

Chapter 5

Summary: Discourse functions of right-dislocated repetition (RDR) and other repetition structures in Khmu oral narratives

5.1 Discourse categories matching grammatical classifications

In this section the question is raised whether there are patterns in Khmu oral discourse to express certain discourse functions via specific grammatical categories, or not.

In order to see patterns I apply the following method: Each repetition structure, which occurs in the elicited oral narratives, is entered in a data table, in which the grammatical classification of the respective repetition structure is marked on one axis and the various discourse functions it performs are marked on the other. If there are matching discourse-grammar patterns, it is expected that each discourse category has at least one grammatical counterpart by which the discourse function is expressed in its grammatical form. In this section, I also include pitch patterns (i.e. non-prominent pitch, normal pitch and pitch prominence) as a category to be matched with various discourse functions.

The following table displays the quantitative results of a discourse-grammar match. The total amount of occurrences is often lower than the absolute total of counting points (due to multiple markings).

Grammatical schema	Total	Absolute Total	P1: Pitch non-prom.	P2: Normal pitch	P3: Pitch prominence	Chunk delimitation	Thematic discont.	D1: Emphasis	D2: Iconicity	D3: Style elaboration	D4: Floor-holding	D5: Thematic updat.	D6: Concept specific.	D7: Cont. Summary	D8: Discont. Summary
G1	38	131	12	23	3	38	9	9	-	1	12	6	-	11	7
G2	6	24	-	6	-	6	2	4	-	-	-	1	-	3	2
G3	30	107	7	20	3	30	9	10	-	1	7	1	-	13	6
G4	1	4	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
G5	4	14	1	3	-	4	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	1	1
G6	13	46	3	7	3	13	2	4	-	5	3	3	-	2	1
G7	4	16	-	4	-	4	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	3	1
G8	21	59	1	20	-	9	1	5	-	21	1	-	-	1	-
G9	59	159	2	31	26	25	3	13	38	17	2	2	-	-	-
G10	31	104	2	22	7	31	2	9	-	2	2	-	27	-	-
G11	12	43	1	8	3	12	3	4	-	-	1	-	11	-	-
G12	61	194	5	46	10	40	12	14	2	21	5	21	8	7	3
Tot	274		33	185	55	207	44	73	40	65	33	35	46	36	21
Abs.		901	34	191	55	213	45	77	40	68	34	35	46	42	21
Total															

Table 14: Quantitative discourse-grammar match

Referring to the shaded cells, it is remarkable, that the phonological category of pitch prominence (P3) predominantly occurs with G9 [...X X_R...]s (in 26 cases). The discourse categories D2 (iconicity) and D3 (style elaboration) highly utilize the grammatical structure of G9 [...X X_R...]s as well. D2 (iconicity) even uses G9 [...X X_R...]s (with 38 occurrences) almost exclusively. The discourse category D3 (style elaboration) predominantly makes use of the grammatical categories G8 [Xa Xb][Xa_RXc]_{EL} (elaborate expression) and G9 [...X X_R...]s (as well as G12 [...X...X_R...]s). The discourse category of concept specification (D6) mostly uses G10 ...X]s [X_R Y] (27 occurrences) and G11 ...X]s [Y X_R] (11 occurrences), because both grammatical categories include a meaningful constituent Y, which is necessary to denote the additional information needed for concept specification.

The boxes in Table 14 above show that the grammatical repetition structures of G4 (...X...X'...]_s ADV X_R X'_R), G5 (...X...X'...]_s X_R (X'_R) ADV) and also G7 ([]s Y/ ADV []s)) are not heavily utilized by the respective discourse functions. This is probably due to their more complex structures as well as the restricted amount of data. For a more detailed discussion of the correlations in the discourse-grammar match see further below.

The following table displays the qualitative summary of a discourse-grammar match.

