การจัดอันดับและการแนะนำผู้มีส่วนร่วมในเรื่องเล่าภาษาโบรว

PARTICIPANT RANK AND INTRODUCTION IN SELECTED BRAO NARRATIVES

วาย ลิง เหลียง[1]

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความฉบับนี้นำเสนอผลเฉพาะกาลของการวิจัยสัมพันธสารที่กำลังดำเนินอยู่เกี่ยวกับระบบการอ้างถึงผู้แสดง
บทบาทในสัมพันธสารของภาษาบราว โอมบา ซึ่งเป็นภาษามอญ พูดกันในภูมิภาคตะวันออกของเขมรกลุ่มบะห์นาริกที่-
(ประเทศกัมพูชา บทความนี้มุ่งเน้นอธิบายการจัดลำดับและการเกริ่นนำผู้แสดงบทบาทจำนวนสี่ประเภทดังนี้ 1 ผู้แสดง
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วรรณกรรมเรื่องเล่าพื้นบ้านที่ใช้สรรพนามบุรุษที่สามจำนวนหกเรื่องซึ่งประกอบด้วยคำทั้งหมด 6,คำ และประโยค 447
ทั้งหมดประมาณ 670 ประโยค เรื่องเล่าถูกถอดเสียงเป็นภาษาบราว โอมบาก่อนที่จะถูกแปลเป็นภาษาเขมรและอังกฤษ
ตามลำดับ การถอดเสียงอ้างอิงจากระบบIPA วรรณกรรมทั้งหกเรื่องประกอบด้วยชื่อเรื่องดังต่อไปนี้ (1งูเหลือม (2
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การจำแนกประเภทผู้แสดงบทบาทอาศัยกลยุทธ์การเรียงลำดับของ Dooley กับ Levinsohn ส่วนการศึกษาการ
เรียงลำดับผู้มีบทบาทเชิงสถิติอาศัยหลักการเชิงปริมาณในการวัดระยะห่างการอ้างถึงและการคงไว้ซึ่งแม่บทของ Givón

ผลการวิจัยสรุปได้ดังต่อไปนี้ เนื่องจากวรรณกรรมเรื่องเล่าทั้งหกเรื่องไม่เคยบันทึกมาก่อน การบันทึกวรรณกรรม
เรื่องเล่าเหล่านี้และจัดเก็บในคลังข้อมูลของภาษาบราว โอมบาจึงเป็นการช่วยอนุรักษ์ภาษา ประเพณี และวัฒนธรรมเอาไว้
เรื่องเล่าที่บันทึกไว้จัดอยู่ในหมวดเรื่องเล่าพื้นบ้าน นับว่ามีประโยชน์ในการเข้าใจทัศนะการมองโลกของชาวบราว โอมบา
และในจำนวนหกเรื่องดังกล่าว มีเรื่องเล่าพื้นบ้านอยู่สี่เรื่องที่อธิบายปรากฏการณ์ธรรมชาติไว้ เช่น ทำไงงูเหลือมจึงไม่มีพิษ
ทำไมถึงเกิดจันทรุปราคา ทำไมถึงมีกลางวันกลางคืน เป็นต้น เรื่องเล่าพื้นบ้านเหล่านี้อาจเป็นประโยชน์กับนักภาษาศาสตร์
สังคมและนักมานุษยวิทยาในการศึกษาประเพณีและวัฒนธรรมของชาวบราว โอมบรา อีกทั้งอาจเป็นประโยชน์ต่อทฤษฎี
ภาษาศาสตร์ ภาษาศาสตร์สังคม และหรือมานุษยวิทยา/

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents interim results in on-going discourse research into the participant reference system in Brao Ombaa, a Bahnaric Mon-Khmer language spoken in northeastern Cambodia. In particular, this paper describes the ranking and introduction of four categories of participants – central, major, minor, and props – in a small corpus of six third person monologue folk narratives. The total number of words is 6,447 and the total number of clauses is about 670. Those narratives are transcribed into Brao Ombaa and translated into Khmer and then English. All of them are interlinearized using IPA transcription. The six narratives being investigated are "The python," "Lunar eclipse," "Mr. Cegruej," "Marksman orphan," "Gecko and Elephant," and "Krung the snake."

Dooley and Levinsohn's sequential strategies are adapted to identify the four categories of participants. Givón's quantitative method of referential distance and topic persistence are applied to examine the participant ranking statistically.

