ASPECTS OF INTER-CLAUSAL RELATIONS IN KHMU

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0. Introduction
This paper attempts to investigate certain mechanisms involved in the manifestation of inter-clausal relations in Khmu, and will discuss the Khmu that is spoken in Huoyen village, Chiengkhong district, Chiengrai province, Thailand. This variety is also found widely spoken in the Park Bang area of northern Laos.

Khmu is a Mon-Khmer language spoken by a group of hill tribesmen found primarily in northern Laos, northern Thailand—especially the area along the Thai–Lao border—northern Vietnam and southern China. They are believed to have previously occupied a larger area than at present, their arrival to this area predating that of Thai speakers and other more recent hill tribes such as Miao, Yao, Lisu, Karen, and others.

A. General syntactic structure
Words in Khmu are mainly monosyllabic, though disyllabic words are still numerous. It is possible that Khmu once had a very complex system of affixation even though nowadays many affixes are found only in fossilised form and have often lost their meanings.

In text materials, although most of the items can obviously be defined as belonging to the natural word classes such as noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, demonstrative, etc., there are a number of ‘syntactic’ particles that do not seem to have meaning by themselves but do have certain functional meanings. They have a possible word shape, Cv(C), but they are never stressed. A number of them occur before the main verb. Many seem to be semantically related to the verb morpheme while in other cases they are related to the whole clause or even to a higher level. Without a knowledge of functional meanings of the particles (PT) it is almost impossible to understand the subtlety of the expressions and thus to follow a conversation, story, or talk thoroughly, even though the meanings of all the major words are clearly known. In order to give a clearer view of this curious syntactic feature which may lead to the understanding of inter-clausal syntax in Khmu, an overview will be given here, including a discussion of the verb phrase.

1. I am grateful to my Khmu friends who patiently gave me the data discussed here and for David Thomas' comments and suggestions.
2. Further information on Khmu structure (phonology and syntax) can be found in Suwilai Premsrirat (1987c). Detailed information on phonology (different dialects) and morphology will also be found in Smalley (1961) and Svantesson (1983).
The normal word order in Khmu is SVO. In case of emphasis the OSV order is very common. Examples of normal clause patterns are:

**Intransitive clause**
- `k5:n jαm3`
  child cry
  ‘The child is crying.’

**Transitive clause**
- `nα: pα? mαh`
  they eat rice
  ‘They are having a meal.’

**Bi-transitive clause**
- `ʔoʔ ʔuaʔ mαʔ jοʔ tεʔ kmű:l`
  I give parents take money
  ‘I gave my parents some money.’

**Semi-transitive clause**
- `jaʔ jat tα kα:ŋ`
  grandmother stay at home
  ‘My grandmother is at home.’

**Equative clause**
- `ʔoʔ mαh k⁴rũ:`
  I am teacher
  ‘I am a teacher.’

**Existive clause**
- `tα kα:ŋ ʔαh hʔiθ, ʔαh sũʔ, ʔαh siŋ`
  at home have hen, have dog, have pig
  ‘There are hens, dogs and pigs at home.’

**Quotative clause**
- `jοʔ pra:k law jõh lαʔ lαʔ`
  father say before say go well well leaving
  ‘My father wished them a safe trip.’

Modifiers (Mod.) in a noun phrase normally follow the head noun (HN).

HN + Mod.

- `sũʔ hiŋ pα:r (to:) kam nαm kɔna:j`
  dog black two (class.*) which big that
  ‘those two big black dogs’

However, it is noticeable that the reversed orders of clause pattern, (O)VS, and of noun phrase, Mod. + HN, have also been found in text materials.

1. `lαm mαh lαm mα:r`
  delicious rice delicious salt
  ‘Have a good life.’

3. ‘ refers to the clear tense register of this Khmu variety, whereas the breathy lax register is unmarked.
* = classifier (Ed.).
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(2) *puh kmâ?*
fall rain (n.)
'It is raining.'