#	Discourse category	Discourse categories matching grammatical classifications
1	Emphasis: atypical state or action	Occurs with every grammatical classification, i.e., there are no grammatical patterns.
2	Iconicity	Occurs predominantly with G9: [X X_R]_s
3	Style elaboration	Occurs predominantly with G8: elaborate expressions, G9: [X X_R]_s , and G12: discontinuous repetition structures.
4	Floor-holding	Occurs with almost every grammatical classification (except of G2, G4, and G7), i.e., there are no grammatical patterns. But occurs only with the phonological category of pitch non-prominence.
5	Thematic updating	There are no occurrences with G4, G5, G8, and G10 + G11 (because G10 +G11 include new information about X), i.e., there are no positive grammatical patterns.
6	Concept specification	occurs predominantly with G10: X]s [X_R Y] and G11: X]s [Y X_R], additionally with G12.
7	Continuous summary	There are no occurrences with G9, G10, and G11 (as G10 and G11 include new information about X). No patterns found.
8	Discontinuous summary	There are no occurrences with G4, G8, G9, G10 and G11 (as G10 and G11 include new information about X). No patterns found.

Table 15: Qualitative discourse-grammar match

Conclusion

In Khmu oral discourse there are hardly any patterns to express certain discourse functions via specific grammatical categories. What seems more common is that certain discourse functions avoid a certain subset of grammatical options. Most of the time the relationships seen are not arbitrary, but they are motivated. The only patterns existing are the following:

Iconicity (D2) occurs predominantly with G9 ($[X X_R]_s$). This distribution is expected as iconicity includes repetition in order to indicate extension in time or scope. Thus it is expected that the repeated elements follow one another. Even though X may consist of two elements a and b (e.g. including a negation particle like in *am yaam, am yaam, am yaam*, 'don't cry, don't cry, don't cry', cf. Poor.172A), the repeated structure X_R still occurs as a package of two elements $[(a) (b)]_R$, instead of a separated structure like $[(a) (b)]_R$, which would equal **am yaam, yaam, yaam*.⁴⁰ For a further iconic example of three repeated elements in one package $[(a, b, a)]_R$, compare Poor.046 (*yoh kap yoh* 'going and going'). However, also compare a more complex example in P.141 (*coop coop yoh* 'spying spying go'), where the couplet is separated, causing the structure $[(a)_R (b)]$ even with the preceding adverb *hnggooy* 'slowly'.

As a conclusion one can state that an iconic repetition structure usually occurs as a package of its involved elements, which indicates that iconic repetition structures only function on word-level, but not on sentence-level.

Style elaboration (D3) occurs predominantly with G8 (elaborate expressions), G9 and G12 (discontinuous repetition structures). It does not cross sentence boundaries, which indicates that elaborate expressions are to be treated on word-level. This makes sense as style elaboration by definition is not meaningful and hence cannot be treated as a sentence.

Concept specification (D6) occurs predominantly with G10 ($X]_s [X_R Y]$) and G11 ($X]_s [Y X_R]$) as expected, because these grammatical structures include a further semantic constituent Y, which represents the element for concept specification.

A further interesting observation, which is beyond the data in the table above is, that repetition structures, which consist of noun phrases (NP) predominantly occur with the discourse category of thematic updating (eleven out of 18 occurrences of a NP in the data). All eleven occurrences update participants or props in a noun phrase. However, there is also thematic updating of verb phrases, predominantly at the beginning of a sentence (sometimes in a tail-head linkage structure). Furthermore, adverbs or parts of clauses can also be updated especially after a thinking pause. Even whole sentences are updated by a complete repetition of the sentence. Therefore, thematic updating can not be delimited to participants and props reference, utilizing only the grammatical category of noun phrases.

⁴⁰ Cf. P.172B, P.178, and P.182, which also represent the repetition of an iconic sentence as a whole package of two or three elements.

5.2 Grammatical classifications matching discourse categories

In contrast to the previous section, this part takes the grammatical classifications, observed in Khmu oral narratives, as a basis and searches for correlating discourse functions, which are expressed via the respective grammatical form.

It is expected that each grammatical classification has a number of different matching discourse functions, but it is also expected that some patterns of typical grammar-discourse match will be revealed.

