

## SOME FEATURES OF MODERN KHMER LITERARY STYLE

Judith M. Jacob

The literary or formal style under review here is that of modern prose, particularly that to be found in journals, speeches and novels. Interest in this aspect of the Khmer language was stimulated by the realization that certain assumptions are made about it without any attempt at justification. For example, one feels, especially when translating, that it is an unnecessarily verbose style, containing far more words than can be represented in the translation. Is this really so, or is it a false impression due to language differences? One also tends to say, without any specific parallels in mind, that modern Khmer journalese is clearly imitative of its French equivalent. This paper attempts to summarize the various linguistic differences between the consciously formal modern style and the spoken, or informal. Material has been collected for the purpose from articles (post-1930) on literature and religion, particularly those in the journal *Kambujasuriyā*, from newspapers (1950-72) and from novels (1938-71). I am very much aware that there may be many constructions, associable with style, which have been missed and I present this analysis as a precursor of others.

The increase in the output of prose writing as compared with poetry in the last few decades, during which, for example, both the novel and the printed newspaper in Khmer have developed from scratch, has caused prose writing to be held in higher esteem than it traditionally was in Cambodia.<sup>1</sup> Authors of novels and writers of articles were trying consciously to raise the standard of prose style in the 1950s and 1960s in response to the general wave of nationalistic feeling. Interesting changes in style which thus took place in post-war Cambodia, especially since independence in 1953, may be observed by comparison with the factual and simple narratives of the *Chronicles*, composed in the nineteenth century,<sup>2</sup> or of the first written versions of folktales<sup>3</sup>, or of the esteemed early twentieth century writer Suttantapriyā In. The analysis of these developments might be presented in many different ways. I have decided to arrange the various points in four sections which suggest my own idea of their possible origin. These are;

1. Features which seem to be present in order to clarify long, involved sentences;
2. A feature which suggests conscious or unconscious imitation of Thai;
3. Features which suggest conscious or unconscious imitation of French;

4. Features which seem to reflect the desire to embellish, using the traditional devices of Khmer literature.

1. Features which seem to be present in order to clarify long, involved sentences

In the 1950s and 1960s, when upwards of 3000 new technical terms based on Sanskrit and Pāli were invented so as to avoid using French loanwords any longer, the introduction of this unfamiliar vocabulary added to the need to explain some old loans to a general reading public and had some effects on the style of written Khmer:

(i) In the early years of the use of the new vocabulary it was common practice to place two words, one Khmer, one Indian, side by side. Thus /smo:m yî:əcək/<sup>4</sup> (Khmer. + Skt.) 'beggar', /syksa: so:t-rîən/ (Skt. + Khmer.) 'education', /prətè:h-cì:ət mî:ətrophù:m/ (old + new borrowing) 'one's native country', all occur in the newspapers of the 1950s.

(ii) The unwieldy sentences produced by use of the new words in complex clauses led to the excessive use of the literary particles /n̥v̥u/ and n̥y̥/ which are used only with restraint in earlier prose writing such as that of the *Chronicles*, the folk-tales, or the writing of Suttantapriyā In.

/n̥v̥u/ (spelt n̥v̥). In Khmer, the object, when it is expressed, normally follows the verb immediately, e.g. /m̥v̥:l kon/ 'see a film'. In an informal or colloquial style, no particle connects the object to the verb. The use of /n̥v̥u/ as an indicator that the object of the verb follows is a literary device which is useful when, as in journalese especially, several phrases occur between the verb and its object and it is helpful to know that the next word, or words, will be the object, e.g.

/coh phsa:y	pî: l̥v̥:k	knoŋ	sa:p̥d̥əd̥əm̥l̥:ən	n̥ək-cì:ət-n̥y̥l̥m̥
publish, print	two times	in	newspaper	nationalist
n̥v̥u	r̥m̥əŋ/			
(particle)	story			

'twice printed the story in the Nationalist newspaper'.

Once established in modern literary usage, however, /n̥v̥u/ began to be used when there was no need for it because the object followed the verb immediately:

/tr̥d̥əm-tr̥d̥:	r̥d̥:ŋ	n̥v̥u	'omp̥v̥:p̥d̥əm-n̥l̥:/
endure	undergo	(particle)	matter pillage

'put up with the pillaging'.