The results of this research are summarized from the presented findings in this paper. Since all six of the narratives have never been recorded before, they can be documented and added to the total Brao corpus of literature to preserve the language, tradition, and culture. As the genre of the collected narratives is folk tale, it will be of some help with understanding the worldview of the Brao Ombaa. Moreover, four of them are folk tales that offer an explanation for some phenomena such as why the python is poisonless, why there is lunar eclipse, why there is daytime and nighttime, and why elephants have no behind. So, they may help sociolinguists and anthropologists to investigate the Brao Ombaa tradition and culture. Perhaps, they may contribute to linguistic, sociolinguistic, and/or anthropological theories.

Keywords: Narrative, Participant Reference, Participant Identification, Participant Rank

1   Introduction

This paper is a study of the participant reference system found in a corpus of six third-person narrative texts based on the Ombaa variety of the Brao language, usually referred to as the Brao language (Jordi 2011:9). Brao is spoken in the villages of Ta Veaeng / Ta Veng in Ratanakiri province, Cambodia. Brao has been classified by Thomas and Headley (1970:399) as one of the languages of Western Bahnaric, of the Mon-Khmer language group.

The collected Brao narratives use proper names, common names, noun phrases, possessive phrases, kin terms, pronouns, relative pronouns, demonstrative

pronouns, and null reference to refer to participants. This study examines the ranking and introduction of the Brao participant reference system.

2   Participant Rank

The participants of the collected narratives are ranked statistically by four measurements: total number of references to participants, topic persistence (decay), referential distance (look-back), and relative referential distance. Four main categories are used: central participant (the most important participant in the narrative), major participants (the slate of other important participants for the whole narrative), minor participants (participants whose role is restricted only to particular episodes in the narrative), and props (non-active participants in the narrative). The six narratives are: N#1[1] "The python" (385 words), N#2 "Lunar eclipse" (907 words), N#3 "Mr. Cegruej" (2420 words), N#4 "Marksman orphan" (704 words), N#5 "Gecko and Elephant" (705 words), and N#7[2] "Krung the snake" (1326 words).

The obvious minor participants and props of each narrative are listed below. Participants are considered to be obviously minor if they were only referenced a couple of times in the entire narrative.

In N#1, minor participants are the Brao people (2 occurrences), centipedes, big and small scorpions and spiders (3 occurrences), and cobras, vipers (4 occurrences). There is no prop in the narrative.

In N#2, minor participants are the orphans' older uncle (2 occurrences), older uncle's family (5 occurrences), Mr. Rich Ruler's servants (4 occurrences), a god (5 occurrences), and the Brao people (2 occurrences). The props are a mouse, one older uncle, and the medicine.

In N#3, minor participants are the villagers (3 occurrences) and the chicken (2 occurrences). The props are the small deer, the deer, the horned deer, and the elephant.

In N#4, minor participants are Mr. Orphan's grandmother (4 occurrences). The props are the deer, the elephant, and the sun.

In N#5, minor participants are Lady Baya's father (4 occurrences), Lady Baya's mother (2 occurrences), Lady Baya's younger sister (2 occurrences), and Lady Baya's younger aunt (2 occurrences). There is no prop in the narrative.

In N#7, minor participants are Mr. Rich Ruler's wife (4 occurrences), Mr. Rich Ruler's daughters (4 occurrences), one Mr. Rich Ruler's servants (3

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[1] N#1 is the abbreviation of Narrative number 1.
[2] After considering the length of the collected narratives, N#6 will not be included in this paper.

occurrences), and one Mr. Rich Ruler's household (6 occurrences). The prop is Mr. Rich Ruler's axe.

After taking out the obvious minor participants and the props, central, major, and other minor participants of each narrative will first be identified by the total number of references to participants.

2.1   Participant rank by total number of references to participants

Based on the following results of the total number of references to participants, the most referenced / central participants of the six narratives are listed in Table 1.

Table 31 Total number of references to participants

	N #1	N# 2	N#3	N# 4	N# 5	N# 7
Most referenced	The Python 19	The older orphan 53	Mr. Cegruej 117	The five brothers 44, 43	Lady Baya 23	Krung the snake 35

In N#4, Mr. Orphan, who was not the five brothers, performed the key actions. Thus, though Mr. Orphan is the second most referenced participant, he is still considered the central participant according to his thematic role.

