PARTICIPANT REFERENCE IN NORTHERN KHMER 1

Somkiet POOPATWIBOON

Srinakharinwirot University, Mahasarakham

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

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

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

1. Initial introduction of participants

Main, secondary, incidental secondary, and nonhuman secondary participants 2 are introduced in different ways at their first appearance.

1.1. Main participants

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

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

 $^{^3}$ Symbolized as \emptyset .

and that participant is automatically in focus. Examples:

main participant of text:

miiən <u>mεε ?əw</u> nuu muuj Ø there-is mother-father be one 'There were parents.... (they)'

main participants of episode:

miiən kmom koon kmom muuj Ø
there-is girl child girl one
'There was a daughter.... (she)'
miiən mεε cah nυυ muuj

be

one

'There was an old mother....'

1.2. Secondary participants

there-is mother old

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

miiən niiə? sro? kii kii there-is person village they they 'There were neighbours... they'

miiən <u>?aakii</u> kii there-is someone she

'There was someone.... she'

miiən <u>phoon priiən</u> there-is group hunter

'There were some hunters'

1.3. Incidental secondary participants

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

Incidental secondary participants may also be introduced in possessive form. Examples:

0 s4 tuu som mii nuh kii PreN(F) that go ask 'Ask that woman for some (water)..... she'5 0 jaan ceeh kii kə? liic koon moo L deliver child come Part 'She delivered a child like that....' tamrɛɛj coh preeŋ moopah come meet elephant in heat '(They) went to meet an elephant in heat.....' Poss sneeh kə? ?aa ppuuən kii moo

'Then his wife came.... (she)'

1.4. Non-human secondary participants

wife his

Secondary participants who are non-human may be introduced by a noun in the subject slot of the main clause. Example:

come

C

PreN

then

jum kə? <u>puəh</u> kə? ramkhaan
cry L snake L be-bothered
 '(When she) cried, the snake was bothered.....'

2. Reintroduction of participants

[&]quot;Grammatical abbreviations: Dem = demonstrative; L = lexical linker; Mod = modifier; N = noun; O = object; Part = particle; Poss = possessive; PreN = prename; PreN(F) = female prename; Ref = reflexive pronoun; S = subject.

 $^{^5}$ Kii and mii nuh represent the same person.

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

2.1. In-focus reintroduction

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

S

moo kə? $\underline{\text{mee}}$ then than

come L mother ask that

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

S

phoo tə <u>?ew tamrεεj</u> moo Ø

when father elephant come

'When the father elephant came (he)'

S

koon nuh kə? plεεk knon cəət child that L be-surprised in heart

'That child was surprised'

S

mii ckεε nih kə? liic koon
mother dog this L delivered child

'This mother dog had delivered (she)'

S

mεε ?εεη nuh həj phoo tə phlum
mother herself that Part when be-bright

'That mother, when the day began'

S

sneeh kə? pdəj kii kə? tnen thaa
then husband her L ask that

'Then her husband asked that....'

2.2. Non-focus pronoun reintroduction

khniiə

kə?

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

> 0 kii.6 tuu liin non play with

she $_{\rm L}$ go 'She went to play with them.'

0

kum tampiien dec kii coh həj.7 thəə cniik da? spade put-into clump bamboo like her

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

2.3. Non-focus noun reintroduction

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

0

neeh ka? pbuul ppuuən thaa then persuade wife that

'Then (the husband) persuaded his wife that'

0

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

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

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

0

nesh kə? tuu tu? kə? khəən <u>pdəj kii</u>

then go Part L see husband her

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

3. Maintaining reference to participants

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

3.1. In-focus chain of zeroes

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

3.1.1. Subject-initial chain

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

I-F⁸

¶ miiən mεε ?əw nuu muuj neeh ka? miiən koon there-is mother father be one there-is child then FØ proh nou te muuj slan ?ooj FØ slan (parents) love male be - one (parents) love kə? kə?ləəj cuun koon tuu riin FØ mot FØ send child go study (parents) L (parents) lose so ?at ГØ mot stan FØ miiən srεε money (parents) lose money (parents) have ricefield kə? luə? cuun koon FØ miiən ckaa ГØ mot (parents) have garden (parents) L sell send child

⁸Discourse symbols: \emptyset = zero; \P = structural paragraph; # = paragraph boundary; $F\emptyset$ = zero focused participant; I-F = introduction of focused participant; NonF = nonfocused participant.

tuu riin mwwnkook thonburii. go study Bangkok Thonburi

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

3.1.2. Object-initial chain

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

tək sleek woojwaaj ?poj kii niiə? sro? cuuj roo for them person village shout sharply help seek niiə?^S sro? kii kə? sneeh kə? phoon cuuj nunuam group person village they L help bring khniiə-khnaan FØ [11 times] (they) together

