Case-marking of O and S in Khmer

Ayako SAKAMOTO
Graduate School of Tokyo University, Japan

1. Introduction

1.1 The aim of the paper

In Khmer, the basic word order of the transitive clause is AVO, and both the subject and the object normally do not receive any morphological marking. But under a certain condition, the object NP and some of the intransitive subjects are marked with the locative preposition ｎ evoke (hereafter ‘NEV’). Example (1a) is a normal AVO clause, and (1b) is its alternative NEV variant. (The object NP is in square brackets.) Example (2a) is a normal intransitive clause, and (2b) is its alternative NEV variant.

I am indebted to Tsunoda Tasaku for comments on earlier drafts of this paper, and to my main consultant Hun Seang Hong for his time and patience.

1NEV is a poly-functional morpheme. It has at least four more functions other than the function as an object marker.

1. NEV as a main verb, meaning ‘stay, live’:
   e.g. ក្នុង នៅ ក្រោយ ពោះពោះ
   1sg. NEV city Phnom Penh
   ‘I live in Phnom Penh City.’

2. NEV as an auxiliary which indicates imperfective aspect:
   e.g. ក្នុង នៅ នៅ ក្រោយ ពោះពោះ
   1sg. NEV PART study linguistics
   ‘I’m still studying linguistics.’

3. NEV as a preposition, introducing a locational/temporal NP into the clause:
   e.g. នៅ នៅ ពោះពោះ ក្នុង នៅ នៅ ពោះពោះ
   NEV time night 1SG study NEV home
   ‘In night time, I study at home.’

4. NEV as a conjunction which connects NPs into one unit (this usage is limited to formal speech style):
   e.g. ក្នុង នៅ ក្រោយ នៅ មេត្តRAL ធ្វើ រៀន ធ្វើ រៀន
   king’s family and government official big small
   នៅ នៅ ព្រះព្រះ នៅ នៅ ព្រះព្រះ
   [Cuon 1967:324]
   NEV all people all
   ‘the king’s family, dignitaries of all ranks, and all the people.....’

In terms of orthography, (i) NEV of type 1 to 3 above, and (ii) NEV of type 4 and NEV in example (1b) and (2b), are written differently, but they are pronounced identically.

MON-KHMER STUDIES 35:1-19
Case-marking of O and S in Khmer

(1) a. ;">nənɔŋ  baan  dσŋ  [kaa  put]  (A  V  O)
3SG.F  ASP  be informed  NOM  true

b. ;">nənɔŋ  baan  dσŋ  nɛv  [kaa  put]  (A  V  NEV  O)
3SG.F  ASP  be informed  NEV  NOM  true
‘She knows of the truth.’

(2) a. ;">kaɔt  [krɔh-tnak  coɔra?coɔ]  (V  S)
occur  accident  traffic

b. ;">kaɔt  nɛv  [krɔh-tnak  coɔra?coɔ]  (V  NEV  S)
occur  NEV  accident  traffic
‘A traffic accident has occurred.’

The occurrence of NEV is very restricted. A cursory view reveals that approximately less than one tenth of all the candidate NPs (i.e. objects and some of the intransitive subjects) are marked with NEV. The aim of this paper is to clarify the condition which triggers this non-canonical marking on O and some of S.

NEV marking is a result of the interaction of several factors.

I. Substantive factors:
   factors of
   a) nouns
   b) predicates
   c) the other constituents

II. Stylistic factors: formal, unexpected

In the following sections, I will discuss these factors one by one.

1.2 Overall view of NEV construction

Before going to the discussions, I will mention the outline of the NEV-marking which I will not discuss in detail in this paper.

1.2.1 Sentence types

In some languages, non-canonical marking on the core argument is restricted to a certain sentence type\(^2\), however Khmer NEV marking is not restricted to a certain sentence type, i.e. NEV is used in various sentence types.

(3)  désormt  baan  səmdaŋ  nɛv  -  [seeckdaj  kɔorɔp]  cɔmpɔh  kruu
3SG  ASP  express  NEV  NOM  respect  toward  teacher
‘S/He has expressed respect toward the teacher.’

\(^2\)E.g. in Russian, genitive is used instead of accusative to mark object NP, but this phenomenon appears mainly in negated clauses (Timberlake 1975).
(4) Interrogative
taa koot baan taktuol nay - [pòeapmèan pòc lèc] rùm tèe?
INT 3SG ASP receive NEV information REL good or FP
‘Does s/he receive good news?’