/nèy/. In the colloquial, or informal, language, two nouns occurring in close junction may represent an object and its possessor, e.g. /phtèəh vî:ə/ 'their house'. A more elaborate way, especially useful if attributes of the first noun follow it before the occurrence of the possessor-noun, is found both in colloquial speech and in the literary language: /phtèəh thom rəbɔh vî:ə/ (house big possession they) 'their big house'. In a literary modern sentence, however, the role of /rəbɔh/ is played by the particle /nèy/ 'of', e.g.

/lò:k ʔakkèətè:saʔphîba:l	nèy prètè:h ʔo:stra:lî:
governor general	of country Australia

'the Governor-General of Australia'

It may be pointed out that, in the *Chronicles*, many similarly long instances of possession and possessor are expressed without /nèy/ by simple juxtaposition, and that /nèy/, like /nÿu/, came to be used between short familiar words in modern writing too.

(iii) Among the seemingly unnecessary words which help to give the verbose impression to modern literature are many sentence-final nuclei which corroborate a word, often a particle, which has occurred earlier in the sentence. Examples are in this case given (see next page) without full sentences, for the most part, since the point seems clear from the meanings given and they are divided according to the grammatical functions of the two elements.

The practice illustrated in these examples, which occurs freely in the colloquial language as well as the written, seems to have become a characteristic feature of journalese, where it has a clarifying role, not so much because the meaning is reaffirmed as because the sentence-final nucleus, or sometimes several of them together, confirms that the end of a clause has been reached.

(a) Meaning of pre-verbal particle<sup>5</sup> (pre-v.p.) corroborated by sentence final element:  
pre-v.p. final particle translation extra

n̄y-tae (still)	prekaek argue	n̄y-laey still)	'is still arguing about (it)'	'still'
p̄um-t̄den (not yet	rel̄uet extinguished	n̄y-laey still)	'is not yet extinguished'	'still'

pre-v.p. adverbial particle

sot-tae (all without do exception	thv̄: t̄i:eh̄:en soldier	t̄eə-ʔch all)	'all without exception became soldiers'	'all'
sr̄ap-tae (suddenly	dol arrive	phl̄i:em immediately)	'suddenly they were there'	'immediately'
<u>pre-v.p.</u>		<u>verb</u>		
k̄ueq (certain meet	pret̄eəh n̄m̄ with nest	v̄i:ə p̄um k̄ha:n they not miss)	'shall be sure to come across one of their nests'	'without fail'

(b) Meaning of general particle (gen.p.) corroborated by a final particle (f.p.)  
gen.p. f.p.

n̄y (left over	sol only four	tae bu:en just so)	'there were only four left'	'just so'
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(c) *Meaning of pre-nominal particle (pre-n.p.) corroborated by adverbial particle (adv.p.):*  
pre-n.p. adv.p. translation extra

ʔəh pù:ək (all group)	tə̃əŋ-ʔəh all)	'the whole group'	'all'
krùp rù:p (complete person)	tə̃əŋ-ʔəh all)	'all of them'	'all'

(d) *Meaning of post-nominal particle (post-n.p.) corroborated by adverbial particle:*  
post-n.p. adv.p.

pùm tetù:əl dəmnyŋ ʔvy (not receive news any)	bontec-bontu:əc laey at all)	'did not receive any news at all'	'the slightest'
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(e) *Meaning of main verb corroborated by final particle or verb:*  
verb f.p. or verb

kaən (increase)	tə̃u muk tjet on further)	'will increase'	'further'
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(f) *Meaning of attributive verb corroborated by an adverb:*

yð:k khaet .:.....ba:n krùp tə̃əŋ-ʔəh mò:k vèp (take province manage complete all come back)	'managed to recover all the provinces'	'all'
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(g) *Plurality of a reduplicative compound corroborated by sentence final nucleus:*

rəbəh thom-thom (thing big and numerous)	ci:ə craən in numbers)	'many large objects'	'in numbers'
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2. A feature which suggests conscious or unconscious imitation of Thai