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# of cat.	Syntactic definition	Matching discourse categories	Right-dislocated repetition (RDR)
G1	...X...] _s X _R	38 of 274 occurrences. No perfect patterns found. G1 occurs with D1 (emphasis), D3 (style elaboration), D4 (floor-holding), D5 (thematic updating), and D7/D8 ((dis-)continuous summary). It does not co-occur with D2 (iconicity) and D6 (concept specification).	RDR
G2	...X...X'...] _s X _R X' _R	6 of 274 occurrences. No patterns. G2 occurs with D1 (emphasis), D5 (thematic updating) and D7/D8 ((dis-)continuous summary). It does not co-occur with D2 (iconicity), D3 (style elaboration), D4 (floor-holding), and D6 (concept specification).	RDR
G3	...X...] _s ADV X _R	30 of 274 occurrences. No perfect patterns found. G3 occurs with D1 (emphasis), D3 (style elaboration), D4 (floor-holding), D5 (thematic updating), and D7/D8 ((dis-)continuous summary). It does not co-occur with D2 (iconicity) and D6 (concept specification).	RDR
G4	...X...X'...] _s ADV X _R X' _R	1 occurrence. No pattern. G4 occurs with D1 (emphasis) and D7 (continuous summary).	RDR
G5	...X...X'...] _s X _R (X' _R) ADV	4 of 274 occurrences. No patterns. G5 occurs with D1 (emphasis), D4 (floor-holding), and D7/D8 ((dis-)continuous summary). It does not co-occur with D2 (iconicity), D3 (style elaboration), D5 (thematic updating), and D6 (concept specification).	RDR
G6	[] _s ... [] _s	13 of 274 occurrences. No perfect patterns found. G6 occurs with D1 (emphasis), D3 (style elaboration), D4 (floor-holding), D5 (thematic updating), and D7/D8 ((dis-)continuous summary). It does not co-occur with D2 (iconicity) and D6 (concept specification).	

G7	[], Y/ADV [],	<p>4 of 274 occurrences.</p> <p>No patterns.</p> <p>G7 occurs with D1 (emphasis), D5 (thematic updating) and D7/D8 ((dis-)continuous summary).</p> <p>It does not co-occur with D2 (iconicity), D3 (style elaboration), D4 (floor-holding), and D6 (concept specification).</p>	
G8	[Xa Xb][X _R Xc] _{EL}	<p>21 of 274 occurrences.</p> <p>G8 always denotes style elaboration (D3).</p> <p>It further occurs with D1 (emphasis), D4 (floor-holding) and D7 (continuous summary).</p> <p>It does not co-occur with D2 (iconicity), D5 (thematic updating), D6 (concept specification), and D8 (discontinuous summary).</p>	
G9	[...X X _R ...] _s	<p>59 of 274 occurrences.</p> <p>No perfect patterns found.</p> <p>G9 occurs with D1 (emphasis), D2 (iconicity), D3 (style elaboration), D4 (floor-holding), and D5 (thematic updating).</p> <p>It does not co-occur with D6 (concept specification), D7 (continuous summary), and D8 (discontinuous summary).</p>	
G10	...X] _s [X _R Y]	<p>31 of 274 occurrences.</p> <p>G10 often occurs with concept specification (D6) (27 occurrences).</p> <p>It further occurs with D1 (emphasis), D3 (style elaboration), D4 (floor-holding).</p> <p>It does not co-occur with D2 (iconicity), D5 (thematic updating), D7 (continuous summary), and D8 (discontinuous summary).</p>	RDR
G11	...X] _s [Y X _R]	<p>12 of 273 occurrences.</p> <p>G11 predominantly denotes concept specification (D6) (11 occurrences).</p> <p>It further occurs with D1 (emphasis) and D4 (floor-holding).</p> <p>It does not co-occur with D2 (iconicity), D3 (style elaboration), D5 (thematic updating), D7 (continuous summary), and D8 (discontinuous summary).</p>	RDR
G12	[...X...X _R ...] _s	<p>61 of 274 occurrences.</p> <p>No patterns.</p> <p>G12 occurs with every discourse category.</p>	

Table 16: Grammar-discourse match

Conclusion

The only typical patterns found for the grammar-discourse match prescribe G8 to denote style elaboration (D3), and G11 to predominantly denote concept specification (D6). G10 though does often denote concept specification (D6) as well.