In addition to the total number of references to participants, the major participants are also the Local Very Important Participants (Local VIPs), i.e. the most referenced participant in an episode, or at least one episode.

In N#1, major participants are human beings (Local VIP of Ep.3 and Ep.4).

In N#2, the major participants are Mr. Rich Ruler's daughter (Local VIP of Ep.4) and the younger orphan (Local VIP of Ep.1).

In N#3, major participants are Mr. Cegruej's six older brothers (Local VIP of Ep.1, Ep.2, Ep.5, and Ep.6), Mother Gee Ersee (Local VIP of Ep.9), Mr. Teem Enlee (4th most mentioned but not a Local VIP), Mr. Rich Ruler (Local VIP of Ep.12), and Mr. Rich Ruler's youngest daughter (Local VIP of Ep.11). Mr. Teem Enlee is considered a major participant though he is not a Local VIP because he is always referenced with his wife Gee Ersee who is a Local VIP.

In N#4, major participants are the five brothers (Local VIP of Ep.1, Ep.2, and Ep.3).

In N#5, major participants are Thaaw (Local VIP of Ep.1 and Ep.3), the elephants (Local VIP of Ep.5), and Grandma Gecko (Local VIP of Ep.4).

In N#7, major participants are Mr. Rich Ruler (Local VIP of Ep.1), Mr. Rich Ruler's youngest daughter (Local VIP of Ep.4), and one Mr. Rich Ruler's youngest daughter (Local VIP of Ep.5).

At this point, the rest of the participants of each narrative are considered the minor participants.

In N#1, minor participants are the crow and the toad. Although the crow is a minor participant according to the total number of references, he was the one who deceived the python. His thematic role is an agent in relation to the central participant suggests the crow should be considered a major participant.

In N#2, minor participants are the husband snake, Mr. Rich Ruler, and the wife snake.

In N#3, minor participants are the termites.

In N#4, minor participants are human beings.

In N#5, there are only obvious minor participants.

In N#7, minor participants are the python, Mr. Rich Ruler's servants, one Mr. Rich Ruler, one Mr. Rich Ruler's wife, and the villagers. Although the axe was classified as a prop, it has been included in the table because its loss was the key thing that brought the plot.

2.2   Participant rank by topic persistence (decay)

According to Givón, "more important discourse topics appear more frequently in the register, i.e. they have a higher probability of persisting longer in the register after a relevant measuring point" (1983:15).

The results of the topic persistence measurement are displayed in Table 2. The higher the number of occurrence, the more persistence the topic is.

Table 32 Topic persistence (decay) measurement

	N #1	N #2	N#3	N# 4	N#5	N# 7
Occurred in all episodes	The python	The older orphan	Mr. Cegruej	---	Lady Baya	---

Among the participants in the six narratives, the most referenced participants of N#1, N#2, N#3, and N#5 were on the stage in all episodes whereas the most referenced participants in N#4 and N#7 were off the stage in one out of 6 episodes and four out of 7 episodes respectively. By this method, central participants of the narratives are: the python (N#1), the older orphan (N#2), Mr. Cegruej (N#3), Lady Baya (N#5), and no central participant in N#4 and N#7.

Since Krung the snake is the central participant of N#7, the results of the topic persistence – Krung the snake is the third most persistent do not correspond

exactly with the results of total number of references to participants – Krung the snake is the most referenced.

According to the total number of references in episodes, major participants are typically on the stage not less than half of the number of episodes.

In the four episodes in N#1, human beings were on the stage in three episodes and the crow was on the stage in two episodes.

In the five episodes in N#2, Mr. Rich Ruler's daughter and the younger orphan were on the stage in three episodes.

In the twelve episodes in N#3, Mr. Cegruej's six brothers were on the stage in six episodes, Mother Gee Ersee and Mr. Teem Enlee were on the stage in seven episodes, and Mr. Rich Ruler and his youngest daughter were on the stage in two episodes. Although Mr. Rich Ruler and his youngest daughter were on the stage less than half of the number of episodes, they are considered major participants because they are the Local VIPs of Ep.12 and Ep.11 respectively.

In the six episodes in N#4, Mr. Orphan and the five brothers were on the stage in five episodes as the last episode is a moral after the narrative. Mr. Orphan instead of the five brothers is considered the central participant though all of them were off the stage in one episode since he shot a deer, an elephant, and the sun, his thematic role is an agent in relation to the props.

