

Indefinite pronouns in Pnar

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Abstract

Pnar is a Mon-Khmer language spoken in the state of Meghalaya in the Indian Union. Meghalaya represents the Khasian sub-branch of the Northern Mon-Khmer languages. Pnar is the language of the Jaintias, the second largest subgroup among the Mon-Khmer tribes in Meghalaya, and is spoken in the Jaintia Hills District of Meghalaya. This analysis of indefinite pronouns in Pnar is based on the extensive typological parameters discussed in Haspelmath (1997). Various issues raised by Haspelmath are taken up for consideration in the paper. Indefinite pronouns in Pnar have no stems indicating their ontological category. They are neither present in any series. Hence there is no formal element of indefiniteness that is generally shared by all forms in a series. In Pnar, the indefinite pronouns and the interrogative pronouns share the same bases. The morphological process of reduplication is used as a very productive means of deriving the indefinite pronouns from bound bases. Unlike Khmer, as Haspelmath's data shows, the interrogative forms and indefinite forms are not identical to each other, except in a few cases. Apart from these, other issues of interest with regard to the indefinite pronouns like human/non-human distinction, distinction relative to specificity and non-specificity of the indefinite NPs etc is also taken up in the paper. The paper will also highlight that apart from interrogatives, Pnar also derives its indefinite pronouns from other sources like generic ontological nouns etc. Pronominal clitics are a very important constituent of all indefinite pronouns in Pnar and their morphological and syntactic role in the derivation of indefinite pronouns is also highlighted in the paper.

1. Introduction

Pnar is a Mon-Khmer language spoken in the state of Meghalaya in the Indian Union. In India the Mon-Khmer languages are geographically represented only in Meghalaya and in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Nicobar languages, namely, Car Nicobarese, Chaura, Teressa, Southern Nicobarese, Central Nicobarese and Shom Peng are spoken by the tribal groups inhabiting the Nicobar Islands (Gordon 2005). Meghalaya represents the Khasian sub-branch of the Northern Mon-Khmer languages. The term 'Khasi' was traditionally understood to cover all the seven/eight¹ Mon-Khmer tribes inhabiting Meghalaya. However, the term is now increasingly used to refer to a particular sub-tribe called Khyntiam, whose variety of Khasi has been adopted

¹The status of the Lyngngam population is still disputed; see Grierson (1904); Nagaraja (1996)

as the standard form and used in education, literature and media. What we find in standard literature on the Khasi language is the description and analysis of this particular variety of the language spoken mainly in Cherrapunjee (called ‘Sohra’ locally) and called *ka-tien-so Ꞇra* ‘the language of Sohra’. Pnar is the spoken language of the second largest sub-group among the Mon-Khmer tribes after Khyntiam. Pnar is spoken in the Jaintia Hills District of Meghalaya. The major tribal populations in Meghalaya and their respective sizes are listed in Table A, adapted from Langstieh et al (2004).

Table A. Major Mon-Khmer tribal populations of Meghalaya

Population	Approximate size	Traditional Occupation	Distribution in Meghalaya
Nongtraï	6,000	Shifting cultivators	West Khasi Hills District
Maram	200,000	Settled agriculturists	West Khasi Hills District
Khyntiam	550,548	Settled agriculturists	East Khasi Hills District
Pnar	259,667	Settled agriculturists	Jaintia Hills District
War Khasi	33,000	Horticulturists	East Khasi Hills District
War Jaintia	36,025	Horticulturists	Jaintia Hills District
Bhoi	179,630	Shifting cultivators	Ri-Bhoi District