These outcomes are expected as G8 represents the grammatical definition of an elaborate expression (which belongs to the discourse category of style elaboration by definition). Furthermore, the grammatical classifications of G10 and G11 include a semantic constituent Y, which is responsible for the added new semantic information, which specifies the repeated concept in the discourse category of concept specification.

5.3 Synthesis of discourse-grammar and grammar-discourse match

Putting both previous matching operations together results into a synthesis of the interrelationship between grammatical form and discourse function in Khmu oral narratives, presented in the following table.

Discourse category	matched with	Grammatical classification	Grammatical classification	matched with	Discourse category
D2: emphasis	Predominantly denoted by	G9 ([...X X _R ...] _s)			
D3: style elaboration	Predominantly denoted by	G8 (elaborate expression) G9 ([...X X _R ...] _s) G12 (discontinuous repetition)	G8 (elaborate expression)	always denotes	D3 (style elaboration)
D4: floor-holding	only in connection with	pitch non-prominence (1)			
D6: concept specification	Predominantly denoted by	G10 (...X] _s [X _R Y]) G11 (...X] _s [Y X _R) G12 (discontinuous repetition)	G10	often denotes	D6 (concept specification)
			G11	Predominantly denotes	

Table 17: Synthesis of discourse-grammar and grammar-discourse match.

In summary, only four discourse functions (D2, D3, D4, and D6) are typically denoted by certain grammatical structures or phonological features, respectively. And there are only two patterns for grammatical structures, which regularly denote certain discourse functions, namely G8 and G11.

The lack of patterns in a discourse-grammar and grammar-discourse match shows that the discourse functions dealt with in this thesis are generally not heavily dependent on a grammatical basis for their definition, except of clause position and the existence of a verb phrase in a (dis-)continuous summary (cf. the definition of discourse functions in Table 12, section 4.7). Although different discourse functions utilize various grammatical structures, and different grammatical structures can denote various discourse functions, the interrelationship is generally not to be characterized as an exclusive relationship, but rather a preference choice of resources available. Generally speaking there are various grammatical alternatives for a speaker to use for different discourse functions. Especially for the discourse function of emphasis, there are (at least) twelve different repetitive structures (G1 – G12) available. Theoretically, there are even more choices, which are not represented by the repetition structures in these five Khmu narratives. Other discourse functions (especially floor-holding, thematic updating and discontinuous summary) might also use more complex repetitive structures, which are not heavily used in this data (like G4 (...X...X'...]_s ADV X_R X'_R), G5 (...X...X'...]_s X_R (X'_R) ADV) and also G7 ([]_s Y/ ADV []_s), cf. the boxes in Table 14), when exploring a broader range of texts.

5.4 Presupposed and exclusive discourse categories

This section is concerned about the possibilities of having discourse categories presupposed by grammatical or phonological features or excluding each other within a certain repetition structure.

For example, the discourse functions of (dis-)continuous summary and thematic updating can theoretically be in competition with each other, if the repeated phrase is not adjacent to the original source phrase (which is a prerequisite for thematic updating) and if the repeated phrase represents a clause final verb phrase with normal pitch (which are the prerequisites for (dis-)continuous summary). The question arises why the definition of (dis-)continuous summary only allows verb phrases, but not e.g. noun phrases (if ensured that they bear the character of a summary). In the latter case, we would have competition between thematic updating and continuous summary in Poor.007 (which may actually be a whole sentence with the verb being omitted). A RDR construction, which includes a verb phrase, is generally counted as (dis-)continuous summary, even though it may fit the definition of thematic updating (e.g. FT.070, Poor.003, Poor.110 C, Poor.121 and Poor.207 C). Hence, further research will show, if there can be a clear distinction between (dis-)continuous summary and thematic updating even without including grammatical categories like verb phrases into the definition of a discourse function.

