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 *nəv* (hereafter 'NEV')[1]. 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.

---

[1]NEV 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. kɲom   nəv   kroŋ   pnòmpèɲ
         1sg.   NEV   city   Phnom Penh
         'I live in Phnom Penh City.'

2. NEV as an auxiliary which indicates imperfective aspect:

  e.g. kɲom   nəv   tae   riən   phèəsaasəh
         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. nəv   pèel   jòp,   kɲom   riən   nəv   ptèəh
         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. prèəh-rèəcvɔ̀ŋsaanuʔvɔ̀ŋ nuŋ   mɔ̀ntrəj   thɔm   tooc
         king's family   and   government official big   small
         nəv   ʔɔh   prɔɔcèəcɔ̀n tèəŋ-puoŋ... [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.

(1) a. nèəŋ   baan   dəŋ   [kaa   pɯt]   (A V O)
       3SG.F   ASP   be informed NOM   true

    b. nèəŋ   baan   dəŋ   nə̀v - [kaa   pɯt] (A V NEV O)
       3SG.F   ASP   be informed   NEV   NOM   true
       'She knows of the truth.'

(2) a. kaət   [krɔ̀h-tnak   cɔɔra?cɔɔ]   (V S)
       occur   accident   traffic

    b. kaət   nə̀v - [krɔ̀h-tnak cɔɔra?cɔɔ] (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) Affirmative
     kɔət   baan   sɔmdaeŋ nə̀v - [seeckdəj kòoròp] cɔmpɔ̀h 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
      taə kəət baan təətuol nəv - [pɔ̀ədɔɔmèən dɔɔ   lʔɔɔ] rɯɯ tèe ?
      INT 3SG ASP receive NEV information   REL good or   FP
      'Does s/he receive good news?'

(5)   WH interrogative
      taə   kəət baan khə̀əɲ nəv - [ʔəvəj klah] ?
      INT   3SG ASP see   NEV what   some
      'What did s/he see?'

(6)   Negative
      kɲom mɯn dael khə̀əɲ nəv - [tɔ̀ttha?phèəp dɔɔ lʔɔɔ] tèe
      1SG   NEG EXP see   NEV scenery   REL good FP
      'I have never seen such beautiful scenery.'

(7)   Imperative
      sɔmdaeŋ nəv - [seeckdəj kɔ̀orɔ̀p] cɔmpɔ̀h   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
      kɲom baan bɔŋhaaɲ kɔ̀mnɯt rɔɔbɔh kɲom
      1SG   ASP show   thought   GEN   1SG
      [A]   [V   ] [O   ]
      'I expressed my idea.'