In the five episodes in N#5, Thaaw and the elephants were on the stage in three episodes and Grandma Gecko was on the stage in two episodes. Although Grandma Gecko was on the stage less than half of the number of episodes, she is considered a major participant since she is the Local VIP of Ep.4.

In the seven episodes in N#7, Mr. Rich Ruler was on the stage in five episodes, Krung the snake and one Mr. Rich Ruler's youngest daughter were on the stage in three episodes, Mr. Rich Ruler's youngest daughter was on the stage in one episode. Even though the three participants were on the stage less than half of the total number of episodes, Krung the snake is considered the central participant as he is the VIP of all three episodes (Ep.3, Ep.4, and Ep.7), one Mr. Rich Ruler's youngest daughter is considered a major participant as she is the Local VIP of Ep.5, and Mr. Rich Ruler's youngest daughter is considered a major participant as she is the Local VIP of Ep.4.

The minor participants basically occur in one or two episodes.

In the four episodes in N#1, the toad was on the stage in two episodes.

In the five episodes in N#2, the husband snake and Mr. Rich Ruler were on the stage in two episodes and the wife snake was on the stage in one episode.

In the twelve episodes in N#3, the termites were on the stage in one episode.

In the six episodes in N#4, human beings were on the stage in one episode.

In the seven episodes in N#7, the python and one Mr. Rich Ruler were on the stage in three episodes, and Mr. Rich Ruler's servants, the villagers, and one Mr. Rich Ruler's wife were on the stage in two episodes.

The results of the topic persistence do not correspond exactly with the results of the total number of references to participants except for the minor participants. The most important differences were the most referenced participants in N#4 and N#7 do not occur in all episodes and the most referenced participant in N#7 is the third most persistent.

2.3   Participant rank by referential distance (look-back) – Inconsistent readings

The referential distance was figured by counting the number of clauses back from a participant to the nearest clause in which a referent for the participant previously appeared. The maximum value is 20 (the suggested capacity of short-term memory) (Givón 1983:13) and the minimum value is 0 (the introduction of a participant). The referential distance of each individual participant was calculated by dividing the total look-back value by the total number of occurrences. Thus, the higher the degree of persistence of a participant, the shorter the referential distance of that participant.

The results of the referential distance measurement are listed in Table 3. A higher number indicates a longer distance between two occurrences for a participant denoting that participant is likely to be less important.

Table 33 Referential distance (look-back) measurement

	N# 1	N# 2	N# 3	N# 4	N# 5	N# 7
Most important	The python 1.89	Husband snake 1.45	Mr. Cegruej's six older brothers 1.65	The elephant, The sun 1.67	Thaaw 1.38	Mr. Rich Ruler's youngest daughter 1.57

Among the participants in the six narratives suggested by referential distance, only the python in N#1 ranks first by the two previous measurements. All the other participants ranked highest by this referential distance are either the Local VIPs or were on the stage in only one or two episodes. They are obviously minor. It is not unusual for obviously minor participants or even props to have a low referential distance value since the only times they were referenced, they were close together and then never referenced again. The purpose of the total number of

references is positively to suggest the most likely candidates but negatively to rule out participants referenced so few times they cannot be central or major.

Since the referential distance calculates the look-back value of the occurrence of participants, the most important participants indicated by this measurement were usually on the stage in only one episode. In other words, the most highly ranked participants would not be the most important participants based on the referential distance measurement.

2.4 Participant rank by relative referential distance - Adjusted

In order to identify the central participant by considering both the referential distance and the occurrence of participants, based on Tebow (2010:66-67), the relative referential distance of individual participant was measured by dividing the total number of clauses by the total number of occurrences.

The results of the relative referential distance measurement are listed in Table 4.

Table 34 Relative referential distance (look-back) measurement

	N# 1	N# 2	N# 3	N# 4	N# 5	N# 7
Most important	The python 2.11	The older orphan 1.80	Mr. Cegruej 1.97	The five brothers 2.04	Lady Baya 2.65	Krung the snake 3.07

With the suggested adjustments, all three methods identified the same participants as the central participants. Again N#4 is exceptional.

For this paper, N#3 is given as a detailed example because it is the most typical one among the collected narratives. The participants ranked by the relative referential distance measurement are listed in Table 5.