In colloquial speech, the only numeral coefficients which have to be used are those of which the meaning is a term of measurement, e.g. /kɪːloː/ in the phrase /skoː pɪː kɪːloː/ 'two kilos of sugar'. In a formal or literary context, however, there is a tendency to use unnecessary numeral coefficients. Thus, for example, the numeral coefficient for human beings /nɛək/ (e.g. /mənùh pɪː nɛək/ 'two men'), which has been in evidence since the seventh century, is used more frequently in literature; the general word for 'item', /prəkaː/ is found (e.g. /haet pɪː prəkaː/ 'two reasons'), and various coefficients indicating shapes (e.g. /dom/ 'lump'; /səsay/ 'strand'; /daəm/ 'long thin thing') occur. In addition to the increased use of numeral coefficients in connection with counting, however, there is also a different construction which occurs in modern literature, involving the use of numeral coefficients when counting is not taking place, e.g.

/ceŋcɪən vùəŋ nɪh/ (ring circle this) 'this ring'

/prɛəh rɪːəcɪːə ʔəŋ nɪh/ (revered king body this) 'this king'.

In such constructions, reminiscent of Thai, the numeral coefficients, here /vùəŋ/ and /ʔəŋ/, are behaving as true classifiers.

3. Features which suggest conscious or unconscious imitation of French

Slight changes in grammatical usage which seem to be due to French influence are illustrated below under four heads: (i) the use of abstract nouns in preference to verbs; (ii) the attempt to express some *nuances* contained in the meanings of various verbal forms in French; (iii) changes of Cambodian word-order in imitation of the French. Under (iv), the practice of word-for-word translation of French turns of phrase is illustrated.

(i) *The use of abstract nouns in preference to verbs*

The Khmer natural idiom uses a verb rather than a noun whenever possible. When an abstract noun is essential Khmer has its own ways, based on verbs, of supplying the need. Nouns formed by infixation of the verb are still in use, e.g. /kəmhoh/ 'a wrong' < /khoh/ 'to be wrong'. Sometimes an abstract noun is produced by juxtaposing two verbs of opposite meaning, e.g. /tətùːəl khoh-troːv/ (lit. 'to accept wrong-right') 'to take responsibility for'. Another means is to form a noun by placing the word /kaː/ 'action' or /ʔəmpɔː/ 'activity' or /sekdɔy/

'matter' before a verb or attributive verb, e.g. /ka: pùəgrì:k/ (lit. 'matter open up') 'development'. However, many abstract nouns were nevertheless borrowed from French and have now been carefully replaced<sup>6</sup> and supplemented by new Indian borrowings. Also of importance is the position of an abstract noun in a natural Khmer sentence. It seems that when abstract nouns are used in Khmer, they do not usually occur, except in philosophical discourse, as the subject of the sentence. Sentences in modern writing in which new nouns occur often seem very un-Cambodian and, especially if nouns do occur as sentence subjects, suggest French influence to me, e.g.

/kùmnùt nùŋ sakaməphì:əp nìh pùm mì:ən prəsvthiphì:əp  
 (idea and action            these not have effectiveness  
 mù:əy rð:y phì:ək rð:y)  
 one hundred part hundred)

'These ideas and activities were not one hundred percent effective'.

/sa:rəphì:əp srok yv̌:ŋ cì:ə sa:rəphì:əp srok vî:əl tùmnì:əp/  
 (truth            country we is            truth            country plain low)

'The essential nature of our country is that of a low plain' / 'Our country is essentially a low-lying plain'.

(ii) *The attempt to express some 'nuances' contained in the meanings of various verbal forms in French*

(a) /daoy/ This word may occur as a clause-marker (conjunction) and, if so, the unexpressed subject of the clause is always the same as that of the main clause. In everyday usage it occurs with the meaning 'through the fact (that); because (of)'. In novels, /daoy/ has been observed in occurrences such as these but also in contexts where it seems to indicate that the action of the verb in the clause it introduces takes place simultaneously with the action of the main verb and where no cause is given, e.g.

/kraok chð: khv̌t	ceŋ chŋa:y, <u>daoy</u>	somdaen
(get-up stand move	off afar, (through)	show
prəəh-ka:y-vika:	s'əp-khp̌v̌:m	
royal-gesture	despise)	

'He stood up and moved away some distance, making a gesture of contempt.'