The Khmu verb phrase normally consists of one or more main verbs (MV) and their modifiers (auxiliaries and preverbal adverbs) occurring mainly in the pre-verbal positions. The pre-verbal modifiers (preV) can be classified into 5 categories according to their positional occurrences away from the main verb.

preV 5  preV 4  preV 3  preV 2  preV 1  MV

PreV 1 indicates state of existence like /pîən/ 'able', /jat/ 'to have been happening, still', /hô:c/ 'already', /cû?/ 'want to', /'îk/ 'not want to', /kô:j/ 'slowly, gradually', /lak/ 'completely', /pʰɔːn/ 'never,' etc.

PreV 2 indicates negative meaning like /pê/ 'not', /pîs?/ 'not any more'.

PreV 3 indicates intention, determination and future action like /ce/ 'will'.

PreV 4 indicates tense and aspect like /hâ/ 'already (past action)', /nô:ŋ/ 'still, will'.
Some of the pre-verbals of category 1 and category 2 like /pîən/, /hô:c/, /lak/, and /pîs?/ may sometimes be shifted to the post-verbal position.

Examples of verb phrases containing preV 1, 2, 3, and 4 functioning in the clause are

*na: pʰɔːn 'îak pu:c*  
1 MV  
she never drink wine  
'She has never drunk wine.'

(3) *snâ:*  
     hâ  
     rɔː:t  
     4 MV  
they (two) already arrive  
'They have come.'

(4) *ʔô? pê pîən jôh ta jû?*  
     2 1 MV  
I not able go to forest  
'I did not have a chance to go to the forest.'

(5) *ʔô? nô:ŋ ce jôh mɔː:t kmû:l kâ:l*  
     4 3 MV  
I still will go take money before  
'I still have to go to take the money first.'

(6) *nɔː: hâ ce pîs? pîən ʔôh jaŋ ki:*  
     4 3 2 1 MV  
they already will not any more able do like this  
'They will not be able to act like this any more.'
PreV 5 indicates modality such as the actor’s volition, obligation, necessity or ability in doing something. Since it involves a relationship between a causer which may be stated or unstated and the actor and the action it is more like a clause rank notion than a phrase one. In Khmu it contributes a good deal to the inter-clausal relationship. This category includes /tan/, /le/, /cen/, mák/, /kaj/ and /thə/. These will be dealt with in detail in the next section. Examples of Khmu utterances with various pre-verbal particles including the category 5 pre-verbs are

(1) prap ləh las ?i? màk pê piən jəh
   5  2  1 MV
dress body quickly we afraid not able go
‘Dress quickly otherwise we will not be able to go.’

(2) nâj  ?o? law ce pê jəh ?o? tan ha ce
    3  2 MV  5  4  3
a moment ago I say will not go I certainly already will
   2 MV MV  5 MV
not go you go I therefore go
‘I said that I would not go so I should not go. But you will go so I will too.’

(3) pə: jəh kâ:l ?i? tan ce nɔ:ə jəh
    5  3  4 MV
you go before I certainly will still go
‘You go first and I will follow you.’

It should be noted here that the preV 3 /ce/ which indicates the future and the speaker’s intention and determination can also function at the inter-clausal level (as will be seen in the next section) whereas the preV 5 /tan/ which also indicates the speaker’s determination or obligation (though in a higher degree) can be manifested at the clause level.

B. Inter-clausal Relations
In the context of speech, a semantic sentence represents a minimum speech act consisting of one or more predications (semantic clauses). A structural sentence is therefore composed of at least one main independent clause with or without subordinate clauses and occurs with a distinct illocutionary force (mood) which may be a statement, question or command. In Khmu, two clauses or series of clauses whose meanings are related are structurally joined by various devices. The formal linguistic devices used may be conjunctions, pre-verbal particles, and reversed word

4. Since these pre-verbal particles do not have any content meaning, the explanation here is presented without giving the meaning of each item. However, in the following examples the approximate meaning of each item has been attempted.