Table 35 Relative Referential distance (look-back) measurement for N#3

Most imp	2nd most imp	3rd most imp	4th most imp	5th most imp	6th most imp
Mr. Cegruej 1.97	Mr. Cegruej's six older brothers 3.90	Mother Gee Ersee 4.94	Mr. Teem Enlee 6.91	Mr. Rich Ruler 13.44	Mr. Rich Ruler's youngest daughter 14.24

Mr. Cegruej is the most referenced participant and was on the stage in every episode, and was ranked by the relative look-back as the most important participant. Additionally, he was the one, not his six older brothers, who shot to

death a small deer (N3:12d,13)[1], a deer (N3:25b,c), a horned deer (N3:32e,f), and an elephant (N3:44b,c). With regard to the thematic role, he is an agent in relation to those props. Thus, Mr. Cegruej is considered the central participant of N#3.

Mr. Cegruej's six older brothers are the second most referenced and ranked by the relative look-back as the second most important participants. Besides, since Mr. Cegruej killed those animals and they just grilled and ate them, their thematic role is a beneficiary in relation to the central participant and are considered the most major participants.

Mother Gee Ersee was the third most referenced and was ranked by the relative look-back as the third most important participant. Moreover, when she and her husband Mr. Teem Enlee talked to Mr. Cegruej, she was often the spokesperson. Therefore, Mother Gee Ersee is considered a major participant.

However, although Mr. Teem Enlee is the fourth most referenced and ranked by the relative look-back as the fourth most important participant, he always co-occurred with his wife Gee Ersee. The total number of references of Mr. Teem Enlee alone was only 2 times (N3:86a,98a), far less than that of Mr. Rich Ruler (18 times) and his youngest daughter (17 times), who are the fifth and sixth most referenced and ranked by the relative look-back as the fifth and sixth most important participants respectively. So, Mr. Teem Enlee is considered the least major participant.

Since the total number of references of Mr. Rich Ruler and his youngest daughter is far more than that of Mr. Teem Enlee, and Mr. Rich Ruler and his youngest daughter are the Local VIPs of Ep.12 and Ep.11 respectively, Mr. Rich Ruler and his daughter are considered major participants.

2.5 Summary

In summary, 19 out of 72 items are classified as obviously minor participants, and 11 out of 72 are props. Also, 42 other participants are ranked as central, major, and minor participants by the total number of references to participants, topic persistence (decay), referential distance (look-back), and relative referential distance. Apart from the referential distance, the results of the other three measurements closely correspond, except for N#4. The 72 items are ranked as follows: 6 are central, 26 are major, 29 are minor, and 11 are props.

In order to discover the patterns of the participant reference for the four ranks of participants, how the participants are introduced was described and the exceptions of introduction were investigated in Section 3.

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[1] 'N3' stands for Narrative 3, '12d' denotes Sentence 12 and Clause d.

3   Introduction of participants

Once we have established a ranking and categorization for all participants in the narratives, then linguistic patterns associated with those categories can be identified.

The openings of narratives are usually intended to draw and hold the attention of the audiences. How participants are introduced in order to give information about the importance of participants was investigated in this paper. In the sections below, the introduction of central, major, and minor participants, and props are discussed (in order).

3.1   Introduction of central participants

The patterns of the introduction of the 6 central participants are described in this section.

Three (in N#4, N#5, and N#7) out of the 6 central participants were introduced in the same way by a noun phrase with a demonstrative followed by a pronoun [NP + Dem + Pro], and two others by a reduced version of this: by a noun with a demonstrative [N + Dem] in N#1 and by a noun phrase consisting of two addresses and his name [NP] in N#3.

The one exception is in N#2. All the central participants were introduced individually but the older orphan in N#2 was introduced at the same time with a major participant (the younger orphan) in the opening of the narrative. They were introduced by a noun followed by a numeral and a classifier [N + Num + Clf] *kuən.pər.tii baar raa* "orphan two persons" (N2:1a). Perhaps the role of the younger orphan is as prominent as the central participant (the older orphan) in Ep.1, thus, both the central and major participants were introduced in the presentational sentence.

Thus, central participants are generally introduced by the heaviest coding material among the four categories of participants. The summary schema for the introduction of central participants is [(Addr) N (Dem) (Pro)] $_{\text{NP}}$. If the exceptional N#2 is not counted, the introductions here average 2.3 words in the NP.

3.2   Introduction of major participants

The patterns of the introduction of the 26 major participants are described in this section.