A native Khmer way of expressing simultaneous action which might have been used is to place the word /dəmnaə/ after each of the two verbs. In the example, however, the Khmer sentence seems to imitate the ability of French to bring the present participle into play ('faisant' or 'en faisant').

(b) /kəmpùŋ/ occurs as a pre-verbal particle meaning 'in the middle of verb-ing' and precedes a main verb of action in normal everyday usage. In novels it has been found in occurrences where it seems to be added in as an extra word, e.g.

/prətəəh phnè:k nùŋ sat-chlù:h mù:əy kəmpùŋ chò: sî: smau/  
(meet eyes with mouse-deer in-the-middle-of standing eat grass)

'Their eyes lit upon a mouse-deer *standing* grazing'.

Here /kəmpùŋ/ occurs unusually before a verb used attributively in close junction with a noun, where the same phrase without /kəmpùŋ/ would be normal in Khmer and where French might have a present participle or a relative clause with imperfect tense.

(c) Khmer sentences, spoken or written, tend to depend as far as possible on context and meaning to indicate relative time, and can proceed with a minimum use of words such as /ba:n/ (past), /nùŋ/ (future) and /haəy/ (completion). Time relationships between two clauses may not need any clause marker, such as /kraoy-dael/ 'after', if any of the other indicators is present. It seems probable that it was familiarity with the precision of the various tenses in French which caused a much fuller use of indications of relative time in recent written Khmer, e.g.

/kraoy-dael ba:n sdap seckdvy thlaeŋ cəp haəy, prəəh-səŋ ko:  
ba:n sɔmdaəŋ seckdvy rî:k-rî:əy/  
(after have listened-to matter express through-to-end already monks then have shown matter joyful)

'After they had listened through to the end of the address, the monks expressed their delight...'

Since the whole context of this sentence was already known to be past, /ba:n/, which occurs in both clauses, was not needed at all. In speech /haəy/ at the end of the first clause would be enough to indicate the relative time of the actions of the two clauses. The French 'après avoir écouté...' seems possible as a model for this.

(iii) *Changes of Cambodian word-order in imitation of the French*

In spoken, or simply written Khmer, adverbs, adverbial phrases, attributive verbs modifying a main verb, and post-verbs completing the meaning of a main verb all characteristically follow the main verb and its object and occur in clause or sentence final position. In newspaper style, however, changes of word-order such as the following may take place made possible by use of the particle /nəu/ discussed in section 1 (ii).



/cap-phdəəm cì:ə yù: chnam m̀: k haey n̄v̄u n̄əyð:ba:y t̀mk/  
(establish being long years by now (particle) policy water)

'put the water policy into operation many years ago'

This seems to me to reflect French 'depuis de longues années' placed between verb and object.

The following example comes from an article in *Kambujasuriyā* (1966):

/sɔn̄isv̄t baep n̄h phdɔl ʔaoy n̄v̄u lathəphɔl dɔ: sɔmkhan/  
'A conference of this kind produces important results'  
(lit. 'produces for [particle] result').

Normally /ʔaoy/ 'to give; for' would come after the object; it suggests 'for (us, people, the participants, one)'. Perhaps the aim of the un-Khmer-like position of /ʔaoy/ is to avoid a construction which is so unlike French?

(iv) *Word-for-word translation of French turns of phrase*

(a) The Khmer language has its own metaphoric vocabulary, some of which uses the same imagery as French or English, for example, in associating the ideas of heat or fire with anger. In the following examples, from newspapers, however, the metaphors of French idiom are used rather than those which the Khmer language offers:

/r̀umc̀:əl har̀ut̄èy ya:ŋ cr̀:əl-cr̀v̄u/ (agitated royal-feelings manner deep) 'deeply disturbed'. Here Khmer idiom would have /khlaŋ/ 'strong' instead of 'deep'.

/khɔŋ b̄ər̄i:ya:ka:h r̀i:k-r̀i:əy/ (in atmosphere joyful) 'in a happy atmosphere'. This use of the new Khmer loanword /b̄ər̄i:ya:ka:h/ metaphorically is entirely due to French.