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

phoo to ban?oon tuu pah tamreej soo tamreej
when by-chance go meet elephant white elephant
con-coot FØ

be-stumped (he) $\underline{F} \emptyset$

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

3.1.3. Interruption by quotation

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

FØ 2 times + direct quotation + <u>?aa khniiə</u> man meen baan (she)

PreN she not really get

tuu lun non proh naa chmool naa $\underline{F\emptyset}$ go play with male what male what (She)

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

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

 $\underline{F\emptyset}$ 3 times + direct quotation by elephant + snesh kə? (elephant)

tamrεεj ka? thaa + direct quotation by elephant. elephant L say

'Then the elephant said,'

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

3.1.4. Interruption by settings

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

.....
$$\underline{FØ}$$
 # #¶ location setting + \underline{khnii} kə? tuu (she) she L go

kreet phə? $\underline{F\emptyset}$ 4 times. dip drink (She)

'She went to drink... She'

..... \underline{Fp} # #¶ time setting + $\underline{\text{niiən}}$ nuh kə? ləəj lunuk (she) daughter that so lift

```
da?
                ciiər ....
                              FØ (2 times)
puəh
snake put-into basket
                              (She) .....
    'The daughter put the snake into her basket ... She...'
3.1.5. Chain-final reidentification
   At the end of a paragraph or episode, or when he is being
removed from the scene, a focused participant is occasionally
referred to by a pronoun or noun phrase. Example:
.... FØ ..... + direct quotation + khniiə kə? ?>>
                                                        teh #
    (she)
                                     She
                                            L be-glad
                                                        Part
..... FØ ..... tuu kə? thom
                                ckee ka? thom
                                                 thom
                                                        thom
               go L be-big dog L be-big be-big
    (she)
           # (end of introductory paragraph).
continually
# ¶ ..... FØ ..... khniiə phəəm
                                  nuu
                                         noo tuu
                                                    kii
                                                          kə?
                        conceive
                                                    she
                                                           L
                     she
                                    be
                                         be
                                              go
 liic
         koon
               moo
                       jaan ceeh #
                                       (end of episode, with
                                         participant removed
deliver child come
                         Part
                                                  from scene)
    '..... She was glad.
    '.... (She = the dog) .... went, the dog grew bigger.
    '.... (She) .... She was pregnant for a long time, then
she delivered .....'
3.1.6. Changing chains
   When a new participant is brought into focus, the chain of
zeroes for the previous focused participant will be ended and a
new chain will start for the new focused participant. Examples:
khniiə ..... FØ (4 times) ..... phoon priiən
                                             kə?
                                                        ktra?
 She
                               group hunter
                                             _{
m L}
                                                         pull
```

FØ

(hunters)

'The hunters suddenly pulled (They)'

phrup

suddenly come

moo

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

ruuət <u>FØ</u>

run (She)

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

3.2. Non-focused participants

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

3.2.1. Non-focused subject pronoun

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

NonF

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

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

NonF NonF

joo <u>mii</u> nuh həj moo kə? <u>wiiə</u> kə? man numnəp take PreN(F) that Part come L she L not die

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

3.2.2. Non-focused object pronoun

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

NonF NonF NonF NonF

<u>kii</u> kə? moo soopsuun <u>niiə</u> banthwkbanthaa <u>niiə</u> mot

he come investigate him record him entirely

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

3.2.3. Non-focused object noun

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

NonF

kə? ləəj cuun koon tuu riin

so send child go study

'So (the parents) sent their child to study'

NonF

phoo to ban?oon tuu pah tamreej soo tuu ko? tuu haw when by-chance go meet elephant white go go call

NonF

tamreej soo

elephant white

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

3.2.4. Non-focused complex subject deletion

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

NonF

NonF

neeh kə? miiən niiə? sro? kii tuu numuəm $\underline{\emptyset}$ tuu ciik besides there-is person village they go bring (her) go dig

NonF NonF

tamloon \emptyset \emptyset

taro root (they all)

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

NonF

phoon niie? sro? ciik tamloon ke? tuu chnaaj tuu chnaaj
group person village dig taro root L go far go far

NonF NonF

 $\underline{\emptyset} \qquad \underline{\emptyset} \qquad \dots$

(they all)

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

3.2.5. Non-focused repeated subject deletion

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

NonF NonF

NonF

miiən $\frac{2aakii}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1$

<u>luu pkoo</u> non phiin

hear thunder will rain

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

NonF

phoo to ban?oon naj krooj kii ko? haw thaan nuh hoj when by-chance day next he call soldier that Part

NonF

<u>Ø haw</u> moo.....

he call come

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

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