Other linguistic varieties of Khasi like Langrin Khasi have also been reported in the literature (see Nagaraja 1996). Officially, though, according to the Census of India, 2001 report, published by the Government of India on the languages of India, following are the population figures for the Mon-Khmer languages subsumed under the generic name ‘Khasi’: Bhoi Khasi – 14,882; Khasi – 828,545; Pnar/Synteng – 243,441; War – 25,886 and Others – 15,821. According to the official records, the Mon-Khmer languages are spoken by 1,128,575 people, which is around 0.11% of the total Indian population. The total number of Nicobarese speakers (all the tribes) in India is 28,784, which is just about 0.003% of the Indian population. Both Nicobarese and Khasi have been given the official status of ‘Non-scheduled languages’. Though standard Khasi has been researched and studied to some extent, Pnar has largely remained ignored, subsumed as a dialect/variety of Khasi. There is no published material available on the Pnar language. Bareh (1977:37-54) in his chapter on ‘Khasi Linguistics’ discusses the various dialects of Khasi spoken in Meghalaya. He uses Khasi as a cover term, and what is known as standard Khasi is called the ‘Cherra’ variety. He refers to Pnar as ‘Jowai’ (the name of the district headquarters of Jaintia Hills district). The alternative names used for Pnar other than ‘Jowai’ include ‘Jaintia’ and ‘Synteng’.

2. Indefinite pronouns: general remarks

Indefinite pronouns have been studied on a cross-linguistic basis in Haspelmath (1997) which provides interesting insights into our study of Pnar. While Pnar has not been dealt with in Haspelmath (1997), its closest relative Khasi finds a brief mention as a language that derives indefinite pronouns by reduplication. It is hoped that this study would enhance our knowledge of the indefinite pronouns in Pnar. Indefinite pronouns have been understood to be those that express indefinite reference. The following are some of the issues and observations on Indefinite pronouns put forward by Haspelmath (1997):

- He observes that very often indefinite pronouns appear in series referring to various ontological categories like ‘person’, ‘thing’, ‘place’, ‘time’, and ‘manner’² etc. Different series in English include the ‘any’-series, ‘some’-series etc.
- He lists various functions that indefinite pronouns generally satisfy in different languages like marking specificity/non-specificity, negation, expressing free choice etc.
- He notes that in many languages across the world indefinite pronouns are very often based on interrogative pronouns derived by a process of grammaticalization involving semantic broadening, whereby the indefinite covers larger ontological categories than the interrogative.
- Indefinite pronouns not based on interrogative pronouns, according to him, are generally based on generic nouns like ‘person’, ‘thing’ etc. Another way of forming indefinite pronouns in many languages is by the use of the numeral ‘one’.
- He considers those derived from interrogatives to be the most commonly attested type cross-linguistically.
- He also discusses the issue of co-occurrence of negative indefinite pronouns with sentential verbal negation, which he argues is the more cross-linguistically attested structure. He notes the interesting optionality of a negative element in the negative indefinite pronouns in some languages and also the use of other indefinite pronouns to mean negative indefinites.
- Based on data in Huffman (1967), Haspelmath concludes that in the Khmer language, the indefinite pronouns are not derived from interrogative pronouns but are identical to them, a point of great significance for our analysis of Pnar.
- Another point of typological importance that he takes up is whether the languages make a distinction between human/non-human in their indefinites as well as interrogatives.
- Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) whose use is not restricted to the expression of non-existence but is also used in conditional, interrogative and comparison clauses, is another area that he probes.
- He also notes that languages sometimes maintain different indefinite series depending upon whether the indefinite NP is specific or non-specific.

²Haspelmath’s list of the ontological categories is based on Jackendoff (1983).

- He discusses four different strategies for expressing indefiniteness without indefinite pronouns in many languages which include the use of generic nouns, the use of existential sentences, the use of non-specific free relative clauses (using forms like ‘whichever’, ‘whatever’, ‘wherever’ etc) and the use of universal quantifiers ‘every’ and ‘all’ instead of indefinites. Though the universal quantifiers quantify over a set and look at it either as a whole or distributively and generally express no indefiniteness, Haspelmath notes that “there are close connections between distributive universal quantifiers like ‘every’ and indefinite pronouns that express irrelevance of choice like ‘any’” (13) and hence also merits discussion with indefinites.

Thus, while many issues and dimensions relating to the indefinites have been talked about in the literature, my analysis tries to work on these issues within the limitations of this work.

3. Indefinite pronouns in Pnar

Indefinite pronouns in Pnar are mostly derived (the few lexically available indefinites are discussed in section 3.4). The two most common indefinites in Pnar (see sections 3.1 and 3.2) use the same base as the interrogatives - the differences and similarities of which are discussed in later sections (see section 4.3.1). It also uses syntactic strategies to signify indefiniteness. Pronominal clitics are a very important constituent of all indefinite pronouns in Pnar and appears in all constructions involving derived indefinites.