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

(10) Intransitive: V+S
      khooc   tɔ̀mnèək-tɔ̀mnɔ̀ŋ rɔɔvèəŋ kɲom nuŋ 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 clause[3].
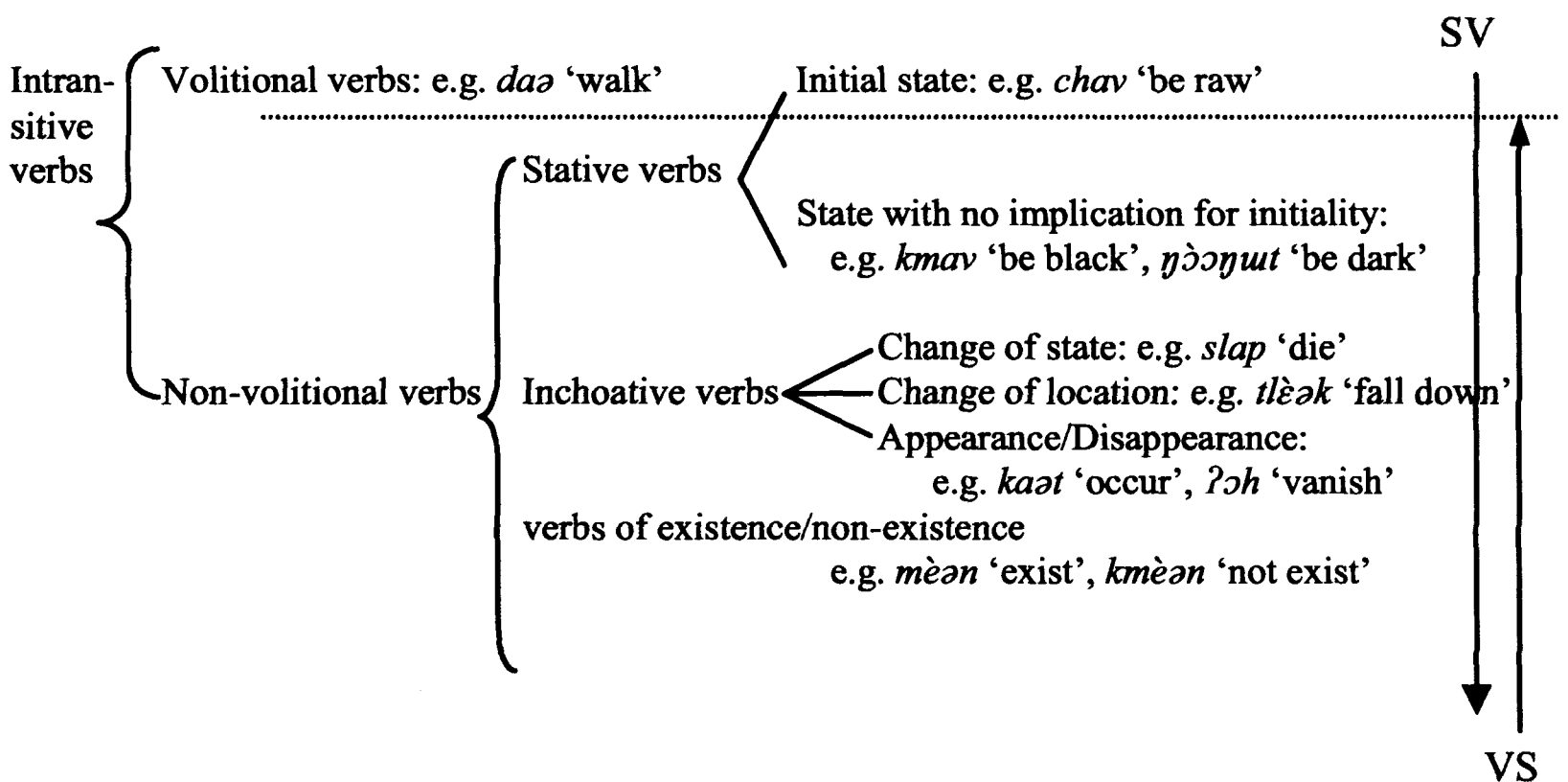

Figure 1. Word order patterns of Khmer intransitive verbs

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

---

[3]Verbs 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: tmèɲ   kmav
               teeth   be black
               'Teeth are black.'
    b. VS: kmav   tmèɲ
               be black teeth
               '(e.g. you smoke too much, so your) teeth became black.'

Kmav 'be black' in SV refers to state of teeth, while *kmav* '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) kɲom   baan   bɔŋhaaɲ   nəv -   [kɔmnɯt   rɔɔbɔh   kɲom]
     1SG   ASP   show   NEV   thought   GEN   1SG
     [A]   [V   ]   NEV [O   ]
     'I expressed my idea.'

(12) khooc   nəv - [tɔmnɛ̀ək-tɔmnɔ̀ɔŋ   rɔɔvèəŋ kɲom nɯɯŋ nèəŋ]
     be brokenNEV relationship   between 1SG   and   3SG.F
     [V] NEV [S   ]
     'The relationship between her and me is broken.'

NEV-marking on S_O 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 S_O. This may come from the fact that intransitive predicates which are likely to take NEV-marked S_O 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/S_O VS. $*S_A/*A$, but in reality, the preference of the NEV-marking follows the "$O > S_O > *S_A, *A$" hierarchy[4].

1.2.3 Optional and obligatory NEV-marking

The NEV-marking on O/S_O is obligatory under some circumstances and optional under others. Among the examples of the NEV-marking on O and S_O 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 *tèəŋ-ʔɔh* 'totally' intervenes between the verb and the NEV-marked NP.

(13) kɲom baan cam   *tèəŋ-ʔɔh** φ /nəv -[sɔmdəj rɔɔbɔh kɔət]
     1SG   ASP memorize totally   NEV words   GEN   3SG
     'I have completely memorized what s/he had said.'

---

[4]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$_O$ in question immediately follows the verb. Examples include (14).

(14) kɲom baan cam φ/ nǝv - [sɔmdǝj rɔɔbɔh kɔǝt] tὲǝŋ-ʔɔh
     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 *pii* 'as for' or *ʔɔmpii* 'as for'. It may also have no preposition at all. But it can never be marked with NEV. See (16).

(15) untopicalized
      nὲǝk trǝv   tae   bɔŋhaaɲ φ /nǝv - [kòmnuɯt rɔɔbɔh nὲǝk]
      2SG should PART   show   NEV idea   GEN 2SG
      'You have to show your own idea.'