(5) WH interrogative
taa koot baan khèay nèy - [ʔenaj klah]?
INT 3SG ASP see NEV what some
‘What did s/he see?’

(6) Negative
khnom muon dael khèay nèy - [tòthahpèep pòc lèc] tèe
1SG NEG EXP see NEV scenery REL good FP
‘I have never seen such beautiful scenery.’

(7) Imperative
sòmdaej nèy - [seeckdaj kòorèp] compèh kruu!
express NEV NOM respect toward teacher
‘Express respect toward the teacher!’

1.2.2 Partial ergativity

NEV-marking pattern shows a partial ergative type, in that objects of transitive verbs and some of the intransitive subjects may (or may not) be marked with NEV, in contrast with transitive subjects and other intransitive subjects, which can never be marked with NEV.

In Khmer, there is one word order for transitive clauses: A+V+O, and two word orders for intransitive clauses: S+V and V+S.

(8) Transitive
khnom baan boñhaaj kòmnut ròbòch khnom
1SG ASP show thought GEN 1SG
[A] [ V ] [ O ]
‘I expressed my idea.’

(9) Intransitive: S+V
koot daə knoŋ prèj
3SG walk inside forest
[S] [ V ]
‘S/He walked around in a forest.’

(10) Intransitive: V+S
khooec tòmnèk-tòmndōn rònuən khnom muŋ nèəŋ
be broken relationship between 1SG and 3SG.F
[V] [ S ]
‘The relationship between her and me is broken.’
The word order choice for intransitive clauses is complex. Figure 1 is the rough sketch of the correspondence between types of verbs and word order choice. (For detail, see Sakamoto, Ayako 2004.)

The positioning of intransitive subjects (‘S’) in Khmer is a mixture of ‘split-S’ and ‘fluid-S’ (Dixon 1979:80, 82) positioning. The ‘split’ is shown by a broken line. The ‘fluid’ is where two arrows are overlapping. For fluid-S, whether the verb prefers SV order or VS order is different between types of verbs. The preference degree is shown by the arrow from bottom to upward, i.e. verbs of existence/non-existence almost obligatorily take VS order; verbs of appearance/disappearance prefer to take VS order; and verbs of state are the least likely to occur in VS clause³.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intransitive verbs</th>
<th>Volitional verbs: e.g. daa ‘walk’</th>
<th>Initial state: e.g. chav ‘be raw’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stative verbs</td>
<td>State with no implication for initiality:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. kmav ‘be black’, ṭhōm ‘be dark’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-volitional verbs</td>
<td>Change of state: e.g. slap ‘die’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inchoative verbs</td>
<td>Change of location: e.g. ķlêk ‘fall down’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Appearance/Disappearance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. kaət ‘occur’, ʔəh ‘vanish’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>verbs of existence/non-existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. mēən ‘exist’, kmēən ‘not exist’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Word order patterns of Khmer intransitive verbs

I will call the S of SV intransitive clause – which is placed at the same position as the A of transitive – as ‘Sᵥ’). Similarly, I will call the S of VS intransitive clause – which is placed at the same position as the O of transitive – as ‘Sₒ’. Among these four types of core arguments, i.e. A, O, Sᵥ, and Sₒ, the NPs which may or may not be marked with NEV are O and Sₒ. A and Sᵥ can

³Verbs of state take VS order only when they refer to changes of state as a result of the preceding causal events. Compare the following SV/VS pair;

a. SV: tmēp k mav
   teeth be black
   ‘Teeth are black.’

b. VS: k mav tmēp
   be black teeth
   ‘(e.g. you smoke too much, so your) teeth became black.’

K mav ‘be black’ in SV refers to state of teeth, while k mav ‘be black’ in VS refers to change of color of teeth. This is why the stative verbs which refer to initial state and never fit ‘become’ sense, such as chav ‘be raw’, take only SV order and cannot occur in VS order. Meat, for example, becomes rotten, or dries up, but never becomes raw.
never be marked with NEV. The corresponding NEV variants for (8) and (10) are as follows.

(11) ក្រុម បា្ហាន ន្ - [កម្ពុជ រៀបចិត៖ ក្រុម]
     1SG  ASP  show  NEV  thought  GEN  1SG
     [A]  [ V ]  NEV  [ O ]
     ‘I expressed my idea.’