3.1 The ‘yi’ indefinites

The particle *yi* found in these indefinites is shared with the interrogatives. As part of an indefinite pronoun *yi* is used to form ‘any’ as in sentence (1), ‘anything’ as in (2), ‘everything’ as in (3), ‘something’ as in (4) and ‘nobody’ as in (12) below.

- (1) ɪm-ye-p^{hi} u-ra? i-yi-i-yi i-wa-u-bam c^hapɔʔ?
 NEG-MOD: NONFIN- 3ESGCL-Q- 3ESGCL-RP- inside
 ABIL-2PLCL carry 3ESGCL-Q NONFIN-eat
Gloss: You cannot carry any eatables inside.

- (2) c^hwa u-psiaʔ-i c^ha-kamra edward, k^wa-hi-mi
before NONFIN ALL-room Edward want-EMPH-
 -enter- 2MSGCL
 1PLCL

u-k^hana i-yi-re-i-yi
NONFIN-tell 3ESGCL-Q-EPTDR-
 3ESGCL-Q

Gloss: Before we enter the gallery, Edward, do you want to tell
 us anything?

- (3) edward, me tɔʔ u-ɔŋ-mi ya-ki-yi-ki-yi c^hap^haŋ
 Edward 2MSG be NONFIN- ACC-3PLCL-Q- about
 (MOD: say-2MSGCL 3PLCL-Q
 OBLIG)

ki-dur c^hapoʔ.
 3PLCL- inside
 picture

Gloss: Edward, you must tell us everything about every picture inside.

- (4) da-dɛp-e- ya-p^{hi}. p^{hi} leʔ tɔʔ u-e-p^{hi} ya-ka
 k^həwai-kɔ DAT-2PL 2PL also MOD: NONFIN- DAT-3FSG
 PERF-COMPL- OBLIG give-2PLCL
 give-party-
 3FSGCL

i-yi-re-i-yi.
 3ESGCL-Q-EPTDT-
 3ESGCL-Q

Gloss: She had given you a party. You must also give her something.

3.2 The ‘wan’ indefinites

The particle *wan* found in these indefinites is shared with the interrogatives (just like *yi* discussed in section 3.1). *wan* is used to form ‘anybody’ as in (5), ‘anything’ in (6) (as an alternative to *yi* above in (2)), ‘nobody’ as in (7) and ‘something’ as in (8).

- (5) em ki-wan-ki-wan ki-wa-ye u-e ya-i ka-bɔr.
 be/have 3PLCL-Q- 3PLCL-RP- NONFIN- ACC- 3FSGCL-
 3PLCL-Q MOD:ABIL give 1PL permission
Gloss: Is there anybody here who can give us the permission?

- (6) c^hwa u-psiaʔ-i c^ha-kamra edward, k^wa-hi-mi
 before NONFIN- ALL-room Edward want-EMPH-
 enter-1PLCL 2MSGCL

u-k^hana yɛi-wan-yɛi-wan.
 NONFIN- ACC/DAT+3ESGCL-Q
 tell -ACC/DAT+3ESGCL-Q

Gloss: Before we enter the gallery, Edward, do you want to tell us anything?

The expressions with the generic noun for person (see (12)), also contains the reduplicated forms of either of the two particles *wan* and *yi* with a 3rd person singular or plural proclitic as in *im-em-bru-u-yi-u-yi*. The reduplicated complex *u-yi-u-yi* is contiguous in these cases. The negative indefinite representing the ontological category of ‘thing’ is also made up of the complex *im-em* ‘NEG-be’ followed by intensifiers like *de* ‘too/also’ and *c^hibon* ‘much’ as in (13). The indefinite in (13) is a singular instance of a discontinuous indefinite pronoun in Pnar found in our study.

- (13) (ŋa) ŋait-ɔ **im-em-de** u-k^hana-ɔ **c^hibon**.
 (1SG) think-1SGCL NEG-be-also NONFIN-tell-1SGCL much
Gloss: I guess there is nothing more to tell now.