(b) Many instances may be found in newspapers of direct translation of the complete French phrase:

/k̀m̄: tha:/ (that-is to-say) 'c'est à dire'. /k̀m̄:/ alone rather than /k̀m̄: tha:/ would seem more natural judging from older Khmer prose.

/m̀i:ən ka: p̄isaot/ (have matter experiment) 'avoir l'expérience'. Use of the simple verb /p̄isaot/ rather than the expression would seem more idiomatic in Khmer.

/baə ʔaoka:h hoc ʔaoy/ (if opportunity pass-across for) 'si l'occasion se présente'. /hoc/ normally has an object following it, even in a metaphorical use such as in the Khmer phrase /hoc khlu:ən ʔaoy praə/ (pass-across self so-that use-services-of) 'offer one's services'.

/nĭpðən daoy/ (compose through) 'écrit} par'. This phrase, seeming to be a translation from French, now appears on the title page of books instead of the older Cambodian format: Title of work: Author's name: /rĭəp-rĭəŋ/ (prepared).

/kəmpŭŋ sthvt nŭu/ (in-the-middle-of be-stationed remain) 'se trouve actuellement'. /kəmpŭŋ/, which occurs characteristically in Khmer before verbs of action rather than, as here, before a stative verb, seems unnecessary in any case in connotation with both /sthvt/ and /nŭu/, either of which means 'be situated'. I suspect /kəmpŭŋ/ is there because of familiarity with French 'actuellement'.

/mĭ:ən kərənvəkec nŭŋ bəmpĕŋ/ (have duty will fulfil) 'avoir un devoir à remplir'. The Khmer form would be /tro:v bəmpĕŋ kərənvəkec/ 'must fulfil a duty'.

4. Features which seem to reflect the desire to embellish, using the traditional devices of Khmer literature

These features are discussed under three heads: (i) elevation of style; (ii) reduplication and repetition of ideas; and (iii) expansion and variation.

(i) *Elevation of style*

Several features which have been discussed in preceding sections help to elevate the style; for example, the Thai-inspired use of numeral coefficients mentioned in section 2. Here, however, two specific means are considered: the choice of vocabulary and the use of particles preceding attributive verbs.

(a) Four waves of loanwords from Sanskrit and/or Pāli have come into the language to fill gaps: legal, religious, and political terms in the pre-Angkor and Angkor periods; Pāli Buddhist terms, chiefly from the eleventh century onwards; the bulk of the royal vocabulary from sometime after the end of the Angkor period onwards; and the new vocabulary during the last few decades. The 'high' language of poetry has been drawn from the first three of these categories. Terms from all four kinds of borrowing are characteristically to be found in modern prose, causing the style to differ profoundly from that of the spoken language.<sup>7</sup>

(b) /dɔ:/ In Khmer an attributive verb follows immediately the noun it modifies, in the normal structure of colloquial and informal language, e.g. /mĭ:ən phtĕəh thom/ 'had a big house'. In the literary language, however, /dɔ:/ has long had the role of preceding an attributive verb and attaching it to the noun. It is still used and has the effect of highlighting the attribute: e.g.

/a:rĭyəprətĕ:h mŭ:əy dɔ trəcah-trəcoŋ/ (civilised country one particle shining) 'a magnificent civilization'

In newspapers, however, its use is extended so as to attach other categories of word to the nouns:

/thlaeŋ ʔamno: kùn dɔ: kray lè:ŋ/ (express joy (at) good-deed particle very very) 'express (my) great gratitude'

/lathəphəl dɔ: cì:ə tì: kðəp cvt/ (result particle being focus suit feelings) 'a satisfactory outcome'

In the first of these examples, an adverb /kray lè:ŋ/, and in the second, a phrase /cì:ə tì: kðəp cvt/, are treated in the same way as attributive verbs.

Another extension of the use of /dɔ:/ in journalese is to allow it to attach two attributes to the noun:

/ʔəh ka:l dɔ: yù nùŋ dɔ: lùmba:k/ (whole time particle long and particle difficult) 'during this long and difficult period'

/dɔ:/ is not really necessary as a clarifier of the construction even in the long phrases of the literary language; it is an embellishment used particularly in descriptive passages in novels or flowery parts of public speeches.