5. The category 4 pre-verbs can appear after the category 3 in certain cases.

It is noticeable that consciously and off context the co-occurrence between the category 4 pre-verbs /hâ/ and /nɔ:ə/ and the category 3 pre-verbal /ce/ is considered as ‘possible’ but ‘not quite right’. The /ce/ seems to be the main item.
order in the subordinate clauses. Apart from this, there are structurally independent clauses that are just juxtaposed (strung together within a common intonation contour but without any formal conjunction markers). I shall discuss inter-clausal relationships in terms of temporal, logical, and compounding sequences.

1. Temporal sequence relations: these have an initial action followed by one or more succeeding actions. They are normally joined by the medial conjunctions /hô:c/ ‘after that, already, then’ /pa:m/ ‘at the time, when, time’, /kâ:l ‘before, in front of’ and /kʰni?/ ‘after, at the back’. However, in certain contexts the succession of actions may appear without any conjunction. The structural manifestation of this kind of relation is:

SVO (conj.) SVO

(1) *pe? mah hô:c ?ôh wiak*
    eat rice then do work
    ‘I will eat rice first then I will go to work.’

(2) *?o? ?ôh rna: hô:c ka:j sih*
    I do rice field then come sleep
    ‘When I finish working on the rice field I will come to sleep.’

(3) *kə: jôh nám ?o? nô:ŋ sih*
    he go when I still sleep
    ‘He went while I was sleeping’

(4) *?o? nám ?ôm kâ:l po? mah*
    I bath water before eat rice
    ‘I take a bath before having a meal.’

(5) *?o? rôh ta sih kʰni? ma? jôh ta rê?*
    I get out from sleep after mother go to field
    ‘I got out of bed after my mother had gone to the field.’

Sometimes the meaning of words chosen indicates the temporal sequence.

(6) *je? jôh kâ:l ?o? ce jôh nam ta kʰni?*
    you go before I will go follow at the back
    ‘You go first. I will follow you.’

In some contexts a series of verbs following one another indicates the sequence of actions that happen one after the other. They may or may not have the conjunction /hô:c/ in between. The /hô:c/ normally occurs before the last verb of the utterance.

(7) *pa:t plû? Ø cʰréh (hô:c ) kôh*
    cut off leg remove flesh then chop
    ‘Sever and bone the leg and then chop it up.’
8. pok Ø pliot Ø pen to:n Ø tran Ø wah ne:r
cut off cut short to be piece cut square split small
ne:r (hó:c) hó:c
small then cut smooth
‘Cut down (a tree) cut it into (short) pieces, smooth off the rough
good pieces, then smooth them.’

The pre-verbal particle category 5 /tʰa/ or its variants /ta- da-sa/ has
also been found optionally co-occurring with the pre-verbal category 3
/ce/ and the conjunction /hó:c/ in the following clause to indicate that the
event happens after another. Its structure can be manifested as

SVO (hó:c) S (tʰa) ce VO

I come talk with you after that I then will go eat rice
‘I will come to talk to you first, then I will go to eat rice.’

(2) kmā? hā pʰriŋ hó:c ?o? (tʰa) ce jɔh ?ɔh wiak
rain already stop after that I then will go do work
‘When the rain has already stopped I will then go to work.’

(3) ?o? nɔ:ŋ pɔ? mah hó:c ?o? (tʰa) ce hian tɔ:
I still have to eat rice after that I then will learn continue
‘I have to have a meal first then I will continue learning.’

(4) ?ɔ? mu:m ?ɔm hó:c ?o? (tʰa) ce jɔh sǐh
I bath water after that I then will go sleep
‘I will go to sleep after I have taken a bath.’

2. Logical sequence relations: these will be discussed mainly in terms of
various ‘conditional’ sequences that are different in the degrees of
determination, possibility, certainty, expectation and counter-expectation,
including various shades of overtone. This type of sequence normally
consists of a main clause stating ‘condition’, ‘cause’ or ‘environment’ and
one or more dependent clauses stating ‘consequence’. Notions like
‘causal’, ‘resultant’ and ‘co-varying’ will also be included in the discussion
of this type of relationship.

