

**Learnability and direction of convergence in Cham:
the effects of long-term contact on linguistic structures**

Graham Thurgood

English, California State University, Chico

Learnability and direction of convergence in Cham: the effects of long-term contact on linguistic structures. *Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Western Conference on Linguistics*. California State University, Fresno.

1.0 Introduction. Despite the fact that Cham has been spoken on the coast of Vietnam for over two thousand years, the structures of the Austronesian language Cham, spoken in Vietnam are strikingly transparent semantically and structurally—a highly learnable language reminiscent in many regards of an early creole. The question is why? Although it is quite evident that the language was heavily influenced by intense contact with the Mon-Khmer languages of Vietnam, there is no historical data to suggest Cham ever underwent a pidginization stage; thus, there is no basis for attributing Cham's transparency to development from an earlier pidgin. The temptation to account for this transparency through a pidgin-to-creole scenario is further undermined by the retention in Cham of various pieces of archaic structure in the more formal registers.

Instead, this paper argues for another scenario, namely, that the highly learnable, strikingly transparent structures of Cham are the result of long-term contact. Cham has undergone two thousand years of unending, unrelenting language contact. The historical evidence, both linguistic and non-linguistic alike, makes it clear (Thurgood 1999) that wave after wave of Mon-Khmer speaking peoples not only learned Cham as a second language, but many of these subsequently shifted to Cham. At the same time, the speakers of Cham frequently learned various Mon-Khmer languages, including most recently Vietnamese. During much of this period, Cham was the dominant language in the region, often serving as a lingua franca. In this paper, in general terms, it is argued that the structures of modern Chamic are a natural outgrowth of the

patterns of language contact; more specifically, because for roughly two thousand years, Cham was spoken in a situation in which language acquisition and language shift were a central part of the linguistic landscape, the relative learnability of various structures became one of the most influential determinants of the direction of language change.

As Slobin (1977) and others have pointed out, there is a natural tension between semantic transparency and processing ease, on the one hand, and processing speed and discourse pragmatics, on the other. Further, in the earliest stages of language acquisition, the need for semantic transparency and processing ease takes precedence over processing speed and discourse pragmatics with the shift in focus to a concern with processing speed and discourse pragmatics coming only later. Pidgins and early creoles show a similar preference for semantic transparency and processing ease over processing speed and discourse pragmatics. With grammaticalization, there is a phylogenetic parallel: the early stages of grammaticalization are characterized by semantic transparency, while the later stages this transparency has been exchanged for processing speed.

Thus, the notion of relative learnability has concrete correlates in the literature on first language acquisition, on second language acquisition, on pidgins and creoles, and in the literature on grammaticalization. In first language acquisition, the more learnable structures are those associated with earlier, rather than later, acquisition (Slobin 1977; Givón 1979). In second language acquisition (SLA), it is again, the structures found in the earlier, rather than later, stages of second language acquisition that are more learnable (cf. Dittmar 1992). In the literature on pidginization and creolization, it is the structures associated with earlier, rather than later, creolization that are more learnable (Givón 1979). And, although we are no longer talking strictly about language acquisition, in the literature on typology it is precisely those structures associated with early grammaticalization that are more learnable, while those found with the later stages of grammaticalization are less so (Bybee et al. 1994). That is, phenomena common to the early stages in these literatures are

assumed to be more learnable; phenomena common to later stages, less learnable.

In fact, the structures of Modern Cham reflect the same types of constraints as are found in early SLA. In early SLA, Bates and MacWhinney (1981, 1987), invoke the notion of limited-capacity processors, noting that as a consequence learners first tune to the communicative intent of the message; only later is attention turned to mastery of other aspects of coding. In his Input Processing Model, vanPatten (1996) also describes learners as “limited-capacity processors”, observing that second language (SL) learners process for meaning before form, more specifically, for content words before grammatical words and for more meaningful grammar before less meaningful. Only when learners are able to process informational or communicative content at little or no cost to attention do they pay attention to form.

The paper itself is organized around two basic notions central to early grammar, whether it be in first language acquisition, second language acquisition, early creoles, or early stages of grammaticalization: that is, the preference for semantic transparency and isolatable units, and the preference for processing ease over processing speed.

2.0 Semantic transparency and isolatable units.

The preference for semantic transparency associated with readily isolatable units is manifested throughout Cham.