(16) topicalized O
      φ /ʔɔmpii - /*nǝv - [kòmnuɯt rɔɔbɔh nὲǝk], nὲǝk trǝv
        as for   NEV idea   GEN 2SG   2SG should

      tae   bɔŋhaaɲ
      PART   show
      'As for your own idea, you have to show it.'

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

2. Nouns

That an object marker (in Khmer, an O/S$_O$ 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/S$_O$ 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[5] 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

---

[5]The 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 *ʔəvəj* '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$_O$

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

(*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. *? kɔət   baan   ʔaan   nə̀v - [siəvphə̀v]
         3SG   ASP   read   NEV   book
         'S/he has read a book.'

     b.   kɔət   baan   ʔaan   nə̀v - [siəvphə̀v dɔɔ lbəj-lbaaɲ]
            3SG   ASP   read   NEV   book   REL famous
            'S/he has read a famous book.'

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

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

     b.   slap nə̀v - [mɔ́ɔnuh   dɔɔ   craən   sɔnthuk-sɔnthɔəp]
            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. *Rɔ́ɔbuoh* 'wound', for example, is a concrete noun, but if it is modified by an abstract noun such as *sɔŋkòm* 'society', the NP as a whole becomes an abstract NP *rɔ́ɔbuoh sɔŋkòm* '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. *siəvphə̀v dɔɔ lbəj-lbaaɲ* '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-

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. nèəŋ   pɔ̀njɔ̀l   nə̀v - [kɔ̀mnɯt *rɔ̀ɔbɔh nèəŋ*]   dɔl   kɲom
         3SG.F explain NEV idea   GEN   3SG.F reach 1SG
         'She explained her idea to me.'

     b. nèəŋ   pɔ̀njɔ̀l   nə̀v - [kɔ̀mnɯt *dɔɔ sɔmkhan*]   dɔl   kɲom
         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: *tɔɔtuol* 'to receive', etc.
(ii)   cognitive and visual referent: *crèəp* 'to be informed of', *dəŋ* 'to be informed of', *skɔəl* 'to recognize, to know', *jɔ̀l* 'to understand', *cam* 'to keep in mind', *khə̀əɲ* 'to see', etc.
(iii) experience: *rɔɔŋ* 'to receive (damages), to suffer, to encounter', *cuop* 'to encounter', etc.

(21) kɲom   baan   tɔ̀ɔtuol   nə̀v - [pəədɔɔmèən   dɔɔ   lʔɔɔ]
      1SG   ASP   receive NEV information   REL good
      'I have received good news.'

(22) nèəŋ   baan dəŋ   nəv - [kaa puɨt]   jaaŋ cbah-lɔəh
     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) kɲom baan khə̀əɲ nəv - [proh dael   mèən mòk plaek]
     1SG   ASP see   NEV man REL have face strange
     'I saw a man who has a strange face.'

(24) nèəŋ baan rɔɔŋ   nəv -[krɔh-tnak dɔɔ saahaav khòo-khə̀v]
     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: *pdɔl* 'to supply', *bɔnthaem* 'to add', etc.
(ii)   cognitive and visual referent: *còmrèəp* 'to give information, to
       inform', *sɔmdaeŋ* 'to express', *bɔɲcèək* 'to clarify', *bɔŋhaaɲ* 'to
       show', *sɔmkɔəl* 'to demonstrate', *pɔ̀njɔ̀l* 'to make understand, to
       explain', etc.

(25) prɔɔteeh nuh   nuɨŋ pdɔl   nəv - [còmnuoj tuɨk-prak]
     nation   DET   will supply NEV aid   money

     dɔl   jə̀əŋ
     reach   2PL
     'That nation will supply funds to us.'

(26) nih   bɔŋhaaɲ nəv - [caeta?naa rɔɔbɔh jə̀əŋ]
     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 infixes[6].
e.g.

p-dɔl   'to supply'   < prefix /p-/ + *dɔl*   'to reach'
pɔ̀n-jɔ̀l   'to make understand'< prefix /pɔ̀N-/ + *jɔ̀l* 'to understand'
s-ɔm-daeŋ 'to express'   < infix /-ɔm-/ + *sdaeŋ* 'to be clear'

---

[6]Affixation 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', *ʔaoj* '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. *ʔaoj* 'to give' is the typical verb of giving in Khmer, however, in my data, there is only one example in which *ʔaoj* 'to give' occurs in the NEV construction.