Two typical patterns (A and B) can be identified describing 19 out of the 26 major participant introductions. A) Three (in N#1, N#2, and N#5) were introduced in the same way by a noun or a possessive noun phrase followed by a pronoun [N + (N $_{\text{[Poss]}}$) + Pro] and eleven others (in N#1, N#2, N#3, N#4, and N#7) by a

reduced version of this: by a noun [N]. B) One (in N#3) was introduced in the same way, by a head noun of a possessive phrase [N+Pro$_{[Poss]}$].

The seven exceptional instances in the introduction of major participants are: 1) One (N3:2b) is Mr. Cegruej's six older brothers were introduced by a plural pronoun followed by a noun with a possessive pronoun followed by a numeral and a classifier [Pro.pl+N+Pro$_{[Poss]}$+Num+Clf]. 2) Three (N5:4a, N7:38, and N7:55) are the major participants were introduced by a noun with a demonstrative and followed by a pronoun [N+Dem+Pro($_{[Conjug]}$)]; they are overcoded perhaps because the three participants are almost as prominent as the central participants when they were introduced in the narratives. 3) One (N3:125) is Mr. Rich Ruler's youngest daughter was introduced by two reference phrases: i) a noun with a possessive proper noun and a demonstrative [N+Addr+N$_{[Poss]}$+Dem] *kuən jaʔ ʔat.ɲaa nɛɛ* "this Mr. Rich Ruler's child" and ii) a noun phrase [NP] *naaŋ ʔən.sooc* "the youngest daughter," to emphasize Mr. Rich Ruler's child was the youngest daughter. 4) One is in N2:1a (see section 3.1). 5) One (N5:28) is the elephants were introduced by a pronoun [Pro] which is undercoded perhaps because they were off the stage when they were introduced. It is a cataphoric reference.

Hence, major participants are generally introduced by slightly lighter coding materials in comparison with central participants to indicate that they are less prominent than central participants. However, they can be introduced by heavier than typical coding materials when they are the Local VIPs, such as Thaaw is the Local VIP of Ep.1 in N#5 and Mr. Rich Ruler's youngest daughter is the Local VIP of Ep.11 in N#3. The summary schema for the introduction of major participants is [(Pro) (Addr) N (Pro($_{[Poss]}$))]$_{NP}$, which covers 15 out of the 26 major participant introductions. The introductions here average 1.7 words in the NP.

3.3 Introduction of minor participants

The patterns of the introduction of the 29 minor participants are described in this section.

Two typical patterns (A and B) can be identified describing 21 out of the 29 minor participant introductions. A) Eight (in N#1, N#2, N#3, and N#7) were introduced by a common noun or a proper noun [(Pro.pl)+N]. B) Thirteen (in N#2, N#3, N#4, N#5, and N#7) were introduced in the same way by a head noun of a possessive phrase [N+Pro$_{[Poss]}$]. A generalized schema is [(Pro.pl) N (Pro$_{[Poss]}$)]$_{NP}$.

The eight exceptional instances in the introduction of minor participants are: 1) Three (N1:3b,12,19) were introduced by a noun followed by a pronoun [N+Pro] which is overcoded. Perhaps since they were as poisonous as the python,

they are almost as prominent as the central participant. 2) One (N3:129) was introduced by a pronoun with a noun followed by a numeral and a classifier and then a pronoun [Pro.pl + N + Num + Clf + Pro.pl] *mɛɛ brɔh puən raa məə* "four young ladies they" which is overcoded. As there is no obvious motivation, more thought and discussion are needed. 3) One (N2:2a) was introduced by two prepositional clauses: i) a preposition with a noun [Prep + N] *dəə ʔuuʔ* "with older brother" and ii) a preposition with a noun [Prep + N] *dəə pɔɔ* "with uncle," in which *dəə ʔuuʔ* (*ʔə.rɛɛŋ*) *dəə pɔɔ* basically means with family, *ʔuuʔ pɔɔ* has a meaning of older family members. It is marked by repetition which is overcoded. Perhaps because the older uncle adopted the two orphans, his thematic role is an agent in relation to the central and major participants. 4) One (N3:76a) was introduced by a noun phrase with a demonstrative followed by a pronoun [NP + Dem + Pro] *juu kən.tiər nɛɛ məə* "these married female termites they" which is overcoded. Perhaps, since the termites solved a problem for Mr. Cegruej, their thematic role is an agent in relation to the central participant.