2.1. Conditional relations: six different pre-verbals /ce/, le/, /tan/, cen/,
mák/, and /kaj/ are found attached to the consequence clause distinguishing six different types of conditional relations. The first
particle has been discussed as pre-verbal category 3, whereas the last five
belong to category 5. They can be manifested structurally as

SVO S preV VO

[ ce 
  le 
  tan 
  cen 
  mák 
  kaj ]
2.1.1. /ce/ normally occurs within a clause to indicate futurity and the actor's determination to do something. Occurring in the consequence clause, it indicates that the action it is attached to will normally happen as the possible consequence of the preceding event. It is the most common type of conditional relationship. There is more than one way of manifesting this type of conditional relationship. Apart from the fact that the verb in the consequence clause is introduced by /ce/, the conditional clause may be introduced by the Lao loan conditional conjunction /kʰān/ or the Thai loan /thāː/, both meaning 'if'. The structural manifestation of this relation can be summarised as:

(conj.) SVO S preV VO

(1) \(kʰān\) ?o? puṣ puː j? o? ce tar
If I meet spirit I will run
'If I see the spirit I will run.'

(2) \(kʰān\) kʰān? rōː t ?ŋ̪? ce pʰān woh
If rain arrive paddy will get plenty
'If it rains we will get plenty of paddy.'

(3) \(kʰān\) ?o? pē ?sh wiːk pommaːj ?o? ce cuːr
If I not do work the second day I will go down after tomorrow
rōː t rāːc pa: arrive visit you
'If I do not work on the second day after tomorrow I will go to see you.'

(4) \(lʰaː\) ?o? ah snāː t o? ce pʰn siːm
If I have gun I will shoot bird
'If I have a gun I will shoot the birds.'

(5) \(lʰaː\) pa jō h?i ce jō hē
If you go we will go together
'If you go so will we.'

Some speakers put the word /ŋuːn/ 'give' before the first clause of a sentence with /ce/.

(6) ŋuːn mar tōk nōː nōː ce hāːn
give snake bite then they will die
'If they are bitten by a snake they will die.'

(7) ŋuːn jōg rōː t ?o? ce jō h
give father arrive I will go
'If my father comes I will go.'

(8) ŋuːn ?o? ah pnār ?o? ce tʰr mīn siːm
give I have wing I will fly like bird
'If I had a wing I would fly like like a bird.'
2.1.2. /le/ indicates that the action it is attached to has naturally happened or has to happen as the consequence of the preceding action. It is information which is being reported to somebody.

(1) ¿o? mu:m ¿ôm hô:c ¿o? le joh sîh
   I bath water already I therefore go sleep
   'I go to sleep after taking a bath.'

(2) ma? cêh ¿o? ¿o? le ja:m
    mother scold me I therefore cry
    'My mother scolded me so I cried.'

(3) hic ¿5? ¿uan mûk hô:c le ku:m
    crush paddy cause small piece already therefore winnow
    'Crush the paddy until it becomes small pieces then winnow it.'

(4) joj ka: ¿k ¿ak pu:k ka: le té:n te: pa:n
    father he not want drink wine he therefore make himself drunk
    'My father did not want to drink wine so he pretended to be drunk.'

(5) ¿a: je? klâm piôn le mz:t ¿5:r joh ¿5m6
    init. part. you carry able therefore take lead go fin. part.
    'If you can carry it then take it.'

2.1.3. /taŋ/ indicates that the action it is attached to certainly and obligatorily happens as determined by the event or circumstances which may be expressed in a clause, or even by a non-verbal behaviour or situation. It implies the speaker's expectation and determination. It may also co-occur with /ce/.

(1) no: jat piôn ¿i? taŋ jat piôn
    they live able we certainly live able
    'If they can stay so can we.'