(27) soom   ʔaoj   nə̀v - [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: *kaət* 'to occur', *lèc* 'to appear', etc.
(ii) creation: *bɔŋkaət* 'to produce, to make (something) happen', *bɔŋkɔɔ* 'to make something happen', *sɔŋ* 'to build', *kɔɔsaaŋ* 'to build', etc.

(28) kaət   nə̀v - [kdəj-kdam]   laəŋ
     occur   NEV   lawsuit   DIR
     'A trial has taken place.'

(29) rɔətthaʔphiʔbaal baan   kɔɔsaaŋ nə̀v - [maccèəʔmɔ̀ndɔl
     government   ASP   build   NEV   center

     dɔɔ   tòmnə̀əp] laəŋ
     REL   modern   DIR
     'The government has built a modern center.'

[B] Verbs of disappearance (including destruction)

(i)   disappearance: *ʔɔh* 'to vanish', *bat* 'to be missing', *bɔmbat* 'to cause (something) to disappear', etc.
(ii) destruction: *khooc* 'to be broken', *kɔmcat* 'to disperse', *bɔŋkhooc* 'to destroy', *bɔmplaɲ* 'to ruin, to destroy', etc.

(30) bat   nə̀v - [ʔəvəj   ʔəvəj   tɛ̀əŋ-ʔɔh dael
     be missing NEV anything anything all   REL

     kɲom   mὲən]
     1SG   have
     'Everything that I had is missing.'

(31) sɔŋkriəm baan bɔŋkhooc nə̀v - [tɔ̀mnɛək-tɔ̀mnɔɔŋ rɔɔvὲəŋ
     war   ASP   destroy   NEV relationship   between

     kɲom   nɯɯŋ nὲəŋ]
     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 *bɔɲcɔp* 'to finish, to conclude' and *sɔmrac* 'to have done, to accomplish' are also likely to occur in NEV construction.

(32) jə̀əŋ   trəv   tae   bɔɲcɔp nə̀v - [ʔuʔtrəttha?kam
     1PL   should   PART   finish   NEV   crime

     prɔɔlaj puuc-saah]
     perish race
     'We should finish the genocide of the race.' (source: KP[7]:2)

(33) puok   kὲe muɯn-tɔən baan sɔmrac   nə̀v - [kɔ̀ol-bɔmnɔɔŋ
     group   3   NEG.IMPF ASP accomplish NEV aim

     rɔɔbɔh kὲe] nə̀v   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/S$_O$ 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.

---

[7]KP: svaeŋ rɔ̀ɔk kaa pɯt [Searching for the Truth], No. 12, Dec. 2000. Phnom Penh: The documentation center for Cambodia.

(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) nèəŋ   skɔəl   nəv - [kroŋ pnɔ̀mpèɲ]   *jaaŋ   cbah*
      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) *? nèəŋ   skɔəl   nəv - [kroŋ pnɔ̀mpèɲ]
         3SG.F   know   NEV   city   Phnom Penh
      'She knows Phnom Penh City.'

Similar examples:

(36) a. nèəŋ   phə̀k   nəv- [soʔraa] *jaaŋ   craən   sɔnthɯk-sɔnthɔəp*
          3SG.F   drink   NEV alcohol ADV   many   many
      'She drinks alcohol a lot.'

      b. *? nèəŋ   phə̀k   nəv - [soʔraa]
             3SG.F   drink   NEV   alcohol
          'She drinks alcohol.'

An example for (ii) is as follows.

(37) baek   nəv - [kaev] *ʔɔh   rɔ̀ɔliiŋ*
      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) *? Baek   nəv - [kaev]
         be broken   NEV   glass
      'Glasses are broken.'

Similar examples:

(39) a.　　kɔət　rian　*cɔp*　nə̀v - [mèe-rian tɛ̀əŋ-ʔɔh]
　　　　　　3SG　study　end　NEV　text　　　　all
　　　　　　'S/He studied and finished all of the text.'

　　　b. *? kɔət　rian　nə̀v - [mèe-rian tɛ̀əŋ-ʔɔh]
　　　　　　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 *taə*, 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, *taə* is optional grammatically, but is more preferable. My informant judged that (40a) is acceptable but is 'lacking' something, while adding *taə* as in (40b) is perfect.