/ya:ŋ/ This word, meaning 'way', is in competition with /dɔ:/, now as a means to attach attribute to noun: e.g.

/tətù:əl para:cèy ya:ŋ ʔa:mah/ 'suffered a humiliating defeat'

Unlike /dɔ:/, however, it occurs also when an attributive verb occurs post-verbally (usually to be translated into English by an adverb), e.g.

/ka: ta:n-tvŋ ba:n kaət mì:ən laeŋ ya:ŋ khlaŋ-kla:/ (matter tense has risen is-there rising way strong) 'tension has arisen to an extreme degree'

Khmer grammar does not require the presence of any particle before such an attributive verb and it would not be present normally in informal and colloquial speech (cf. /kùt seckdvy tɔ:v/ 'think the matter out *correctly*'). The particles /nʋ/ and /nèy/, discussed in section 1 as having a clarifying role, also, like /dɔ:/ and /yaŋ/, contribute by their mere presence to the literary flavour of a sentence.<sup>8</sup>

## (ii) *Reduplication and repetition of ideas*

As is well known, Khmer is a language in which reduplication occurs structurally at the levels of phonology,<sup>9</sup> morphology,<sup>10</sup> and syntax.<sup>11</sup> Repetition of ideas occurs in the formation of compounds.<sup>12</sup> Both exact reduplication using

phonaesthetic words, sometimes specially created, and repetition of ideas using poetic vocabulary,<sup>13</sup> occur as literary devices and have done so since the beginning of Khmer poetic composition.<sup>14</sup> The following examples, taken from modern prose, merely illustrate the use of the same devices in modern writing.

(a) *Reduplication*

/rūt-tae chm̃: khlaŋ laəŋ khlaŋ laəŋ/ (increasingly ill strong up strong up) 'became more and more seriously ill'

/khlaŋ laəŋ/ could have occurred without reduplication.

/cì:k kùəl cì:k rùh su:ə/ (dig tree-stump dig roots ask) 'make a thorough investigation'

/cì:k kùəl rùh/ could have occurred without the interpolated reduplication.

/cì:ə nèc cì:ə ka:l/ 'always'

This use of interpolated reduplication, based on a compound loan-word (Pāli: niccakālaŋ) produces an understandable phrase because both components of the compound are familiar to Khmer readers as separate words. Word-play exercised on Indian loanwords is used as a poetic embellishment.

(b) *Repetition of ideas*

The examples under this heading are from both novels and newspapers:

/cì:ə ?ūla:rùk ?athùk-?athùk/ (being grand splendid) 'in a very grand manner'

/cì:ə/ usually precedes one attributive verb in this much-used pattern for forming clause final adverbial phrases with the meaning 'in a -- manner'

/n̄u-tae prəkaek m̄m-t̄dən tət̄:əl pr̄ð:m n̄u-laəy/ still refused not-yet accept agree still) 'still staunchly refused'

The whole meaning is in effect said twice in different ways, very much in the poetic tradition, particularly of the nineteenth century.

A certain means of expression, which I have noticed particularly in the written language, and of which I have found instances in Middle Khmer poetry, consists of following up the main verb with a short clause which merely repeats the intention expressed by the verb in another way: e.g.

/prap kè: ... 'aoy dɔŋ/ 'tell someone ... that he may know'

/sɔ:... 'aoy khɿ:ŋ/ 'indicate...for (one) to see'

/bɔŋceŋ (e.g. tɔk cɔt kla:ha:n)... 'aoy kè: khɿ:ŋ/ 'show (e.g. courage)...for them'

/bɔŋcɛək... 'aoy kè: dɔŋ/ 'make clear...so that people will know'

/bɔŋhə:ŋ... 'aoy yɿ:ŋ khɿ:ŋ chbah/ 'demonstrate...so that we shall clearly see'

/ba:n seckdɔy cɔmraən... do:c pra:thna:/ 'achieve success... as was their wish'

/tɿu: dɔl... do:c pɔ:ŋ/ 'arrive... as they desired'

This kind of clause seems to occur, in journalese especially, rather more often than the contexts warrant. However, it may, in some cases, seem more necessary to Khmers than it does in the translation because the clause fills out the meaning of the preceding verb, which, on its own in Khmer, has a limited meaning, being able to convey neither the sense of finiteness nor the ideas of completion or result which one can convey in English or French by use of the past tense.

