj* 'one' or *nuv muuj* 'be one'. After this introduction the next clause usually has the same participant as a zero subject,³

¹I am indebted to Dorothy Thomas, Sukhumawadee Khamhiran, Sujaritlak Deephadung, and David Thomas for instruction, ideas, and help. I also thank my language helpers, Mrs Phen Piyaram, Mr Prathueng Piyaram, and Miss Anong. This paper owes much to Callow (1973).

²A *main* participant is one who occurs throughout all or most of the text. A *secondary* participant is one who occurs only in some parts, or as a member of an action group or assemblage.

³Symbolized as \emptyset .

and that participant is automatically in focus. Examples:

main participant of text:

miən mɛɛ ʔəw nuu muuj ∅
 there-is mother-father be one
 'There were parents.... (they)'

main participants of episode:

miən kmom koon kmom muuj ∅
 there-is girl child girl one
 'There was a daughter.... (she)'

miən mɛɛ cah nuu muuj
 there-is mother old be one
 'There was an old mother....'

1.2. *Secondary participants*

Secondary participants are usually introduced in an existential miən clause without a numeral phrase but with an optional kii 'third-person pronoun'. After this introduction the same participant usually appears in the next clause and is referred to as kii. This participant is not in focus. Examples:

miən niiəʔ srɔʔ kii kii
 there-is person village they they
 'There were neighbours.... they'

miən ʔaakii kii
 there-is someone she
 'There was someone.... she'

miən phooŋ priən
 there-is group hunter
 'There were some hunters

1.3. *Incidental secondary participants*

Secondary participants who are incidental — that is to say, nonspecific participants — are usually introduced in the object slot of a clause in the form of a noun phrase, noun or pronoun kii 'third person', with or without modifiers. They may be referred to as kii in the subject slot of the following clause.

Depending on whether they are to be in focus or not, main and secondary participants may be reintroduced in various ways, such as by a noun phrase (with or without modifiers) or pronoun. They may be reintroduced in the subject, object, or possessive slots.

2.1. *In-focus reintroduction*

Participants, both main and secondary, may be reintroduced and brought into focus in the subject slot by use of a noun phrase with or without modifiers. The noun phrase may consist of a noun plus description, demonstrative, possessive, or the like. Examples:

S

moo kəʔ mɛɛ tneŋ thaɑ

come L mother ask that

'(When she) came, the mother asked that.....'

S

phɔɔ tə ʔəw tamrɛɛj moo Ø

when father elephant come

'When the father elephant came (he)

S

koon nuh kəʔ plɛɛk knoŋ cəət

child that L be-surprised in heart

'That child was surprised

S

mii ckɛɛ nih kəʔ liic koon

mother dog this L delivered child

'This mother dog had delivered (she)

S

mɛɛ ʔɛɛŋ nuh həj phɔɔ tə phluw

mother herself that Part when be-bright

'That mother, when the day began

S

snɛɛh kəʔ pɔɔj kii kəʔ tneŋ thaɑ

then husband her L ask that

'Then her husband asked that.....'

2.2. *Non-focus pronoun reintroduction*

Participants who are out of focus may be reintroduced in the object slot of a clause by use of pronoun *kii* 'third person'. Examples:

O

khniə kə? tuu lɔŋ nɔŋ kii.⁶
 she L go play with them

'She went to play with them.'

O

thəə cniik da? kum tampiəŋ dec kii cəh həj.⁷
 do spade put-into clump bamboo like her Part

'(She = the second daughter) made her spade lost in the clump of bamboo like her (= as the first daughter had done).'

2.3. *Non-focus noun reintroduction*

Participants who are out of focus may be reintroduced in the object slot by use of a noun phrase with or without modifiers. The noun phrase may consist of a noun plus description, demonstrative pronoun, possessive, or the like. Examples:

O

nəɛh kə? pɔuul ppuən thaa
 then persuade wife that

'Then (the husband) persuaded his wife that

O

kii kə? haw thaan nuh həj moo
 he L call soldier that Part come

'He called that soldier

⁶*Kii* reintroduces the daughter's friends, who are now out of focus.

⁷*Kii* reintroduces the first daughter, now out of focus.

0

nɛɛh kə? tuu tu? kə? khəɲ pdəj kii
 then go Part L see husband her

'Then (she) went to see her daughter's husband.....'

3. *Maintaining reference to participants*

Depending on whether they are in focus or not, reference to participants is maintained in various ways by use of a pronoun, noun, noun phrase, or zero.

3.1. *In-focus chain of zeroes*

A focused participant is normally not referred to overtly at all: for one participant as subject of successive main clauses there may be a chain of zeroes until the series is terminated or interrupted.