Thus, we see that negative indefinites have no dedicated forms, either derived or lexically available. Existential sentences are the only type of constructions that can be used to mark negative indefiniteness. With no dedicated forms, the question whether the negative indefinite pronouns have a negative element in them (raised by Haspelmath) is answered in the negative. With no dedicated negative indefinite pronouns, the question of the co-occurrence of negative indefinite pronouns and normal sentential negation, raised by Haspelmath, also becomes redundant in the case of Pnar, as it is the sentential negation of an existential construction that gives a negative indefinite reading.

The existential sentence used to mark negative indefinites, also permits the optional use of other indefinites as a part of the negative indefinite construction as in (12). Negative indefinites are the only indefinites that make use of generic ontological category nouns. They make use of the Pnar word for ‘person’ *bru* as part of the indefinite as in (12).

3.4 Lexically available indefinites

According to Haspelmath, an indefinites which is not derived from anything is a rare occurrence for indefinites. This is true in the case of Pnar as well. There are only a few indefinites that are not based on anything. The indefinite ‘some’ which is not tied to any ontological category is usually represented by lexically available non-compositional indefinite forms as in (14, 15, and 16). There are no lexically available indefinites for any ontological categories.

- (14) **ban-ŋut** ki-bru ha-ʃillɔŋ klam-k^hasi-ki.
 some-CL:HUM 3PLCL-people LOC-Shillong speak-Khasi-3PLCL
Gloss: Some people in Shillong speak Khasi.
- (15) **khajiet** na-ki-kɔt yɔŋ-ŋa em-ki ha-ʃrɔŋ-mieɟ.
 some ABL-3PLCL-book GEN-1SG have-3PLCL LOC-top-table
Gloss: Some of my books are on the table.

- (16) **kattu-katni** ki-kari wa-blu ki-yɔŋ-u-ɔŋ tɔʔ ki-wa-miət.
 some 3PLCL-car RP-blue 3PLCL-GEN- be 3PLCL-RP-
 3MSGCL-John good
Gloss: Some of my books are on the table.

4. Typological parameters and the indefinite pronouns in Pnar

4.1 *Absence of an ontological series*

The indefinite pronouns do not appear in any ‘series’ representing any ontological categories like ‘person’, ‘thing’ etc. The indefinites have no stems indicating their ontological category. In fact, they have similar structures for all the different ontological categories.

4.2 *The derivation of indefinites: Reduplication as the chief strategy*

Most of the indefinites are realized by reduplication. The process of reduplication is not applied on a single element or particle but on a complex, consisting of one of the two bases (discussed in sections 3.1 and 3.2) with a 3rd person proclitic. The types of reduplication that represent indefinites are both *continuous* reduplication and *discontinuous* reduplication. However not all indefinite pronouns in the language are derived by reduplication. Some are lexically based, while others are realized by syntactic means (see sections 3.4 and 4.3). Only those indefinites which are derived using the particles *yi* and *wan* undergo a process of reduplication. The reduplicated forms, when not contiguous, are separated by an empty particle *re*. Different ontological categories seem to show some preference for contiguous or non-contiguous reduplication. While only contiguous forms are available to represent the ontological category of ‘PERSON’ (see 5, 7 and 12), non-contiguous forms are preferred for the ontological category of ‘THING’ (see 2, 4, and 8). However, the ontological category of ‘THING’ also has contiguous forms (see 6 and 17).

- (17) lada em **i-yi-i-yi**, ɲa wau/dau-k^hana ya-ka wa c^hapɔʔ
 COND be 3ESGCL-Q- 1SG FUT-tell ACC-3FSG inside
 3ESGCL-Q
Gloss: If there is anything I will tell that inside.