(12) ក្រុម ន្ - [តំណាង មិន រៀបចិត៖ ក្រុម អី ន្]
     be  broken  NEV  relationship  between  1SG  and  3SG.F
     [ V ]  NEV  [ S ]
     ‘The relationship between her and me is broken.’

NEV-marking on S₀ is possible, but its frequency rate is very low. In my data, approximately less than 10% of all the examples are examples of NEV-marking on S₀. This may come from the fact that intransitive predicates which are likely to take NEV-marked S₀ are very restricted, restricted to intransitive predicates of appearance (e.g. ‘to occur’) and disappearance (e.g. ‘to vanish’). (The characteristics of predicates is discussed in section 3.) Thus, the possibility of the NEV-marking is the binary distinction, i.e. O/S₀ VS. *S₁/A, but in reality, the preference of the NEV-marking follows the “O > S₀ > *S₁, *A” hierarchy.

1.2.3 Optional and obligatory NEV-marking

The NEV-marking on O/S₀ is obligatory under some circumstances and optional under others. Among the examples of the NEV-marking on O and S₀ in my data, those of the obligatory NEV marking constitute 35%, and those of the optional marking 65%.

The factors that make the NEV marking obligatory are syntactic. Haiman (1999:151) has noted that the NEV marking is obligatory ‘only if the phrases that they introduce are separated (...) from the verbs with which they are in construction’. Examples include (13), in which តំណាង-ជា ‘totally’ intervenes between the verb and the NEV-marked NP.

(13) ក្រុម បា្ហាន តំណាង-ជា ជាមួយ ន្ - [សម្រាប់ រៀបចិត៖ ក្រុម]
     1SG  ASP  memorize  totally  NEV  words  GEN  3SG
     ‘I have completely memorized what s/he had said.’

<sup>4</sup>This ranking is essentially the same as the famous hierarchy, O > S > A (*A, for some grammatical phenomena), which is manifested in many grammatical phenomena of many languages, e.g. : the suffix -ee in English (employee (O) > escapee (S) > *A) (Comrie 1978:390), compounding of V and NP (O is the easiest to incorporate, e.g. fox-hunting, followed by S, e.g. bird-chirping, with A being most resistant to incorporation) (Comrie 1978:337, 390, for instance), the degree of acceptability of Possessor Respect in Japanese (Tsunoda 1996:585-588), and many others.
The NEV-marking is possible and optional only when the O/S\textsubscript{O} in question immediately follows the verb. Examples include (14).

(14) កកនឹឈុបាយចម៉ានី / នែន- [តម៉ូញ រ្លាស់ កាត់] តែម៉ា-ឃឺ
1SG ASP memorize NEV words GEN 3SG totally
‘I have completely memorized what s/he had said.’

As noted above, Haiman discusses the instances in which the NP in question is separated from the verb. But he does not consider the direction of the separation. In my analysis, the direction is strictly restricted to ‘backward’ as in (13). ‘Forward’ separation, such as topicalization is not allowed. Topicalized O NP may occur sentence-initially. Compare (15) and (16). A topicalized NP may be marked with one of the topic-marking prepositions, such as ពីស ‘as for’ or រៀមពីស ‘as for’. It may also have no preposition at all. But it can never be marked with NEV. See (16).

(15) មិត្តបាយ បំណុល់ /នែន - [កូនេច្ញ រ្លាស់ ម៉ា] នែន
2SG should PART show NEV idea GEN 2SG
‘You have to show your own idea.’

(16) តែបាយ បំណុល់ /រៀមពីស - /*នែន - [កូនេច្ញ រ្លាស់ ម៉ា ម៉ា] នែន នែន
as for NEV idea GEN 2SG 2SG should

PART show
‘As for your own idea, you have to show it.’

The restriction that O/S\textsubscript{O} marked with NEV cannot appear in the topic position might be connected with the referential status of the O/S\textsubscript{O}. O/S\textsubscript{O} which is marked with NEV tends to be less referential (indefinite, inanimate, non-specific, etc.). I will discuss the characteristics of O/S\textsubscript{O} in section 2.