### (iii) *Expansion and variation*

The simple forms of everyday speech or writing are constantly expanded and varied in the formal, literary style. Some examples are given (see next page).

Traditional poetic forms which parallel these examples are to be found, e.g. /sɔh sa:/ 'utterly' (pro/sɔh/); /nũh nɛy/ 'that, those' (pro/nũh/), and /hak bɔy rù:/ 'as though' (pro/do:c-cì:ə).)

*Simple form*

/mù:əy t̪iət/ (one further)  
 /mya:ŋ t̪iət/ (one way further)  
 /m̩n̩ tae ponn̩h/ (not only like that)  
 /bontec/ (a little, soon)  
 /knoŋ p̄:ɿ ȳ: kɔnɿɔ:ŋ m̄:k n̩h/  
 (in time long past coming along that)  
 /t̪iən/ (also)  
 /kha:ŋ/ (side)  
 /dɔl/ (as far as)  
 /tae/ (only)  
 /b̄a:n c̄i:ə/(get to be)...p̄i:pr̩uəh

*Expanded or varied form*

'Moreover,...'  
 /mù:əy t̪iət saot/ ( + moreover)  
 'And another thing:...'   
 /mya:ŋ v̄ɛp̄ t̪iət/( + again, now)  
 'Furthermore...'   
 /m̩n̩ tae ponn̩h pr̄:m t̪iən...t̪iət/  
 ( + join also...further)  
 'Soon...'   
 /bont̪ɛp̄ p̄i: p̄:ɿ n̩h̩ bontec m̄:k/  
 (next from time that a little  
 coming-along)  
 'In the distant past...'   
 /knoŋ ʔadv̄tka:l kɔnɿɔ:ŋ m̄:k ȳ:  
 ʔɔv̄ɛ:ŋ haəy n̩h̩/ (in past-time  
 coming-along long long already)  
 'and also'   
 { /pr̄:m t̪iən/ (join also)  
 /thaem t̪iən/ (add also)  
 'in the direction of'   
 /phnaek kha:ŋ/ (section side)  
 'until'   
 /dəra:p m̄:k dɔl/ (all the way come  
 as-far-as)  
 'only...'   
 /tr̩m tae/ (up-to-the point only)  
 'The reason why...was  
 because'   
 /haet-dael...k̩m̩: daoy/ (cause which....  
 was through....)



A further kind of expansion takes place in the use of some idioms which have already been formed on a literary pattern and which take part in a larger grammatical construction. Two examples are:

/ya:ŋ saen khò: khvu/ (way 100,000 aggressive) 'in an extremely aggressive manner'

/taŋ-pì: rðəp satavðət/ (since count centuries) 'for some centuries'

These are both based on idiomatic phrases which occur in literature. /saen/ '100,000' functions in literature as a particle 'very' modifying a following attributive verb, here /khò:-khvu/. (Khmer particles with this function would occur after the attributive verb; /saen/ as a numeral would normally occur preceding a numeral coefficient, not a verb.) In the phrase /ya:ŋ saen khò: khvu/ the expansion consists in taking this instance of an established literary idiom and using it in place of the attributive verb which usually, as was shown in 4(i), follows /ya:ŋ/. In the second phrase, /rðəp/ 'to count' occurs idiomatically with several words in a slightly formal language style, e.g. /rðəp rð:y/ 'in hundreds'. Here this idiomatic adverbial form is used after a pre-nominal particle instead of the noun, which is expected in that position (e.g. /taŋ-pì: chnam nũh/ 'since that year'.)