4.3 *Sources and strategies for marking indefinites*

According to Haspelmath, the main types of derivational bases from which indefinite pronouns are derived are ‘interrogative pronouns’, ‘generic ontological category nouns’ and the numeral ‘one’, of which, those derived from interrogatives are the most commonly attested type cross-linguistically. He also has reservations about considering indefinite pronouns based on generic-nouns to be indefinite pronouns proper. The use of ‘one’ as an indefinite pronoun, according to him, is generally observed in languages where indefinite pronouns are not based on interrogative pronouns. However, Haspelmath notes that languages may use more than one strategy to form

indefinites. He talks of four different strategies for expressing indefiniteness without indefinite pronouns in many languages. They include the use of generic nouns; the use of existential sentences; the use of non-specific free relative clauses and the use of universal quantifiers ‘every’ and ‘all’ instead of indefinites. He observes that the first of these (the use of generic nouns) is the most common way of replacing indefinite pronouns and it is possible for some members of an indefinite series to consist of non-grammaticalized expressions involving generic nouns. The use of existential constructions for negative indefinites and specific indefinites are attested in languages like Tagalog and other Philippine languages. It is interesting to note that indefinites in Pnar are also marked using different strategies other than deriving them from or basing them on interrogatives which is the most commonly attested type.

4.3.1 *Indefinites and Interrogatives*

The bases *wan* and *yi* used in indefinites are part of interrogative pronouns as well. As an interrogative particle *yi* is used to form ‘who/whom’, ‘what’, and ‘which’; whereas *wan* is used to form ‘what’, ‘which’, ‘how’ and ‘where’. Though the same elements act as base to form both the interrogative pronouns and the indefinites, one cannot be said to be derived from the other. The particles *wan* and *yi* which are common to both indefinites and interrogatives have different formal characteristics. Although for glossing purposes these two particles have been called Q (QUESTION) particles in this paper, there is no language internal evidence to suggest any kind of a derivational process. The bases shared between the indefinites and the interrogatives cannot be called interrogative bases either, as they by themselves do not make up any interrogative pronouns. It is the presence of proclitics with these bases that makes them interrogative pronouns. The very same proclitics with these bases and a process of complete, continuous or discontinuous reduplication gives rise to the indefinites. So it would only be proper to say that both the forms share the same bases as there is no evidence to suggest that one is derived from the other or that one is based on the other although cross-linguistic generalizations as presented in Haspelmath (1997) would argue that the indefinites are based on the interrogatives. The data from Khmer would also suggest the same (see section 4.3.1.3). The relationship between the indefinites and the interrogatives in Pnar is similar to the case reported by Haspelmath for Ngiyambaa. It “has a system where indefinites are based not directly on interrogatives, but on the same base as interrogatives” (25). However this is considered by Haspelmath to be a very rare case.

A noteworthy difference, however, in the two uses of the same particles discussed in sections 4.3.1.2 and 4.3.1.2 is that in indefinites the *PROCLITIC-yi/wan* complex is always used in a reduplicated form (see 1-8) while these particles as interrogatives can be used in both reduplicated and unreduplicated forms. However, while indefinites allow an empty particle to come between the reduplicated complexes (see 2, 4 or 8), it is not allowed in reduplicated interrogatives.

Though one can assign the bases *wan* and *yi* the status of being indefiniteness markers in both indefinites and interrogatives, they are not indefiniteness markers in the sense in which Haspelmath uses the term. For Haspelmath, the indefiniteness markers shared in a series are words like ‘any’/‘some’/‘no’ which is not the case about these bases.

4.3.1.1 *The ‘yi’ indefinite and the ‘yi’ interrogative*

As far as the particle *yi* is concerned, in interrogatives it always comes with a pronominal clitic. The proclitic coming with this particle is mostly the default 3rd person proclitic *i-* with ‘who’, ‘whom’ and ‘what’ (other 3rd person proclitics are also used when the gender/number specification of the nominal being sought as an answer is known) and any of the 3rd person proclitics with ‘which’. The only exception to this comes when the proclitic is replaced by any of the case markers like the agentive/instrumental *da* or the accusative *ya*. The particle *yi-* as an indefinite likewise always comes with a proclitic, which is generally the default 3rd person proclitic *i-* as in (1), (2) and (4) among others. However, it should be pointed out that other 3rd person proclitics are not prohibited in an indefinite usage (see (3), for example which uses the plural *ki*).