3.1.1. *Subject-initial chain*

After either introduction or reintroduction a focused participant is usually referred back to by zero in the subject slot of the next clauses. Example:

I-F⁸

¶	<u>miən</u>	mɛɛ	ʔəw	nuu	muuj	nɛɛh	kə?	miən	koon
	there-is	mother	father	be	one	then		there-is	child
prɔh	nuu	tə	muuj	<u>F∅</u>	slɔŋ	ʔooj	<u>F∅</u>	slɔŋ	
male	be	-	one	(parents)	love	-	(parents)	love	
<u>F∅</u>	kə?	ləɛj	cuun	koon	tuu	riin	<u>F∅</u>	kə?	mɔt
(parents)	so	send	child	go	study		(parents)	L	lose
ʔat	<u>F∅</u>	mɔt	staŋ	<u>F∅</u>	miən	sɾɛɛ			
money	(parents)	lose	money	(parents)	have	ricefield			
<u>F∅</u>	miən	ckaa	<u>F∅</u>	kə?	luə?	cuun	koon	mɔt	
(parents)	have	garden	(parents)	L	sell	send	child	entire	

⁸Discourse symbols: ∅ = zero; ¶ = structural paragraph; # = paragraph boundary; F∅ = zero focused participant; I-F = introduction of focused participant; NonF = nonfocused participant.

tuu riin munṅkɔk thonburii.

go study Bangkok Thonburi

'There were parents. And there was a son. The parents loved him very much, so they sent him off to study. They used up all of their money. They had fields and gardens. They sold all of these to send their son to study in Bangkok.'

3.1.2. Object-initial chain

A participant first introduced in the object slot must be brought into focus in the subject slot before it can be represented by a chain of zeroes. Examples:

				O				
tək slæk	wojwaaɟ	ʔɔɔɟ	<u>kii niəʔ</u>	srɔʔ	cuuj	roo		
shout	sharply	for	them	person	village	help	seek	
.....	snɛɛh kəʔ	<u>phooŋ niəʔ</u> ^S	srɔʔ	<u>kii kəʔ</u>	cuuj	nunwɛm		
	then	group	person	village	they	L	help	bring
khniə-khnaan	<u>FØ</u>	[11 times]				
together		(they)						

'(The mother) shouted sharply for the neighbours to help her look for (her daughter). Then the neighbours helped together (They).....'

				O		S
phɔɔ tə	baŋʔəən	tuu pah	<u>tamrɛɛj</u>	sɔɔ	<u>tamrɛɛj</u>
when	by-chance	go meet	elephant	white		elephant
con-cæət	<u>FØ</u>			
be-stumped		(he)				

'(The daughter) met the white elephant by chance. The elephant was stumped (He).....'

3.1.3. Interruption by quotation

A chain of zeroes may be interrupted by a direct quotation. After the latter, even though he was previously in focus as Ø, the participant is frequently referred to by a pronoun or noun phrase, being represented by Ø again in any following clauses. Examples:

FØ 2 times + direct quotation + ʔaa khniə man meen baan
 (she) PreN she not really get
 tuu lɔŋ nɔŋ prɔh naa chmool naa FØ
 go play with male what male what (She)

'She really didn't have sexual contact with any man. ...'

Reference to the focused participant had been maintained by zeroes. The introduction of the direct quotation interrupted this chain of zeroes. The first subject was then brought back into focus with the pronoun following the quotation. Once this was done, the chain of zeroes resumed.

FØ 3 times + direct quotation by elephant + snɛɛh kə?
 (elephant) then
tamrɛɛj kə? thaa + direct quotation by elephant.
 elephant L say

'Then the elephant said, ...'

The elephant had been in focus and reference to him had been maintained by zeroes. Both quotations interrupt the chain of zeroes.

3.1.4. Interruption by settings

When a paragraph begins with a time setting or location setting the chain of zeroes is frequently interrupted, even though the same participant is still in focus. A pronoun or noun phrase occurs in the first main clause, zeroes resuming in any following clauses. Examples:

..... FØ # #¶ location setting + khniə kə? tuu
 (she) she L go
 kreet phə? FØ 4 times.
 dip drink (She)

'She went to drink... She ...'

..... FØ # #¶ time setting + niiəŋ nuh kə? ləəj luuk
 (she) daughter that so lift

puəh da? ciər FØ (2 times)
 snake put-into basket (She)

'The daughter put the snake into her basket ... She...'

3.1.5. Chain-final reidentification

At the end of a paragraph or episode, or when he is being removed from the scene, a focused participant is occasionally referred to by a pronoun or noun phrase. Example:

..... FØ + direct quotation + khniə kə? ?ɔɔ teh #
 (she) She L be-glad Part

..... FØ tuu kə? thom ckεε kə? thom thom thom
 (she) go L be-big dog L be-big be-big be-big

ram # (end of introductory paragraph).

continually

¶ FØ khniə phəəm nuu nuu tuu kii kə?
 she conceive be be go she L

liic koon moo jaəŋ cεh # (end of episode, with
 deliver child come Part participant removed
 from scene)

'..... She was glad.

'..... (She = the dog) went, the dog grew bigger.