Some features described in the foregoing sections, particularly the use of particles, of time indicators, and of corroborative nuclei when there is no need for them, seem to confirm that there is a tendency to wordiness in Modern Khmer written style. With regard to the influence of French, examples have shown that, ironically, although loanwords from French have, in principle, been discarded, some aspects of French grammar have been incorporated! In presenting together all the points which I have observed, I may have given the impression that all modern writing of news, articles, speeches and novels is packed with these features. In fact, however, many writers of articles have used a restrained style and many novelists have used a very simple style even in descriptive passages; one for example, is Dik Keam in his novel *Broḳ tae kaṃmaen* (1967). In any case, much of a novel is concerned with narrative and conversation and, for the presentation of conversation, a good tradition of writing both naturally and interestingly seems to have been built up by Khmer novelists, stemming perhaps from the lively little conversation passages which are found in the verse novels (/satra: lbaeŋ/). In fact, for a thorough assessment of a style one would have to separate the *genres* of writing which have been treated together here.

Although it has been interesting for me to attempt to analyse recent changes in style, I personally prefer the simple, restrained



one. However, perhaps foreigners should confine themselves to factual description and not presume to judge style qualitatively. From a Khmer point of view, as section 4 shows, the long-established literary tradition, which is the tradition of poetry, has encouraged embellishment by the use of long loanwords and of reduplicative and repetitive patterns, all of which produce more words.

## NOTES

1. The writing of prose in Khmer was traditionally intended for practical reasons only. Literature for artistic purposes was always composed as poetry; at first, from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries, in Sanskrit.
2. My source for this has been a photographed manuscript of the *Chronicles* in the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies. Some historical writing is easily available in print, however, in Huffman (1977: 38-78).
3. Reproduced in print in the early volumes of the *Prajum rīoēñ breñ khmaer*.
4. The transcription used here was based on Professor Henderson's pioneering analysis of Khmer pronunciation (Henderson 1952).
5. Terms for grammatical categories are as given in Jacob (1968).
6. This is not to say that French loans for which new vocabulary was invented went out of use completely. They are still heard.
7. Many Indian loans are so completely naturalized that their presence in the colloquial language passes unnoticed, e.g. /bon/ 'festival' < *punya* 'good work'.
8. /n̄v̄u/, /n̄ȳ/ and /d̄o:/ were briefly treated in Jacob (1978) together with /r̄i:/ as literary particles. /r̄i:/ does not seem to occur so much in recent writing.
9. That is, in words having reduplicated initial consonants which are no longer, or have never been, analysable as consisting of base and reduplicating prefix, e.g. /b̄əb̄o:/ 'soup', /t̄ət̄u:əl/ 'receive'.
10. Reduplicative prefixes consist chiefly of single consonants (e.g. the frequentative /k(ə)ka:y/ from /ka:y/ 'to dig into the earth with hands, paws') but include some examples of rhotized consonants (e.g. /tr(ə)t̄uən/ which occurs in

/tr(ə)tê:h-tr(ə)tùən/ 'graceful' from /tùən/ 'soft, supple') and of consonants followed by a nasal consonant (e.g. /s(ə)nsaəm/ 'dew' from /saəm/ 'wet'). Reduplicative compounds are formed by the juxtaposition of alliterative, rhyming, chiming, or repeated word-forms (e.g. /cat-caeŋ/ 'to organize' /rì:əy-mì:əy/ 'untidily scattered'); /kme:ŋ-kma:ŋ/ 'children (in quantity)'; /proh-proh/ 'the menfolk, the boys'.

11. Reduplication in syntax intensifies meaning, e.g. /craən laeŋ craən laeŋ/ 'increasing in quantity', is more emphatic than /craən laeŋ/. Reduplication with interpolation also occurs, especially with components of compounds; e.g. /prap kè: prap 'aeŋ/ 'tell everybody', *pro* /prap kè:-'aeŋ/ *id*. The reduplicated form is more stylish.
12. Frequently a compound with specialized meaning or with abstract meaning has been formed of components, each of which has, when used alone, approximately the same meaning, e.g. /ciəh-vì:əŋ/ 'to avoid' from /ciəh/ 'to dodge', and /vìəŋ/ 'to follow a winding course, go round (an object)'.
13. The following are poetic examples /thla: thlaeŋ cə:-ca: prap/ (explain converse tell); /kru:əŋ kra:p 'aphìvì:ət vðəntì:/ (shrink prostrate-oneself salute salute) 'greet respectfully'.
14. By the nineteenth century this poetic device began to be overdone. See Jacob (1979).

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