4.3.1.2 *The ‘wan’ indefinite and the ‘wan’ interrogative*

As far as the particle *wan* is concerned, in interrogatives it very rarely comes just with proclitics. It is usually part of a complex which consists of the locative, ablative or allative case markers *ha*, *na* or *c^ha*, respectively, followed by the 3rd person default clitic *i-*, followed by *wan*. When it comes just with the proclitics, it takes any of the 3rd person proclitics *u*, *ka*, *i* or *ki*. As far as its form in indefinites is concerned, it comes either with the 3rd person default clitic *i-* (see (6) and (8)) or the 3rd person plural proclitic *ki-* (see (5) and (7)).

4.3.1.3 *The Khmer indefinites*

Khmer (as reported in Haspelmath (1997)) presents a very interesting case where the indefinites and the interrogatives are identical in structure. Though Pnar indefinites contain the interrogatives in full, they are not identical. The point of distinction is that when the interrogative form is completely reduplicated, one gets the indefinite pronouns. The reduplicated indefinite pronoun may be separated by an empty particle. Thus an indefinite without an empty particle inside it as in (17), would have the same structure as reduplicated questions, and in this situation Pnar would represent a case exactly similar to Khmer.

4.3.2 *Generic nouns*

Generic nouns are found as part of negative indefinites (see section 3.3). In fact, the only indefinites that make use of generic ontological category nouns in Pnar are the negative indefinites. In such constructions, the generic noun for ‘person’ *bru* follows the negative complex *im-em* ‘NEG-be’ which is

part of all negative indefinites (see (12)). The expression with the generic noun also contains the reduplicated forms of either of the two particles *wan* and *yi* with a 3rd person singular or plural proclitic as in *im-em-bru-u-yi-u-yi*. The reduplicated structure involving *yi* or *wan* along with 3rd person proclitics, can either precede or follow the generic ontological category noun. In the negative indefinite, the use of the generic noun is specifically utilized to mark ‘human’ elements.

4.3.3 The numeral ‘one’

The numeral *wi* ‘one’ in Pnar is used mostly to derive universal quantifiers like ‘every’, ‘everybody’. Notwithstanding the debate on whether these are indefinites, one would like to discuss its usage in the Pnar forms. The form of ‘every’ representing the ontological category of ‘PERSON’ makes use of the numeral ‘one’ as in (18) (while that representing the ontological category of ‘THING’ makes use of a reduplicated *yi*- as in (3)).

- (18) **u-wi-pa-u-wi** em-kam u-k^han ya-ka-mobail yon̄-ki.
 3MSGCL-ONE- have-need NONFIN- ACC-3FSGCL- GEN-3PL
 EPTDR-3MSGCL- (MOD:OBLIG) close mobile
 ONE

Gloss: Everybody must switch off their mobiles.

Apart from the universal quantifiers, the numeral *wi* ‘one’ is used in constructions with negative indefinites. In negative indefinites, the negative complex *im-em* ‘NEG-be’ can be followed by a complex containing the generic numeral *wi* ‘one’ (see 11).

The common features between the indefinites based on interrogatives and the indefinites based on the numeral ‘one’ are generally three. **First**, in both types, the presence of proclitics is compulsory giving rise to the forms *PROCLITIC-wi* or *PROCLITIC-wan/yi*. **Second**, the *PROCLITIC-wi* or *PROCLITIC-wan/yi* complex is always used in its reduplicated form to signify indefiniteness. **Third**, the reduplicated forms of *PROCLITIC-wi* or *PROCLITIC-wan/yi* complex when non-contiguous, use a unique empty particle - *re* in the case of *yi/wan*, and *pa* with the numeral *wi* ‘one’ (see (2), (8) and (18)).

4.3.4 Existential construction

Existential constructions are used to signify indefiniteness in Pnar in both negative indefinites (see section 3.3) as well as in specific/non-specific indefinites as in (19) (also see section 4.5), especially to mark the ontological category ‘PERSON’.

- (19) **em** **u-wi** u-wa-wan na-ka-liəŋ yəŋ-i.
 be/have 3MSGCL-one 3MSGCL-RP- ABL-3FSGCL- GEN-1PL
 come direction

Gloss: There is someone coming in our direction.