5) One (N4:62a) was introduced by a pronoun [Pro] which is undercoded. For this general statement is given after the narrative is finished and in moral to describe the human habitual life, it is an exophoric reference of people in general. 6) One (N7:52) was introduced by a pronoun and a numeral and a pronoun [Addr + N + Pro + Num + Pro] *jaʔ ʔat.ɲaa ləə muuj ləə* "one [another] Mr. Rich Ruler he" which is overcoded in order to distinguish with the other Mr. Rich Ruler in the narrative.

Accordingly, minor participants are generally introduced by the lighter coding materials unless they are given more prominence based on significant roles they performed such as the termites in N#3. The summary schemata for the introduction of minor participants are [N (Dem) (Pro)]$_{NP}$ and [(Pro.pl) (Addr) N (Pro$_{[Poss]}$) (Num) (Pro)]$_{NP}$. Perhaps the participants in this section that receive significantly more words in their introduction should be promoted to major participant because of the overcoding makes them more prominent.

3.4   Introduction of props

The patterns of the introduction of the 11 props are described in this section.

Two typical patterns (A and B) can be identified describing 8 out of the 11 prop introductions. A) Six (in N#3 and N#4) were introduced in the same way by a noun [N], B) Two (in N#2 and N#7) were introduced by a head noun of a possessive phrase [N + N/Pro$_{[Poss]}$].

The three exceptional patterns in the introduction of props are: 1) One (N2:18a) is the medicine was introduced by a noun followed by a demonstrative [N+Dem] *ɟraaw tɔʔ* "that medicine" which is overcoded, perhaps because it is an important prop which would be used by the central participant to save lives. 2) One (N2:22) is the mouse was introduced by a noun followed by a pronoun [N+Pro] *kə.nɛɛ ləə* "a mouse it" which is overcoded, perhaps because when the older orphan used it to test the effectiveness of the medicine, it held the stage.

3) One (N4:48) is the sun was introduced by an ideophone with a noun, an adjective with a noun, and then an ideophone with a noun [Ideo+N+Adj+N+Ideo+N] *drii.drii mat.ta.ŋəj* "a weak shining sun," *tih mat.ta.ŋəj* "a big sun," and *drii.drii mat.ta.ŋəj* "a sun with a weak shine" which is overcoded, perhaps because it is prominent in Ep.5 of N#4.

Thus, the props are usually introduced by a noun. However, they can be introduced by a head noun of a possessive phrase if they are the possession of a human participant acting in that episode. The summary schema for the props is [N (N/Pro$_{[Poss]}$)]$_{NP}$.

3.5   Summary

In summary, other than the exceptional introductions, the four categories of participants were introduced by the following schemata: [(Addr) N (Dem) (Pro)]$_{NP}$ for central participants, [(Pro) (Addr) N (Pro($_{[Poss]}$))]$_{NP}$ for major participants, [(N) N (Dem) (Pro)]$_{NP}$ and [(Pro) (Addr) N (Pro$_{[Poss]}$) (Num) (Pro)]$_{NP}$ for minor participants, and [N (N/Pro$_{[Poss]}$)]$_{NP}$ for props.

4   Conclusion

After excluding the obvious minor participants and props, the rest of the participants of the collected narratives can be ranked based on three statistical measurements: the total number of references to participants, topic persistence, and relative referential distance.

Basically, central participants were referenced the most (except for Mr. Orphan in N#4), were on the stage in every episode (except for Mr. Orphan in N#4 and Krung the snake in N#7), and got the lowest look back value, i.e. the shortest referential distance (except for Mr. Orphan in N#4). Hence, N#4 is an exceptional narrative among the collected narratives.

Generally, major participants were referenced less than central participants (except for the five brothers in N#4), were not necessarily on the stage in every episode, but are the Local VIPs in at least one episode in the narrative. Also, they

got a higher look back value than central participants (except for the five brothers in N#4).

Accordingly, minor participants were referenced less than major participants, were on the stage in at least one episode, and got a higher look back value than major participants.

However, props can be referenced more than minor participants but less than major participants, were usually on the stage in one or two episodes, and got the highest look back value.

With regard to the introduction of participants, central participants were typically introduced by the heaviest coding material to indicate they are the most important participants in the narratives; major participants were introduced by the coding materials which are slightly lighter than that of the central participants in general, unless they are the Local VIPs; minor participants were introduced by even lighter coding materials unless their thematic role is an agent in relation to other participants; props were usually introduced by nouns.

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