(40) a.　nɛ̀ək　　baan　khə̀əɲ　nə̀v - [tɔ̀ttha ʔphɛ̀əp　dɔɔ　lʔɔɔ　nuɯŋ]
　　　　　2　　　ASP　see　　　NEV scenery　　　　REL good DET

　　　ruɯɯ - tèe?
　　　INT

　　　b. *taə*　nɛ̀ək　baan　khə̀əɲ　nə̀v - [tɔ̀ttha ʔphɛ̀əp　dɔɔ　lʔɔɔ
　　　　　INT　2　　ASP　see　　NEV scenery　　　　REL good

　　　nuɯŋ]　ruɯɯ - tèe ?
　　　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)   kɲom   baan   sɔmdaeŋ   nə̀v - [kaa   kòorɔ̀p]   cɔmpɔ̀h   kruu
          1SG   ASP   express   NEV NOM   respect   toward   teacher
          'I have expressed respect to the teacher.'

(42) *? kɲom   baan   sii   nə̀v - [baaj   trɔŋ   dael   cŋaɲ]
          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) *? kɔ̀ət   ʔaan   nə̀v - [siəvphə̀v]
          3SG   read   NEV   book
          'S/He reads books.'

(44)   kɔ̀ət   ʔaan   nə̀v - [lèek   koot]
          3SG   read   NEV   number   code
          'S/He breaks a code number. (lit. s/he reads a code number.)

Similar examples:

(45) a. *? nèəŋ   jɔ̀ɔk   nə̀v - [siəvphə̀v]   ceɲ   pii   bannalaj
           3SG   take   NEV   book   go out   from   library
           'She borrowed a book out of the library.'

     b.   nèəŋ   jɔ̀ɔk   nə̀v - [siəvphə̀v]   ceɲ   pii   bannalaj
           3SG   take   NEV   book   go out   from   library

           daoj   kmèən   ʔaʔnuɲɲaat
           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

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

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: completive aspect marker
CONJ: conjunction
DET: determiner

DIR: directionals
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

Cheung, Hung-nin Samuel. 1973. "A comparative study in Chinese grammars: the ba-construction." *JCL* 1(3):343-382.

Comrie, Bernard. 1978. "Ergativity." In W. P. Lehmann, ed., *Syntactic Typology*, pp. 329-394, Austin/London: University of Texas Press.

Comrie, Bernard. 1989. *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology*. (2nd edition) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Cuon, Nat. 1967. *Vacananukrom Khmaer* [Khmer dictionary]. Phnom Penh: Institut Bouddhique.

Dixon, R. M. W. 1979. "Ergativity." *Language* 55:59-138.

Frei, Henri. 1956. "The ergative construction in Chinese: theory of Pekinese *PA*3 把." *GK* 31:22-50.

Frei, Henri. 1957. "The ergative construction in Chinese: theory of Pekinese *PA*3 把." *GK* 32:83-115.

Haiman, John. 1999. "Auxiliation in Khmer: the case of BAAN." *SLang* 23:1149-1172.

Hopper, Paul J. and Sandra A. Thompson. 1980. "Transitivity in grammar and discourse." *Language* 56:251-299.

Jenner, Philip Norman. 1969. "Affixation in modern Khmer." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii.

Li, Charles N. and Sandra A. Thompson.1981. *Mandarin Chinese*. Berkeley/ Los Angeles/ London: University of California Press.

Mallinson, Graham. 1986. *Rumanian*. London/Sydney/Dover/New Hamphire: Croom Helm.

Moravcsik, Edith A. 1978. "On the case marking of objects." In Joseph H. Greenberg, ed., *Universals of Human Language* 4:249-289.

Onishi, Masayuki. 2001. "Non-canonically marked subjects and objects: parameters and properties." In Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald, R. M. W. Dixon and Masayuki Onishi, eds., *Non-Canonical Marking of Subjects and Objects*, pp. 1-51, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Sakamoto, Ayako. 2004. "Kumeerugo no jidousibun no gojun" [Word order in intransitive clauses of Khmer]. *Asian and African Languages and Linguistics* 32:69-79.

Shapiro, Michael C. 1989. *A Primer of Modern Standard Hindi*. Delhi: M. Banarsidass.

Sun, Chaofen. 1995. "Transitivity, the ba construction and its history." *JCL* 23(1):159-195.

Thompson, Sandra A. 1973. "Transitivity and some problems with the ba construction in Mandarin Chinese." *JCL* 1(2):208-221.

Timberlake, Alan 1975. "Hierarchies in the genitive of negation." *Slavic and East European Journal* 19(2):123-138.

Tsunoda, Tasaku. 1996. "The possession cline in Japanese and other languages." In H. Chappell and W. McGregor, eds., *The Grammar of Inalienability*, pp. 565-630.

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