The existential construction when used to mark non-specificity/specificity (represented by the ‘some’ series in English), is exclusively used to mark ‘human’ entities (see (19)). While the indefinite ‘some’ (which is not tied to any ontological category) is usually represented by lexically available non-compositional indefinite forms (see section 3.4), it is also seen to employ the existential construction if the following indefinite NP is ‘human’ as in (20) below.

- (20) **em** ki-k^hinna? ki-wa-ɣrəŋ yale?-bəl-b^ha-ki
 be/have 3PLCL-child 3PLCL-RP-tall play-ball-good-3PL
Gloss: Some tall boys play football very well (*lit.* There are some tall boys who play football very well).

Existential constructions are very important as a strategy for marking indefiniteness in Pnar. These are the only type of constructions used to mark negative indefiniteness. This is done by negating the verb of the existential sentence as in (9-13). The existential sentence is also the only way of marking indefiniteness showing specificity/non-specificity with the ontological category of ‘person/human’ as in (19-20). Only free-choice indefinites or Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) do not make use of existential sentences to mark indefiniteness which are discussed in 4.3.5 below.

4.3.5 Relative clause construction

When showing ‘free choice’ or as a Negative Polarity Item (represented by the ‘any’ series in English), the indefinites use the non-specific relative clause structure to represent ‘human beings’ as in (21). The indefinite ‘any’ can be represented either with a reduplicated structure as in (1) or by using a non-specific relative clause structure using the relativizing particle *wa* as in (22). Non-specific relative clause construction is the most used strategy to mark free-choice indefiniteness in Pnar.

- (21) spiaub^ha ham-klam **kat-ki-wa-em** hapɔʔ-kamra yəŋheʔ.
 please PROH:NEG EMPH-3PLCL- inside-room loudly
 -speak RP-be

Gloss: Please do not talk loudly to anyone in the room. (*lit.* “Please do not talk to whoever is in the room”.)

- (22) e ŋa **kat-ki-wa-em** ki-kət ya-u-pure.
 give 1SG EMPH-3PLCL-RP-be 3PLCL-book ACC-NONFIN-read
Gloss: Give me any book to read.

4.4 *Specificity/ non-specificity vis-à-vis the indefinites*

Non-specificity is represented in Pnar with existential constructions (see (19)). This is especially used to mark the ontological category ‘PERSON’. Other devices of marking non-specificity are not available for this ontological category. For non-human entities, on the other hand, the two particles *yi* or *wan* are employed in a process of discontinuous reduplication as in (4, 8). There are no separate indefinite pronoun series that depend upon the specificity/non-specificity of the Indefinite NP.

As for how the nominal following the indefinite pronoun marks specificity, it may be argued that the pronominal clitics that come with every nominal mark specificity. However, this may not be true completely. It is true to a large extent in the case of incorporated object nominals *vis-à-vis* free-standing object nominals. When an object nominal is incorporated into the verb phrase, only the bare nominal gets incorporated. The proclitic of the nominal is not incorporated. The process of incorporation leads to a non-specific meaning. While in this case the presence and absence of proclitics on the nominals may be correlated to specific and non-specific readings respectively, in all indefinite constructions the nominal comes with its proclitic and hence it can not be taken as a marker of specificity. Something that does mark specificity in Pnar is the use of the distal demonstrative *PROCLITIC-te* complex along with the nominal, which is a device available in most languages.

4.5 *Human/ non-human entities vis-à-vis the indefinites*

There is a definite human/non-human distinction in the indefinites. Though one cannot make a general statement about all the indefinites as is possible for English (with the use of ‘one’ with the different ontological categories, like ‘someone’, ‘anyone’, ‘none’ etc), in Pnar each type of indefinite has its own way of making this distinction. This is something one would anticipate considering the multiplicity of strategies and sources for indefinites in the language. When showing ‘free choice’ or as a Negative Polarity Item (represented by the ‘any’ series in English), the indefinites use the non-specific relative clause structure to represent ‘human beings’ as in (21) and prefer the reduplicated structure with *yi* or *wan* for non-human things as in (17). The reduplicated structure used in (5) to mark a [+human] entity is a very rarely used construction-type for human beings.