2. Nouns

That an object marker (in Khmer, an O/S\textsubscript{O} marker) sometimes appears and sometimes does not appear is not a rare phenomenon and can be seen in many other languages of the world. According to previous studies of other languages, one of the most crucial criteria for the occurrence of such markers is the referential status (definiteness, animacy, etc.) of the NPs (Timberlake 1975, Moravcsik 1978:267-72, Hopper and Thompson 1980:253, Onishi 2001:5, etc.).
We can consider roughly two types. One is that the NPs which are highly referential, and highly individuated, are likely to be marked with such a marker. Examples of such languages are Hindi: the postposition ko (koo) is used for objects which are human and specific in reference (Shapiro 1989:56, Hopper and Thompson 1980:256); Rumanian: the preposition pe ‘on’ is obligatory when the objects are free pronouns or proper names which are high in referential status (Mallinson 1986:88-89); Spanish: the preposition a is used only for definite human objects (Comrie 1989:134, Hopper and Thompson 1980:256); and the Chinese ba construction which is used when the objects are specific, definite, or generic (Frei 1956, 1957, Cheung 1973, Thompson 1973, Hopper and Thompson 1980:274-75, Li & Thompson 1981:465-66, Sun 1995, and many others).

The other is that the NPs which are lowly ranked in terms of referential status are likely to be marked with such a marker. One example of such a language is Russian: the genitive is likely to be used instead of the accusative for objects of negated verbs which are less individuated (indefinite, inanimate, etc.) (Timberlake 1975).

Khmer NEV on O/SO might be placed intermediate between the former Hindi, etc. type and the latter Russian type; NEV is preferred with nouns which are overwhelmingly less individuated in terms of certain parameters, but overwhelmingly more individuated in terms of the other parameter.

In order to show this tendency, I examined my data in terms of five parameters picked up from Timberlake (1975);

(a) Semantic parameters:
   (i) Properness: proper / common
   (ii) Abstractness: concrete / abstract
   (iii) Animacy: animate / inanimate
   (iv) Definiteness: definite / indefinite
(b) Syntactic parameter:
   (i) Modification: modified / unmodified

5The total number of NEV-NP data is more than five hundred (optional NEV is approximately 65%, and obligatory NEV is approximately 35%), which are gathered from written texts (newspapers, magazines, novels) and spoken texts (recorded from TV programs, internet programs, radio programs). Data which are gathered directly from my consultant’s utterances are also included. NPs which are difficult for me to judge the classification in terms of a parameter concerned are excluded from the counting, e.g. the interrogative pronoun ṭavaj ‘anything (‘what’ in interrogative clause) belongs to INANIMATE in terms of animacy parameter because this morpheme is used only for inanimate referent, but is difficult to classify in terms of properness, abstractness, and definiteness parameters because this morpheme has no implication for these parameters.
where the term on the left is more individuated and the term on the right is less individuated. The first four parameters are concerned with the relationships between the semantics of nouns and the degree of individuation, and the last parameter is concerned with the relationship between the syntax of the nouns and the degree of individuation. Timberlake (1975) did not classify them into two types like this. However, Khmer reality insists that the semantic parameters and the syntactic parameter have to be dealt separately. Khmer NEV is preferred with SEMANTICALLY LESS individuated and SYNTACTICALLY MORE individuated nouns, i.e. modified NPs are marked with NEV more often than unmodified NPs.

The strong tendency for this ‘inverse proportion’ is clearly shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Individuation of NEV-marked O/S**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>more individuated</th>
<th>less individuated</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Properness</td>
<td>proper 5 : 0.96% (1/4)</td>
<td>common 514 : 99.03% (188/326)</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstractness</td>
<td>concrete 82 : 16.63% (48/34)</td>
<td>abstract 411 : 83.36% (144/271)</td>
<td>493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animacy</td>
<td>animate 11 : 2.12% (3/8)</td>
<td>inanimate 507 : 97.87% (174/333)</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definiteness</td>
<td>definite 53 : 10.25% (21/32)</td>
<td>indefinite 464 : 89.74% (167/297)</td>
<td>517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modification</td>
<td>modified 473 : 91.66% (169/304)</td>
<td>unmodified 43 : 8.33% (18/25)</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*The numbers in brackets show the number of obligatory NEV and optional NEV (Obligatory/Optional).)

The number shows that NEV is overwhelmingly more likely to mark less individuated NPs in terms of the properness, abstractness, animacy, and definiteness parameters, but in terms of the modification parameter, the result is opposite from Timberlake’s expectation, i.e. modified nouns are overwhelmingly more likely to occur with NEV than unmodified nouns.