(2) ¿ki:n ¿o? joh ta jû? mi: ski: ¿o? taŋ ce joh me?
    yesterday I go to forest today I certainly will go new
    'Yesterday I went to the forest, today I will go again.'

(3) ma wât taŋ wât
    init. part. fight certainly fight
    'Let's fight.'

(4) ten ta ki: taŋ piôn
    sit at here certainly able
    'Have a seat here.'

(5) ¿o? cú? lu:j ¿o? taŋ joh bû:k pa:
    I have a pain stomach I certainly go tell you
    'If I have a stomach-ache I will tell you.'

6. fin. part. is abbreviated from 'final particle'. The other related abbreviation is init. part. (= initial particle).
2.1.4. /cën/ indicates that the action it is attached to is unavoidable and would logically happen as a result of a specific action or state. It normally has an overtone of ‘sarcasm’, ‘unconcern’, or sometimes ‘annoyance’. In some cases it indicates that the action it is attached to is an unreal situation. It normally occurs with the final particle /(?)u? eh/.

1. je? na:η pri? je? cën pë ?sh ja:η kori ?eh you know the right thing you definitely not do like this fin. part. ‘If you know what is right and wrong you will definitely not do like that.’

2. ka:j cën ka:j pa: na jat ?sh mōh ta ki: go back definitely go back you part. live do what at here ‘If you want to go (home) then go. Why continue living here?’

3. há:n cën há:n ?eh pà: na priol ?sh mōh die definitely die fin. part. you part. alive do what ‘If you want to die then die. Why stay alive?’

4. sí:m ka: ?ah pnír kà: tí:r cën pion ?u ?eh bird it have wing it fly definitely able fin. part. (je? pë ?ah pnír je? tí:r ce pion mōh) you not have wing you fly will able what ‘Birds have wings so they can fly. (You don’t have wings, how can you fly?)’

5. ke? pōh ja:η kòni? kà: cën la:c ?ōh you leave like this it definitely fin. part. lose ‘You left it here like this so (of course) it got lost!’

6. Sà:n, je? cën síh rōh srúat ?eh jōh ?ōh wìok Sorn, you definitely sleep get up early fin. part. go do work la: ce tan then will be in time Sorn, if you had got up early you would have been able to go to work in time.’

7. na: cën tar las ?u ?eh na: nó:η nim she definitely run quickly fin. part. she still young ‘She is still young, of course she can run quickly.’

2.1.5. /mák/ indicates that the action to which it is attached is undesirable, and will happen as a result of another action. It has the overtone of ‘warning’ or ‘concern’. It may occur with the conjunction /hi?/ ‘in a moment, otherwise’.

1. há ta: lor re:η (hi?) kà: mák mec already not talk loud otherwise he probably hear ‘Don’t talk loudly or he will hear what you say.’
(2) ta: lor ja:ŋ kóni no: mák mo:r je?
not talk like this they probably fine you
‘Don’t talk like this or they will fine you.’

(3) kir ṣíh ṣí ka:j las mák puh
thunder loud noise we go back quickly probably be soaked in
kmá? ka:j mák pé tan
rain go back probably not be in time
‘It is thundering so we have to go quickly, otherwise it will rain
and we will not be able to go back.’

(4) ta: joh sé:t hi? mák la:c
not go alone otherwise probably get lost
‘Don’t go alone or you will get lost.’

(5) ta: høj we:l hi? mák ṣoh
not play knife otherwise probably cut oneself
‘Don’t play with the knife, otherwise you will cut yourself.’

(6) ta: joh krip ká? te: jò? no: mák piŋ po:
not go seize fish other people because they probably shoot you
mák há:n le:n probably die free
‘Don’t go to catch others’ fish or they will shoot you and you will
die for nothing.’