The negative indefinite marks human elements by incorporating the generic noun for ‘person’ *bru* as part of the indefinite as in (12). Alternatively it incorporates the nominalizer/agentivalizer *nɔŋ*. The non-human entity is represented by negating intensifiers like *de* ‘too/also’ and/or *c^hibo:n* ‘much/many’ as in (13). The indefinite ‘no’, which is not tied to any ontological category, uses simple negation for both human as well as non-human entities followed by the indefinite NP as in (10).

4.6 Contiguous and non-contiguous forms

4.7 Universal quantifiers and indefinite pronouns

(23) **warɔʔ** ki-kot yɔŋ-ŋa em-ki ha-jrɔŋ-mieʔ.
all 3PLCL-book GEN-1SG have-3PLCL LOC-top/tall-table
Gloss: All my books are on the table.

(24) u-ɰən dɔʔ-u ya ka-bei yɔŋ-o **man**-ka-step
 3MSGCL- kiss-3MSGCL ACC 3FSGCL- GEN-3MSG every-3FSGCL-
 John mother morning
Gloss: John kisses his mother every morning

The typological investigation of indefinites in Pnar, undertaken in this paper, brings out some remarkable aspects of a very little known Mon-Khmer language and encourages us to undertake further research work in the still unknown languages of this sub-group. It would be interesting to see if further research could throw up some more light on the availability of such diverse

strategies in other Mon-Khmer languages or the presence of any areal influence in the development of such strategies and/or if this can be co-related to other aspects of the morpho-syntax of these languages.

List of notations/abbreviations used

1PLCL	:	FIRST PERSON PLURAL CLITIC
1SG	:	FIRST PERSON SINGULAR PRONOMINAL
1SGCL	:	FIRST PERSON SINGULAR CLITIC
2MSG	:	SECOND PERSON MASCULINE SINGULAR PRONOMINAL
2MSGCL	:	SECOND PERSON MASCULINE SINGULAR CLITIC
2PL	:	SECOND PERSON PLURAL PRONOMINAL
2PLCL	:	SECOND PERSON PLURAL CLITIC
3ESGCL	:	THIRD PERSON EPICENE SINGULAR CLITIC
3FSG	:	THIRD PERSON FEMININE SINGULAR PRONOMINAL
3FSGCL	:	THIRD PERSON FEMININE SINGULAR CLITIC
3MSG	:	THIRD PERSON MASCULINE SINGULAR PRONOMINAL
3MSGCL	:	THIRD PERSON MASCULINE SINGULAR CLITIC
3PL	:	THIRD PERSON PLURAL PRONOMINAL
3PLCL	:	THIRD PERSON PLURAL CLITIC
ABL	:	ABLATIVE CASE MARKER
ACC	:	ACCUSTAIVE CASE MARKER
ALL	:	ALLATIVE CASE MARKER
CAUS	:	CAUSATIVE MARKER
CL:HUM	:	HUMAN CLASSIFIER
COMP	:	COMPLEMENT CLAUSE MARKER
COMPL	:	COMPLETIVE ASPECT MARKER
COND	:	CONDITIONAL MARKER
CONJ	:	CONJUNCTION
DAT	:	DATIVE CASE MARKER
DISTDEM	:	DISTAL DEMONSTRATIVE
DISTR	:	DISTRIBUTIVE MORPHEME
EMPH	:	EMPHATIC MARKER
EPTDR	:	EMPTY PARTICLE IN DISCONTINUOUS REDUPLICATION
FUT	:	FUTURE TENSE
GEN	:	GENITIVE CASE MARKER
LOC	:	LOCATIVE CASE MARKER
MOD:ABIL	:	ABILITY MARKING MODAL
MOD:OBLIG	:	OBLIGATION MARKING MODAL
NEG	:	NEGATIVE PARTICLE
NONFIN	:	NON-FINITE VERB MARKER
PERF	:	PERFECT ASPECT MARKER
PROXDEM	:	PROXIMAL DEMONSTRATIVE
RP	:	RELATIVIZING PARTICLE

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Received: 1 October 2007

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