This suits Khmer native speakers’ intuition. Even if the noun has characteristics which are high in individuation in terms of a certain semantic parameter, it is also acceptable with NEV when the modifying element is added. According to my informant, example (17a), where the O is a concrete noun, which is highly individuated in terms of abstractness parameter, is awkward with NEV (I will use ‘*?’ sign to indicate this degree of acceptability). But when a modifying element is added, the clause becomes totally acceptable.
(17) a. *? kœt baan ?aan nêv - [siœphèv]
3SG ASP read NEV book
'S/he has read a book.'

b. kœt baan ?aan nêv - [siœphèv dœ lbaʔ-lbaqn]
3SG ASP read NEV book REL famous
'S/he has read a famous book.'

Similarly, the example (18a), where the S₀ is an animate noun, is judged awkward, but when it is modified, the clause becomes totally acceptable.

(18) a. *? slap nêv - [mœonuh]
die NEV people
'People have died.'

b. slap nêv - [mœonuh dœ craœn sœnthuk-sœnthœep]
die NEV people REL many enormous
'An enormous number of people have died.'

The result that the degree of individuation and modification are in inverse proportion shows that we need more investigation about the relationships between the degree of individuation and modification. In Timberlake (1975), the modified nouns are said to be more individuated than the unmodified nouns, but in fact there are cases where the unmodified nouns are more individuated than modified nouns. Rœbuoh 'wound', for example, is a concrete noun, but if it is modified by an abstract noun such as sœkôm 'society', the NP as a whole becomes an abstract NP rœbuoh sœkôm 'a blot on society', which is less individuated than concrete nouns. Thus, the relationship between the degree of individuation and modification varies, depending on the types of modifying elements.

We cannot find a proper distinction of modification in Timberlake (1975); however, in examples such as the following, we can say that the referent of the NP is clearly individuated:

(19) a. the book over there
b. the book I bought yesterday

In contrast, in the Khmer example (17b), i.e. siœphèv dœ lbaʔ-lbaqn 'famous book', it is hard to say that the referent is individuated. That is, the modification here may not concern individuation. According to Tasaku Tsunoda (pers. comm.), the factor that triggers modification here may be a phonological one, i.e. the modifying elements are added in order to make the NPs phonologically 'longer' or 'heavier'. When examining my data, I can conclude that this phonological factor is crucial, i.e. the modification on NEV-MKS 35:1-19 (c)2005 See archives.sealang.net/mks/copyright.htm for terms of use.
marked NP concerns the phonological heaviness of the NP, but it does not concern individuation, since the NEV-marked NPs do not need to be individuated as a result of modification. Compare (20a) and (20b) below. In (20a), it is possible to say that the referent is individuated as a result of modification, while as for the NEV-marked NP in (20b), it is hard to say that the referent is individuated even though the modifying element is added. However, both (20a) and (20b) are equally acceptable, regardless of the degree of individuation.

(20) a. នំាន់ ពេន្យល់ នៅ - [កុម្ភុត rូចឹង នំាន់] ដេល ក្រែឈ 3SG.F explain NEV idea GEN 3SG.F reach 1SG
   'She explained her idea to me.'

   b. នំាន់ ពេន្យល់ នៅ - [កុម្ភុត dូ សម្រីហ] ដេល ក្រែឈ 3SG.F explain NEV idea REL important reach 1SG
   'She explained an important idea to me.'

3. Predicates

The types of predicates which can occur in the NEV construction are not so strongly restricted to certain semantic categories; however, there are tendencies that predicates of certain semantic categories are likely to occur in the NEV construction. They are:

(i) verbs of giving and reception
(ii) verbs of appearance (including creation) and disappearance (including destruction)
(iii) verbs of completion

3.1 Verbs of giving and reception

[A] Verbs of reception

This lexical category includes receptions of:

(i) substantial referent: តំរុញ ‘to receive’, etc.
(ii) cognitive and visual referent: បញ្ច្កញ ‘to be informed of’, ដំនឹ ‘to be informed of’, សក់ម ‘to recognize, to know’, ពេល ‘to understand’, ចែហ ‘to keep in mind’, ក្លាយ ‘to see’, etc.
(iii) experience: រកឬ ‘to receive (damages), to suffer, to encounter’, ប្រុង ‘to encounter’, etc.