2.1.6. /kaj/. In concessive or adversative sequence, the main independent clause and the subordinate clauses that follow are contrasted in content. The subordinate clause normally posits an exception or ‘concession’ to that which was or will be stated in the main clause. In Khmu this relationship is expressed by the occurrence of the pre-verbal particle /kaj/ in the subordinate clause. /kaj/ indicates that the event it is attached to happens in a contra-normal sequence, as an unexpected consequence of the preceding event, or even as a kind of conflict with the condition.

init. part. live at village you become have money a lot I who
joh cé:n kaj pé ?ah
go be employed become not have
‘How come you who stay at home are rich but I who go to work
outside am not?’

(2) bo:k ṭuán pa: joh ʔh wiak hó:c pa: kaj jat ᵃh móh
tell give you to do work already you become stay do what
‘I told you to go to work. Why are you still here?’

(3) no: jat piŋ ṣi? kaj jat pé piŋ
they live able we become live not able
‘They can stay; how come we can’t?’

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today I not have work there I become do work here
‘I come to work here because there was not any work over there.’

a long time ago I ask to take money give to him give
him give to father then he become not give to father become
joŋ ?uán jo? tmko’? te:
go give to wife his
‘A long time ago I gave him the money (asking him) to give (it) to
my father but he didn’t. He gave it to his wife instead.’

(6) kə: ce srón kō:n te: ku:t ro:yrian kə: kaj law
he will send child his enter school he become say
pę ?ah ma? pō:s héːm te:
not have who look after younger sibling his
‘Instead of sending his child to school he said that there was no
one else to look after his younger sibling.’

2.2. For ‘causal’ sequences the conjunction /joʔ/ ‘because’ is used between
the consequence and its conditional cause. The structural manifestation
of this type of relationship can be written as:
SVO conj. SVO

(1) kə: háːn joʔ mar tōk
he die with snake bite
‘He died of snake bite’ (lit. ‘The snake bit him to death’)

(2) kȟmúʔ hıŋ jōʔ púːh waːr
Khmu black because to be in the sun hot
‘The Khmu are dark because they work in the sun.’

(3) naː taŋ ʔik je jəʔ jeʔ ħáʔ ʔah tmkoʔ?
she certainly not want you because you already have wife
‘She must not want you because you already have a wife.’

(4) ?oʔ jəʔ ta jūʔ jəʔ teː ce ʔıh hʔʔ?
I go to forest because myself will do firewood
‘I will go to the forest to get the firewood.’

2.3. Co-varying sequence or a sliding-scale conditional sequence consists of
two clauses that are grammatically balanced but semantically opposing,
with a free variable and a conditioned variable. It indicates the increasing
degree in the event of the second clause. The conjunctions normally used are
the Thai loan /jñəː... jñ/ and the Lao loan /hėːn... hėːn/. The structural
manifestation of this type of relationship can be written as:
conj. SVO conj. SVO
2.4. In certain conditional constructions the subordinate clause which states the result has the normal clause order reversed.

SVO OVS

(1) ?oŋ srʔe:ŋ maʔ jioŋ lian ʔom mat
I miss mother father come out water eyes
‘I miss my parents so much that the tears fall.’

This characteristic has been extended to other sequences such as certain contrastive compounding (which is treated in the next section) and also to an immediate answer to the question in a question–answer sequence.

(2) maʔ ce raʔ sn teh raʔ ʔiʔ
who will clean dishes clean we
‘Who will do the dishes? We will.’

(3) maʔ ruŋ pu:c kə ki: lam la:k pu:c ruŋ ʔoŋ
who cook make wine this delicious a lot wine make I
‘Who made this delicious wine? I did.’

(4) maʔ peŋ sʔe:ŋ sʔe:ŋ peŋ ʔoŋ
who cut down tree tree cut down I
‘Who cut the tree down? I did.’

However, it must be noted that this kind of syntactic reversal occurred only in certain contexts. The effect is probably topicalisation.