Finally, this discussion leads to exclusive discourse pattern statements of competing discourse functions.⁴¹

Regarding the discourse structuring category of chunk delimitation, it is an entailment of the existence of clause boundaries in all RDR structures as well as G6 and G7. The only occurrences where repetition structures in Khmu do not necessarily co-occur with chunk delimitation are represented by G8, G9, and G12. Hence, the occurrence of chunk delimitation is predictable for RDR, because RDR appears clause final by definition.

Moreover, regarding the descriptive discourse categories of participant reference or props reference, they co-occur predominantly with concept specification (and often with thematic updating in a noun phrase). This is expected as concept specification is realized by the grammatical categories G10 and G11, which leave room for a semantic constituent Y, that can carry new information like the specification of participant or props reference. The descriptive discourse category of thematic discontinuity co-occurs with every other discourse category (except of continuous summary by definition), which suggests that repetition is not a significant indicator for thematic discontinuity (Larin Adams p.c.).

Amongst the other eight discourse categories, there is floor-holding, which is accompanied by the phonological feature of pitch non-prominence, i.e., whenever there is pitch non-prominence, there is the discourse function of floor-holding.

Furthermore, there are various discourse functions which may be assigned to a single repetition structure. The instances where discourse functions are in competition with each other reveals exclusive discourse patterns. For example:

Iconicity does not co-occur with any other discourse category except of emphasis. It does neither co-occur with style elaboration, which does not bear semantic meaning, nor with concept specification, which depends on a new semantic constituent. As an iconic repetition structure develops new meaning by the process of repetition (namely extension in time or scope), it can neither co-occur with thematic updating (which only updates previous information), nor with floor-holding (which is articulated in phonological non-prominence and is therefore not suitable to carry across new meaning to the interlocutor). However, if the original concept is atypical, then iconicity co-occurs with emphasis.

Style elaboration does not co-occur with iconicity, since iconic repetition structures develop new meaning, whereas style elaboration does not bear semantic meaning by definition.

Floor-holding does not co-occur with any other discourse category (except of one occurrence of style elaboration in P.006 C), as it rules out any other discourse function for the phonological reason of pitch non-prominence.

⁴¹ This still leaves room for discourse functions which co-occur, as they do not compete with each other, like "emphasis of an atypical state or action", which co-occurs with various other discourse functions.

Thematic updating does not co-occur with iconicity, since iconic repetition structures develop new meaning, which is ruled out with thematic updating. Neither does thematic updating co-occur with floor-holding, since phonological non-prominence is prohibited with thematic updating, as the interlocutors are supposed to become aware of the update. Furthermore, thematic updating does not co-occur with concept specification, since new information (represented by the semantic constituent Y within concept specification) is ruled out with thematic updating.

Concept specification does not co-occur with any other discourse category except of emphasis, since concept specification includes new information in its repetition structure, which is not part of iconicity, style elaboration, thematic updating or (dis-)continuous summary. Concept specification does not co-occur with floor-holding (which is articulated with pitch non-prominence), as the former aims to inform the interlocutor about new information which specifies the original concept. However, if the original concept, which is specified by concept specification, is atypical, then concept specification co-occurs with emphasis.

Continuous summary does not co-occur with iconicity (since the latter develops new meaning by iconic repetition, which is ruled out by a summary), floor-holding (since only normal pitch is prescribed with continuous summary, as the interlocutor is supposed to get the summary), concept specification (since new information is ruled out with a summary), or discontinuous summary (since the latter presupposes thematic discontinuity).

Discontinuous summary does not co-occur with iconicity (since the latter develops new meaning by iconic repetition, which is ruled out by a summary), floor-holding (since only normal pitch is prescribed with discontinuous summary, as the interlocutor is supposed to get the summary), concept specification (since new information is ruled out with a summary), or continuous summary (since the latter presupposes thematic continuity).

In summary, only floor-holding can be declared as an exclusive discourse pattern, which out-rules every other discourse category within a certain repetition structure (except of style elaboration in P.006 C). Iconicity and concept specification however usually co-occur with emphasis of atypical state or action.