

Personal Pronouns in Pacốh

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O. Introduction

The personal pronouns of Pacốh¹ form a regular system having singular, dual, and plural in all three persons.

¹ Pacốh is a member of the Mon-Khmer language family and is spoken by approximately eight thousand people in Thừa Thiên province of Viet Nam. It may be mutually intelligible with some dialects of Ta-Oi in Laos.

3. Description of pronouns

(1) *Cư* 'I' (first person singular) *Cư póc alíng may* 'I go with you'. *Cư* has an allomorph *day* which is used when one quotes another person's use of *cư*. *Do tông acư, «Day póc alíng may»* 'He said to me, «I'll go with you»'.

(2) *May* 'you' (second person singular) *May póc tống dúng* 'You go to the house'

(3) *Do* 'he, she, it' (third person singular) *Do póc tống dúng* 'He (she or it) goes to the house'. When *do* is used to refer to a person it can only be singular. However, in referring to

the plural of animals or things (where *ngai* 'they' or *ape* 'they' cannot be used), *do* occurs with a pluralizer such as *ngéq* 'all', *é* 'many', *clừng* 'many'. *Ngéq do lủh* 'They (animals) ran away'. *Amáh ngéq do ân cuxo?* 'What those things that (are) red?'

Do has a bound allomorph *u-* which only occurs in the subject slot and is affixed to one-syllable verbs. It seems that *do* and *u-* can be used interchangeably when acting as subject. *Do póc tốq mmo? Uchử tốq dủng* 'He went where? He returned to the house'. When referring to animals or things *u-* can be pluralized like *do*. *Ngép ulủh* 'All they (animals) ran away', *É lư ulủ* 'many very they (animals) ran away'.

(4) *Nháng* 'we (two)' (first person dual)

Nháng póc tốq dủng 'We (two) go to the house'

(5) *Inha* 'you (two)' (second person dual)

Inha póc tốq dủng 'You (two) go to the house'

(6) *Anha* 'those two' (third person dual)

Anha póc tốq dủng 'Those two go to the house'

(7) *He* 'we' (first person plural) *He póc tốq dủng* 'We go to the house'

(8) *Ipe* 'you' (second person plural) *Ipe póc tốq dủng* 'You (all) go to the house'

(9) *Ape* 'they' (third person plural specific)

Ape póc tǒq dúng 'They go to the house'. *Ape* is used in situations where both the speaker and the hearer understand who is being referred to.

(10) *Ngai* 'they' (third person plural nonspecific) *Ngai póc tǒq dúng* 'They go to the house'. *Ngai* can be used whether the identity of the referent is known or not. *Ngai* can only be used of persons, never of animals. Although *Ngai* is usually plural in number it can sometimes be singular nonspecific, *ngai ncốh* 'person or persons there'.

With the exception of *cu* 'I' and *ngai* 'they', all the pronouns listed above can refer to an animal or have an animal included in their number. *Ape* 'they' can be used to refer to animals only after the specific animal has been named in the text. When a dual or plural pronoun refers to persons and an animal it is preferable to state the animal specifically. *Nhàng acho póc* 'we dog go' (I and the dog go), *Inha acho póc* 'You two (including dog) go', *He acho póc* 'We (including dog) go'.

Publication No 1 of the Linguistic Circle of Saigon

MON-KHMER STUDIES I

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Published jointly by
THE LINGUISTIC CIRCLE OF SAIGON
and
THE SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS

1964