3. Compounding sequence relations: these refer to the co-ordination of two independent clauses acting as a single unit in the higher grammatical level or sentence level. I shall discuss this type of relation in Khmu in terms of additive, contrastive and alternative sequences. There is no formal conjunction between clauses. The clauses are just juxtaposed. However, they normally occur within a common intonation contour. The structural manifestation of this relation is

SVO SVO

However, in contrastive sequence the subordinate clause may have a reversed order of the elements.

SVO OVS / OVS SVO
3.1. Additive compounding consists of clauses with only either the subject, predicate or the object in contrast.

(1) *na: joh dé: ja:m dé:* she go also cry also
    ‘She was crying while going.’

(2) *ta kųŋ ʔo? ʔáń ré? ʔáń pra:j liŋ sò? liŋ sín* at home I do field do trap feed dog feed pig
    ‘At home I worked on the rice field making traps, feeding dogs and pigs.’

(3) *nak ɳɔ? sëh nak klaːŋ sëh* heavy paddy put in heavy rock put in
    ‘It is heavy because both paddy rice and rocks have been put in there.’

(4) *na: kuʔ naː woh naː pé lôn naː* she love them a lot she not forget them
    ‘She loves them a lot and she will not forget them.’

(5) *coːn laːc kʰɔːŋ pʰáːn naː kán* thief steal thing kill them die
    ‘The thieves took the things and killed them.’

3.2. Contrastive compounding consists of two contrasting clauses in subject and predicate (verb or object).

(1) *jeʔ nám ʔoʔ neʔ* you big I small
    ‘You are big (but) I am small.’

(2) *ʔoʔ tuk paː rmaːŋ* I poor you rich
    ‘I am poor (but) you are rich’.

(3) *ʔoʔ héːt koː pé jás* I call he not answer
    ‘I called (him) (but) he did not answer.’

(4) *ʔoʔ ce joh ta mok na ce joh ta ʔōm* I will go to mountain she will go to water
    ‘I will go to the mountain (but) she will go to the river.’

(5) *meːw pé péŋ sʔɔːŋ kʰmûʔ péŋ sʔɔːŋ* Meo not cut down tree Khmu cut down tree
    ‘The Meo do not cut the tree down (but) the Khmu do.’

(6) *ʔoʔ pé cʰáːj tòːm koː cʰáːj* I not know how to sing he know how to
    ‘I do not know how to sing Khmu traditional song (but) he does.’
The order of the subordinate clause in the last two examples is naturally reversed in the text.

(5)a  me:w πé πêŋ  sɔːŋ sɔːŋ pêŋ kʰmũʔ
Meo not cut down tree tree cut down Khmu
‘The Meo do not cut the tree down (but) the Khmu do.’

or (5)b  sɔːŋ pêŋ kʰmũʔ  me:w πé πêŋ
tree cut down Khmu Meo not cut
‘The Khmu cut down the tree (but) the Meo do not.’

(6)a  ʔoː pê cʰá:j  tɔ:m cʰá:j  kə:
I not know how to sing know how to he
‘I do not know how to sing Khmu traditional song (but) he does’.

3.3. Alternative compounding consists of two clauses with alternative predicate or alternative participants.

(1)  pa: ce ʔjɔh (pa:) ce ʔj ʔjɔh
you will go you will not go
‘You will go or not.’

(2)  pa: ce ʔjɔh pa: ce jat ʔɔŋ pãʔ  pã:r
you will go you will stay certainly able both two
‘You will go or you will stay.’

(3)  pa: lor ‘mo:j ʔum’ ʔɔŋ  lãʔ  ‘mo:j ʔu:’ ʔɔŋ  lãʔ
you say ‘mo:j ʔum’ certainly right ‘mo:j ʔu:’ certainly right
‘You can say either ‘mo:j ʔum’ or ‘mo:j ʔu:’.’

(4)  lor ʔoŋ lor ʰɔ:j
speak real speak play
‘Are you just joking or not?’

(5)  pa: ʔaŋ kũː:l wɔh pa: ce weːt lɔt pa: ce ʔoʔ  kəːŋ
you have money a lot you will buy car you will build house
‘If you have a lot of money will you buy a car or will you build a house?’