(21) ក្រែឈ បាយ តំរុញ នៅ - [ព្រុក់ក់ម ដូ ឃីូ] 1SG ASP receive NEV information REL good
   'I have received good news.'
(22) nêaŋ baan dəŋ nəv - [kæa prət] jaaŋ cbah-ləəh 3SG.F ASP be informed NEV NOM true ADV clear ‘She knows of the truth clearly. (lit. She has already been informed of the truth clearly.)’

(23) knom baan khəŋ nəv - [proh dæl məən mək plaek] 1SG ASP see NEV man REL have face strange ‘I saw a man who has a strange face.’

(24) nêaŋ baan rəŋ nəv - [krə-mtak də saahav khəo-khəv] 3SG ASP receive NEV accident REL cruel violent ‘She encountered a terrible accident.’

[B] Verbs of giving

This lexical category includes ‘giving’ of:

(i) substantial referent: pə dol ‘to supply’, bən thaem ‘to add’, etc.
(ii) cognitive and visual referent: cəm rək ‘to give information, to inform’, səmdə aŋ ‘to express’, bən cək ‘to clarify’, bən haŋ ‘to show’, səm kəl ‘to demonstrate’, pə njəl ‘to make understand, to explain’, etc.

(25) prəc teeh nuh nuŋ pə dol nəv - [cəm nəoŋ tək prək] nation DET will supply NEV aid money
dəl jəəŋ reach 2PL
‘That nation will supply funds to us.’

(26) nih bən haŋ nəv - [caeta? nəa rəobə nəəŋ] DET show NEV intention GEN 2PL
‘This shows our inclination.’

What these verbs have in common is that these verbs are derived from certain base verbs by affixation, especially by causative prefixes and infixes⁶. e.g.

\[
\begin{align*}
 p·dəl & \quad \text{‘to supply’} & < \text{prefix} /p/ + \text{dəl} & \quad \text{‘to reach’} \\
pən·jəl & \quad \text{‘to make understand’} & < \text{prefix} /pənN-/ + \text{jəl} & \quad \text{‘to understand’} \\
s·əm·daŋ & \quad \text{‘to express’} & < \text{infix} /-əm-/ + \text{daŋ} & \quad \text{‘to be clear’}
\end{align*}
\]

⁶Affixation is no longer productive in modern Khmer. Affixes may at one time have had clearly defined functions, however, a given affix now may have several functions. For detailed discussions on Khmer affixation, see Jenner 1969.
Verbs which have the semantic content ‘giving’, but do not contain affixes, are not likely to occur in NEV construction. For example, cuun ‘to give’, raoj ‘to give’ and prap ‘to tell’, which belong to the ‘giving’ class semantically but which do not contain any affix morphologically, rarely occur in NEV construction. raoj ‘to give’ is the typical verb of giving in Khmer, however, in my data, there is only one example in which raoj ‘to give’ occurs in the NEV construction.

(27) soom raoj nôv - [snae]...
please give NEV love
‘Please give (me) love.’
(lyric from a song “Flower of Battambang”)

Thus verbs which are likely to occur in NEV construction are not only restricted semantically, but also restricted morphologically.

3.2 Verbs of appearance (including creation) and disappearance (including destruction)

[A] Verbs of appearance (including creation)

(i) appearance: kaat ‘to occur’, lêc ‘to appear’, etc.
(ii) creation: bôykkaat ‘to produce, to make (something) happen’, bôykko ‘to make something happen’, sôn ‘to build’, kôcsaann ‘to build’, etc.

(28) kaat nôv - [kdaj-kdam] laaŋ
occur NEV lawsuit DIR
‘A trial has taken place.’

(29) rœttha?phi?baal baan kôcsaann nôv - [maccêa?môndol
government ASP build NEV center
doo tômndœap] laaŋ
REL modern DIR
‘The government has built a modern center.’

[B] Verbs of disappearance (including destruction)

(i) disappearance: ?ph ‘to vanish’, bat ‘to be missing’, bômbat ‘to cause (something) to disappear’, etc.
(ii) destruction: khooc ‘to be broken’, kômcat ‘to disperse’, bôykhooj ‘to destroy’, bômplaaj ‘to ruin, to destroy’, etc.
(30) bat nèv - [ʔəvəj ʔəvəj təəŋ-ʔoh dæl be missing NEV anything anything all REL
knom mèən]
1SG have
‘Everything that I had is missing.’

