PREFIXATION AND INFIXATION IN OLD MON, OLD KHMER, AND MODERN KHMER

First I must acknowledge my indebtedness to my colleague, Mr. H. L. Shorto, for most kindly supplying me with information on OM prefixes and infixes. All the data on OM here used have been taken from his notes. For OKhm the body of material is smaller and the language much less diverse than OM (many of the OKhm texts being lists of slaves’ names and their duties.) It has therefore provided me with many problems and fewer examples than I should have liked.

In attempting this comparison between the three languages I looked at the collected data with a view to answering three questions:

I. What graphic/phonetic and phonological elements may be (a) prefixed, (b) infixed in each language?

II. In what graphic/phonetic and phonological contexts do these elements occur?

III. What grammatical functions do they perform?

The answers which I found are presented in the three following sections.

Section I. The graphic/phonetic and phonological elements which may be prefixed or infixed.

A table of these elements is given on pages 21-23.

In so far as OKhm and MKhm are concerned, prefixes and infixes may be treated phonologically as being entirely consonantal, consisting of one or two consonants. Such vowels as are written or pronounced before or after or between two consonants of a prefix or infix (short ‘inherent’ vowel or short neutral vowel, ə, in MKhm; short ‘inherent’ or occasionally i in OKhm) do not show sufficient variation to be regarded as essential phonological elements and may be satisfactorily treated as prosodic features of the junction between consonants. Cf.:

Khm chləwəh ‘to quarrel’  pracləwəh ‘to squabble together’
   (Prefix pr and prosodic ə)
   rəəs ‘to rake’         rəəəs ‘a rake’ (Prosodic ə and infix n)
OKhm jəhəv ‘to barter’  pamjəhəv ‘bartered goods’ (Prefix pN and prosodic a between consonants)
   pre ‘to use’           pamre ‘person used, servant’ (Prosodic a and infix m)

(Contrast som ‘to beg’, smom ‘beggar’, where no junctional short vowel is felt to be necessary (Infix m).)

1 The phonetic transcription here used for MKhm was evolved by Miss E. J. A. Henderson. See ‘The main features of Cambodian pronunciation’, BSOAS, xiv, 1, 1952, pp. 149-74. For OM and OKhm a straightforward transliteration is used, with the symbol ‘representing the vowel-base.
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It may also be conveniently mentioned here that aspiration is another Khm feature of junction which is recorded in later OKhm spelling and in MKhm: e.g. OKhm sahm ‘together’, phsahm ‘to add together’; MKhm kəəp ‘pleasing’ phkəəp ‘to please’. (In both cases prefix p and prosodic aspiration.)

In OM more frequent use seems to have been made of a short vowel between prefixes and the initials of roots to which they were attached and a slightly wider variation of vowel is noted (short a, i and u all occur). Thus the prefix p (causative) has at least three forms:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{lop} \text{ ‘to enter’} & \quad \text{plop} \text{ ‘to bring in’} \\
\text{duk} \text{ ‘to be poor’} & \quad \text{paduk} \text{ ‘to oppress’} \\
\text{piñ} \text{ ‘to be full’} & \quad \text{pupiñ} \text{ ‘to fill’}
\end{align*}
\]

and the hypothetical prefix s has two forms, s and si:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kir} \text{ ‘to dig’} & \quad \text{skir} \text{ ‘shall dig’} \\
\text{dmoñ} \text{ ‘to stay’} & \quad \text{sdmoñ} \text{ ‘shall stay’}
\end{align*}
\]

and, before another s,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{stul} \text{ ‘to write’} & \quad \text{sistul} \text{ ‘shall write’} \\
\text{siscih} \text{ ‘shall be rich’} & \quad \text{sisin} \text{ ‘shall embellish’}
\end{align*}
\]

and

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kim} \text{ ‘to smile’} & \quad \text{sikim} \text{ ‘shall smile’} \text{ (an isolated instance of}} \\
\text{si before a consonant other than s)}
\end{align*}
\]

I have entered in the graphic column of the tables the exact spelling of OM words (as for OKhm also), but in the phonological column I have taken the liberty of singling out the M consonants, for the purpose of comparison with Khm.

Some OM infixes are preceded or followed by a short vowel and here Mr. Shorto takes the consonant as the phonological element, e.g.:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{gruh} \text{ ‘to laugh’} & \quad \text{ginruh} \text{ ‘laughter’} \\
\text{p’ar} \text{ ‘to put into practice’} & \quad \text{pun’ar} \text{ ‘conduct’} \text{ (Infix N in both cases)}
\end{align*}
\]

These are entered in the phonological column as N.