'..... (She) She was pregnant for a long time, then she delivered

3.1.6. Changing chains

When a new participant is brought into focus, the chain of zeroes for the previous focused participant will be ended and a new chain will start for the new focused participant. Examples:

khniə FØ (4 times) phoŋ priən kə? ktra?
 She group hunter L pull

phrup moo FØ
 suddenly come (hunters)

'The hunters suddenly pulled (They)

khniə FØ (5 times) mii koon tuuc nuh
 she (= the dog) PreN(F) child be-small that

mεε man baan haw ?oj mii koon tuuc nah wiə
 mother not get call what PreN(F) child be-small that she

ruuət FØ
 run (She)

'It (the dog) (it) That younger daughter, the mother didn't call her yet. That younger daughter ran to her... .. (She)'

3.2. *Non-focused participants*

A non-focused participant cannot have a chain of zeroes. Reference to such a participant is maintained by nouns or pronouns, or by single zeroes in specific situations.

3.2.1. *Non-focused subject pronoun*

A non-focused participant in the subject slot of a clause will be referred to by pronouns: normally *kii* 'third person', sometimes *wiə* 'third person'. Examples:

NonF

tuu som mii nuh kii kə? man ?ɔɔj phə?
 go ask PreN(F) that she L not let drink

'(The orphan) asked the girl for (some water), but she didn't give her any to drink...'

NonF
NonF

joo mii nuh həj moo kə? wiə kə? man ɲuɲəp
 take PreN(F) that Part come L she L not die

'(The neighbours) took the girl out. She didn't die...'

3.2.2. *Non-focused object pronoun*

A non-focused participant in the object slot of a clause may be referred to by *niiə* 'third person'. Example:

NonF
NonF
NonF

kii kə? moo sɔɔpsuun niiə banthukbanthaa niiə mət
 he come investigate him record him entirely

'He (the officer) investigated him (a soldier) and recorded everything about him...'

3.2.3. Non-focused object noun

A non-focused participant in the object slot of a clause is usually referred to by a noun, commonly a kin term or a noun phrase. Examples:

NonF

kə? ləəj cuun koon tuu riin
so send child go study

'So (the parents) sent their child to study

NonF

phɔɔ tə baŋ?əən tuu pah tamrɛɛj sɔɔ tuu kə? tuu haw
when by-chance go meet elephant white go go call

NonF

tamrɛɛj sɔɔ
elephant white

'(The daughter) met the white elephant by chance. She went and called the white elephant...'

3.2.4. Non-focused complex subject deletion

When there is joint action by two or more non-focused participants, they will be represented by zero in the subject slot of the clause immediately following. Examples:

NonF

NonF

nɛɛh kə? miən niiə? sɔɔ? kii tuu nuwəm ∅ tuu ciik
besides there-is person village they go bring (her) go dig

NonF NonF

tamlooŋ ∅ ∅
taro root (they all)

'There were neighbours. They brought her (the orphan) to dig taro roots

NonF

phooŋ niiə? sɔɔ? ciik tamlooŋ kə? tuu chŋaaj tuu chŋaaj
group person village dig taro root L go far go far

NonF NonF

..... ∅ ∅

(they all)

'The neighbours and the orphan went to dig taro roots. They (the neighbours and the orphan) went very far...'

3.2.5. Non-focused repeated subject deletion

If a verb is repeated or paraphrased, its non-focused subject may be deleted in the second occurrence. Examples:

	NonF		NonF		NonF
miən	<u>ʔaakii</u>	<u>luu</u> <u>pkoo</u>	<u>kii</u>	<u>luu</u> <u>pkoo</u>	ph _h ɿŋ nah <u>∅</u>
there-is	someone	hear thunder	she	hear thunder	rain much she
	<u>luu</u> <u>pkoo</u>	nəŋ	ph _h ɿŋ		
hear	thunder	will	rain		

'There was someone who heard thunder. She heard much thunder (and) rain. (She) heard thunder; it would rain...'

				NonF						
phoo	tə	baŋʔəən	ŋaj	krɔɔj	<u>kii</u>	kəʔ	haw	thaan	nuh	həj
when	by-chance	day	next	he			call	soldier	that	Part

NonF

∅ haw moo

he call come

'It just happened that the next day he called the soldier. (He) called

REFERENCES

- Callow, Kathleen, 1973. *Discourse Considerations in Translating the Word of God*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids.
- Dhanan Chantrupanth and Chartchai Promjakgarin, 1978. *Khmer (Surin) - Thai - English Dictionary*. Chulalongkorn University Language Institute, Bangkok.
- Diffloth, Gérard, 1973. Austroasiatic languages, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, III: 480-4.
- Ennulat, Jurgen H., 1978. Participant Categories in Fali Stories, *Papers on Discourse*, ed. J. Grimes. S.I.L., Dallas.
- Huffman, Franklin Eugene, 1967. *An Outline of Cambodian Grammar*. Doctoral dissertation, Yale University.
- Halliday, M.A.K., and Ruqiya Hasan, 1978. *Cohesion in English*. Longman, London.
- Thomas, Dorothy, 1978. The Discourse Level in Chrau, *MKS VII*: 233-96.
- _____, 1979. The Paragraph Level in Chrau, *MKS VIII*: 187-220.