(31) səŋkriəm baan bəŋkhooc nèv - [təmneək-təmndəəŋ rəvəŋ] war ASP destroy NEV relationship between
knom ntnə nəəŋ] 1SG and 3SG.F
‘The war has broken the relationship between her and me.’

3.3 Verbs of completion

Verbs which express completion of events, such as bəŋcəp ‘to finish, to conclude’ and səmrəc ‘to have done, to accomplish’ are also likely to occur in NEV construction.

(32) jəŋ trəv tae bəŋcəp nèv - [ʔʊʔtətthaʔkəm 1PL should PART finish NEV crime
proːlaj puuc-saah] perish race
‘We should finish the genocide of the race.’ (source: KP7:2)

(33) puok kəə mən-toən baan səmrəc nèv - [kəoːl-bəmncəŋ group 3 NEG.IMPF ASP accomplish NEV aim
rəðəʊh kəə] nèv laəj GEN 3PL.INPF FP
‘They have not accomplished their aim yet.’

4. Other constituents

As we have seen in section 2 that the O/S0 nouns which are phonologically heavy with modifying elements are preferable in NEV construction. Similarly, the predicates which accompany adverbial phrases or other verbs are also more preferable than predicates which do not take adverbials or other verbs. These constituents which occur in NEV construction have either or both of the following two semantic functions.

(i) adverbials or verbs which reflect *intensity* of the event
(ii) adverbials or verbs which reflect *completion* of the event

The examples of (i) include (34).

(34) នៃនាទី ស្វែង ដោយ - [ក្រុង ភ្នំពេញ] ជាកុំ ចូល
3SG.F know NEV city Phnom Penh ADV clear
‘She knows Phnom Penh City well.’

The adverbial phrase in italic style expresses the high degree of her knowledge about Phnom Penh City, and if there are no such elements which express the intensity of the event, attaching NEV is judged awkward, because proper names are not preferred with NEV (as mentioned in section 2).

(35) ស្វែង ដោយ - [ក្រុង ភ្នំពេញ]
3SG.F know NEV city Phnom Penh
‘She knows Phnom Penh City.’

Similar examples:

(36) a. នៃនាទី ដែល ស្វែង - [សុរាល] ជាកុំ ក្លាយ សុឈឺ-សុឈឺប់
3SG.F drink NEV alcohol ADV many many
‘She drinks alcohol a lot.’

b. ស្វែង ដែល ស្វែង - [សុរាល]
3SG.F drink NEV alcohol
‘She drinks alcohol.’

An example for (ii) is as follows.

(37) បំក់ ស្វែង - [កែវ] ផ្ទះ រែលីយ
be broken NEV glass vanish go out of
‘All the glasses are thoroughly broken up (the glasses are broken and there are no more glasses.)’

The adverbial phrase in italic style express the completeness of the event, and if there are no such elements, NEV attachment is judged awkward.

(38) បំក់ ស្វែង - [កែវ]
be broken NEV glass
‘Glasses are broken.’
Similar examples:

(39) a.  kœt rień cœp nœv - [mœe-rień tœn]-?oh
       3SG study end NEV text   all
       ‘S/He studied and finished all of the text.’

b. *? kœt rień nœv - [mœe-rień tœn]-?oh
       3SG study NEV text   all
       ‘S/He studied all of the text.’

The intransitive verb in italic style in (39a) expresses the completion of the event, and if there is no such element which expresses the completive aspectual property, the acceptability of NEV declines.

5. Speech style and content of speech

For any constituent factors given discussed above there are additional factors governing the use of NEV. That is, NEV is used preferably when (i) the style is formal, or (ii) the information conveyed is unexpected, unusual or unpredictable.

5.1 Formal style

NEV is used more often in formal speech style rather than in less formal, colloquial speech style. This might be seen from the fact that the other ‘formal morphemes’ tend to co-occur with NEV. In Khmer, there are several morphemes which are used in formal style. One of them is an interrogative marker tœœ, which is placed at the top of an interrogative clause of formal questioning (such as question sentences of an examination paper). In an interrogative clause with NEV, tœœ is optional grammatically, but is more preferable. My informant judged that (40a) is acceptable but is ‘lacking’ something, while adding tœœ as in (40b) is perfect.