The M infix u/i, for which Mr. Shorto uses the symbol u, occurs as follows. Either

(a) it is infixed between the two consonants of an initial sequence

(i) with no change taking place in either consonant, e.g. kciit ‘to die’, kucit ‘death’; or

(ii) with voicing of the first consonant, e.g. phic ‘to fear’, buhic ‘to frighten’. Or

(b) when the root has a single initial consonant

(i) this is reduplicated and the infix occurs between the two
consonants, e.g. moy ‘one’, mimoy ‘each’; or
(ii) reduplication occurs but the first consonant is deglottalized, e.g. bat ‘to compare with’, bi.bat ‘to measure, test’.

Such occurrences as (b) (i) and (ii) are phonetically so like the Khm words formed by the occurrence of the reduplicative prefix (e.g. kakary ‘to scratch continually’, from kary ‘to scratch’; pəbaos ‘to sweep diligently’, from baos ‘to sweep’), that I have entered them in square brackets, in the graphic column of the prefix table to demonstrate that a phonetic similarity may conceal a morphological difference.

The M infix N may similarly occur either between the two consonants of an initial sequence or between the two consonants formed by the reduplication of a single initial in the root, e.g. pi ‘three’, punpi ‘triad’; jum ‘leg’, jumjun ‘post of building’. Again the resulting phonetic, as opposed to morphological, similarity between this phenomenon and some Khm prefixed forms (e.g. tən ‘to be in time, to catch up’, təntən (with prefix + N) ‘to be just behind’) seems sufficiently striking to be entered in square brackets in the prefix table I A 2, as well as in the infix table, I B 2, where they belong morphologically. pun, pun, in the M prefix column have also no place in the phonological column, since they represent a prefix (p) and an infix (N), and not two prefixed consonants.

Summary: Section I

No particular likenesses are observed in connection with the single consonants which may be prefixed in the three languages, but when two consonants are prefixed these may in all cases be either C + r or C + N.

Where one consonant is infixed it may be n, m, or N in all the languages. In addition M has r and l infixes while Khm has p, b. Where two infixed consonants are concerned, all three languages have only nasals and liquids. One two-consonant infix, mn, occurs in all the languages.

M is unique in having a vowel infix, u.

Section II

1. The graphic/phonetic contexts in which prefixes and infixes occur. It was found

(a) that the prefixes of all the languages (single consonant and two consonants) may all be prefixed to roots having a single initial consonant, thus forming words in which two or three consonants occur in close succession. Some prefixes occur before words beginning with a two-consonant sequence, e.g. s in OM (dmo.h ‘to stay’, sdmoh ‘shall stay’); kN in OKhm (ste.h (title), kmste.h (title)); pr in MKhm (chlw.h ‘to quarrel’, prchlw.h ‘to squabble together’).

(b) That in all the languages infixes may occur with roots having either a single initial consonant or a two-consonant initial sequence.

2. The phonological contexts in which prefixes and infixes occur.
### Prefixation and inflexion in Mon and Khmer

#### 1. Single Consonant prefixed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonetic nature of prefix or infix</th>
<th>OM</th>
<th>OKhm</th>
<th>MKhm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graphic</td>
<td>Cons only</td>
<td>Phonol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velar</td>
<td>(gu)</td>
<td>(g)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palatal</td>
<td>[ji + j]</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental</td>
<td>[ti, tu + t]</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>(ta) [+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[di + d]</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>(na) [+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilabial</td>
<td>p, pa</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p, ph, ph, pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(m), (m)</td>
<td>(mi) [+]</td>
<td>m, ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid</td>
<td>s, si</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(sa/su)</td>
<td>(s)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2. Two Consonants prefixed

| Velar                             | [kin + k] | –     | kN     | k + short | kN |
|                                   | [kir + k] | –     | kN     | ‘inherent’+ any nasal | kN |
|                                   | [gin + g] | –     | kN     | kra       | kN |
|                                   | [gir + g] | –     | kN     | c + s.i. + a.n. | kr |
|                                   | [jiin + j] | –     | (cam) | (CN) cN | cr |
|                                   | [jir + j] | –     | (dam) | (dN) tN | t |
| Bilabial                          | pan, pun | pN    | pN    | p + s.i. + a.n. | a.n. | pr |
|                                    | (pur)    | (pr)  | pr    | b + s.i. + a.n. | a.n. | bN |
|                                    | [pun, pum] | –     | (pra) | (mr) | a.n. | a.n. |
| Liquid                            | rin      | rN    | (ram) | (rN) rN | r |
|                                    | (rir)    | (rr)  | (lan) | (IN) lN | l |
|                                    | (hum)    | (IN)  | (lan) | (IN) lN | lI |
| Sibilant                          | [sir + s] | –     | –     | s + s.i. + a.n. | a.n. | sr |
| Glottal                           | –        | –     | ‘an, ’am | ‘N | ‘N |