The correspondences between various types of semantic relations and syntactic devices is summarised in Fig. 1 on the following page.
Aspects of inter-clausal relations in Khmu

semantic relations

1. temporal
   - 2.1 conditional
     - 2.1.1 possible cons.
     - 2.1.2 reported cons.
     - 2.1.3 expected cons.
   - 2.1.4 unavoidable cons.
   - 2.1.5 undesirable cons.
   - 2.1.6 unexpected cons.

2. logical
   - 2.2 causal
   - 2.3 resultant
   - 2.4 co-varying

3. compounding
   - 3.1 additive
   - 3.2 contrastive
   - 3.3 alternative

syntactic devices

1. conjunctions
   - med. conj.
   - init. preV conj.
   - init. med. conj.

2. pre-verbal particles

3. reversed word order

4. juxtaposition

Fig. 1

Conclusion

Inter-clausal relations in Khmu have been discussed both semantically and structurally. Three main types of semantic relations, temporal, logical and compounding sequences, including various sub-types, have been discussed. The syntactic devices used in manifesting these semantic relations are conjunctions, pre-verbal particles, reversed word order and juxtapositions or a mixture of these. It is obvious that in Khmu conjunctions are not in predominant use, only a few examples having been found. Some are Thai or Lao loanwords, for instance, those initial, or initial and medial, conjunctions discussed in 2.1.1 and 2.4. The common Khmu medial conjunctions are /hô:c/ 'then, after that', /jo?/ 'because', and /hi?/ 'otherwise'. It is noticeable that their occurrences are not obligatory. They may be left out, or some other way of expressing the relationship may be taken instead. They also occur normally in positions of other word classes such as /jô hô:c/ 'to have already gone', /kô? hi?/ 'this coming evening', /pô jo? ti?/ 'to eat with hand', /jô jô? jo?/ 'to go with others'.

The reversed word order has been found used mainly in special or emphasised cases. The use of pre-verbal particles and juxtaposition is quite clear and obligatory. Pre-verbal particles are mainly used for subordinative constructions manifesting temporal and various logical (conditional) sequences, whereas juxtaposition is mainly used for co-ordinate constructions manifesting various compounding sequences. The systematic use of different pre-verbal particles for distinguishing different conditional relations in Khmu is unique. It also shows certain things about how the speakers of this language view and systematically categorise their 'conditional (cause and consequence)' experiences.

The young Khmu consider the pre-verbal particles as the conservative
forms of Khmu. Those who work in urban areas among the Thais tend to lose them gradually and unconsciously adopt the Thai pre-verbal particles /kɔ:/ ‘then’ /tɔŋ/ ‘must’ and final particles /sí/ and /lɔːj/, even though they are not exactly equivalent, whereas the people at home, especially the old and the women, still make quite a lot of use of the old forms. They sometimes adopt Thai conjunctions, /ɨn³ː/ ‘if’, /pʰr̥ɔŋ (wɔː)/ ‘because’, /lɛŋ/ ‘and’, /tɛː/ ‘but’, and /rɔ:/ ‘or’. However, they said that they still found it difficult and unnatural to express the contrastive, alternative or additive compoundings using the conjunctions /tɔː/, /rɔː/ and /lɛŋ/, respectively. Looking at the text materials of another Khmu variety which is spoken in the Nam Pan, Huay Moy, and Nam Lu villages in Chiengklang district, Nan province, Thailand, it is noticeable that the syntactic constructions in that area have been simplified quite a lot and become more like those of Thai. However, unconsciously, in certain contexts, most of the pre-verbal particles mentioned above are still retained, though the pronunciation may be slightly different. The exception is /cen/ which is generally replaced by /ce/, the equivalent of the Thai /cɔːŋ/ which indicates the speaker’s intention and future action. This pre-verbal seems to be very common and can sometimes replace other pre-verbs such as /mɔːk/ and /tanŋ/.

REFERENCES


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