(40) a.  nœêk baan khœn nœv - [tœthia?phœap dœc l?œc nœn] 2 ASP see NEV scenery REL good DET
       ruu - tœe?
       INT

b.  tœœ nœêk baan khœn nœv - [tœthia?phœap dœc l?œc
       INT 2 ASP see NEV scenery REL good
       nœn] ruu - tœe?
       DET INT
       ‘Did you see that beautiful scenery?’
The other thing that might be related to the formality of the NEV construction is that the NEV is likely to be used in clauses whose semantic contents themselves are formal and elegant. For example, the event ‘I expressed respect to the professor’ might be more formal in its meaning rather than ordinary events such as ‘I ate lunch’, ‘I washed shirts’ etc. The former event is acceptable and preferable with NEV, while the latter events are awkward when NEV is used.

(41)  knom baan somdaeñ nôv - [kaa kôrôp] cômô nh kruu
1SG ASP express NEV NOM respect toward teacher
‘I have expressed respect to the teacher.’

(42)  *? knom baan sii nôv - [baaj trọ̀n dael cŋañ]
1SG ASP eat NEV meal noon REL tasty
‘I ate a delicious lunch.’

5.2 Unusual/unexpected information

NEV construction often expresses ‘unexpected’ or ‘unpredictable’ nuance, while construction without NEV has no implication for this. Thus NEV is preferable when the semantic content of the clause itself is unusual and unexpected one. For example, the event ‘reading books’, which is an ordinal event, and thus is not unexpected, is awkward with NEV, while the event ‘reading (breaking) a secret code’, which is not an ordinary event (not everybody can break a secret code), is preferably uttered with NEV.

(43)  *? kœt ñaan nov - [siəvphaltøy]
3SG read NEV book
‘S/He reads books.’

(44)  kœt ñaan nov - [lèek koot]
3SG read NEV number code
‘S/He breaks a code number. (lit. s/he reads a code number.)

Similar examples:

(45)  a.  *? nəŋ jôk nôv - [siəvphaltøy] cəŋ pii bannalaj
3SG take NEV book go out from library
‘She borrowed a book out of the library.’

b.  nəŋ jôk nôv - [siəvphaltøy] cəŋ pii bannalaj
daoj kmoën ?a?numŋaat
CONJ not exist permission
‘She took a book out from the library without permission.’
NEV is awkward in (45a), since ‘borrowing books from the library’ is an ordinal event and is not an unexpected event. While in (45b), NEV is acceptable since ‘taking books from the library without permission’ is an unexpected, surprising event, and is preferable if the speaker wants to express this with surprise.

6. Conclusion

For the data examined, generally Timberlake’s framework works well, but the parameter of modification seems to deviate from it. That is, a syntactic parameter may not always coincide with semantic parameters.

Table 2 is the list of all the factors governing the use of NEV which have been discussed in this paper. In Table 2, the terms in boldface is more likely to use NEV.

Table 2. Factors governing the use of NEV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substantive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) NOUNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semantic properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>properness: proper/common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstractness: concrete/abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>animacy: animate/inanimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>definiteness: definite/indefinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syntactic property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modification: modified/unmodified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(phonologically heavy/phonologically light)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) PREDICATES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lexicon: general transitive, intransitive/giving and reception appearance and disappearance creation and destruction completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morphology: base verbs/derived verbs by affixation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) OTHERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no other constituents/verbs or adverbials of intensity, completeness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stylistic

ordinal/formal, unexpected

These factors must be related to each other in some way. However, subsuming all the parameters under one single rubric is difficult and is beyond the scope of this paper. Further research may make this possible, but at the same time this may be the reality about language.
ABBREVIATIONS

1SG: 1st person singular pronoun  
1PL: 1st person plural pronoun  
2: 2nd person pronoun  
2SG: 2nd person singular pronoun  
2PL: 2nd person plural pronoun  
3: 3rd person pronoun  
3SG: 3rd person singular pronoun  
3SG.F: 3rd person singular feminine pronoun  
ADV: adverbializer  
ASP: complete aspect marker  
CONJ: conjunction  
DET: determiner  
DIR: directional  
EXP: experience marker  
FP: final particle  
GEN: genitive  
IMPF: imperfective aspect marker  
INT: interrogative marker  
LOC: locative  
NEG: negation marker  
NEG.IMPF: imperfective negation marker  
NOM: nominalizer  
PART: particle  
REL: relativiser

REFERENCES


Received: 27 June 2004

Graduate School of Tokyo University
Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo,
JAPAN
<ayako-s@hi-ho-ne.jp>