2.1 Acoustics and segments. Cham is an analytic language, that is, morphemes never consist of less than a syllable and, overwhelmingly, are phonologically separate words. Aside from the possibility that the causative-marking *pa-* is still marginally productive, there is no affixal verbal morphology. As a result, the morphemes are maximally salient phonologically.

This Cham preference for the analytic is paralleled by the preferences of English-speaking children, who, upon realizing that the component parts of contracted auxiliaries can be recast more analytically, go through a period in which they use forms like *I will* in place of *I'll* (Slobin 1977:190-191). Slobin explains this preference for more analytical forms as

motivated by the desire for acoustically salient and readily isolatable units, allowing an easier mapping of form and content. Similar tendencies have been observed in adult second language learners in the early stages of English acquisition. In fact, an initial preference for analytic units characterizes first language acquisition, second language acquisition, early pidgins and creoles, and early stages of grammaticalization.

2.2 Aspect and tense. Basic aspectual distinctions are optionally marked in the verb morphology; tense is not a category. Cham often uses the transparent forms *təɔʔ* ‘live; stay’ > ‘still’ > ‘PROGRESSIVE’ and *pləh* ‘finish’ > ‘PERFECTIVE’ to distinguish ongoing states and activities from completed ones, not just on the verbal level but also on the clausal level.

In (1) *təɔʔ* ‘PROGRESSIVE’ is an auxiliary verb indicating the continuance of a state; and in (2), the progressive begins a clause, marking the overlap of the activities in this paragraph and the activities in the previous paragraph.

- (1) $\tilde{n}u$ ʔyəʔ...boh təɔʔ kədɔɔŋ tha trəy ən□□ʔ. (6.1.16)
she look...see stay remain one CLF child fish
‘She looked...and found one small fish remaining.’
- (2) təɔʔ MəKaam təpiàʔ truh məthil... (6.1.186)
stay Kam go.out away palace...
‘Meanwhile Kam had left the palace...’
- (3) pləh ʔi nan oŋ paliiʔ twà tən təlay kapwàʔ. (6.2.15)
finish PREP that sir roll two CLF string silk
‘After that he rolls two strings of silk...’

In (3) *pləh* ‘finish; finished’ temporally relates two clauses.

In short, Cham’s aspectual marking represents early grammar. In first and second language acquisition, aspectual marking precedes tense marking. In early creoles, the same preference for aspectual marking manifests itself.

2.3 Semantically transparent constructions. Many Cham constructions are periphrastic in nature using semantically transparent components: a causative from ‘make,’ a permissive from ‘give,’ a quotative from ‘say,’ the aspectual

markers from ‘stay; live’ and ‘finish’ (mentioned above), a reflexive from ‘body,’ recipient, experiencer, and change-of-state marking from ‘get; receive’, locative nouns from nouns meaning ‘top’, ‘bottom’, and ‘back’, and prepositions that mark only the most basic relationships, e.g., ‘INSTRUMENTAL’ and ‘BENEFACTIVE’.

Causation and causatives. Several different morphemes are used to mark causation in Cham but the only affixal causative is the prefix *pa-*, inherited from PAN, which converts intransitives into transitives, adding an additional argument, for example, *mətaay* ‘die’ > *pa-mətaay* ‘kill’. It is unclear, however, whether the affixation of *pa-* is productive, or if it is a frozen prefix limited to a restricted set of verbs.

In the texts, most causatives are periphrastic, with the most common being with *ŋaʔ* < ‘make’, often used literally; in (4), however, *ŋaʔ* has a clearly causative sense.

- (4) (∅) *twàh prùʔ ŋaʔ pa-càl.* (6.1.71)
 (∅) seek work make CAU-busy
 ‘(she) looked for work to keep her busy.’

The permissive from *prày* ‘give’ is also periphrastic.

- (5) *min əmɛɛʔ MəKaam oh prày naaw* (6.1.70)
 but Mom Kam NEG give go
 ‘but Kam’s mother would not let her go,’
 (6) *prày ka təhlaʔ likaw ʔyəʔ bəʔʔ.* (6.1.76)
give for me beg look cheek
 ‘Please let me see her.’

Aside from its frequent main verb sense, in (5) it is an auxiliary with a permissive meaning; and, in (6) it is again periphrastic but the sentence has also gone from transitive to ditransitive.

Quotative from ‘say’. For both direct and indirect quotes, quotative clauses are usually preceded by the quotative *layʔ*, a morpheme obviously related to the verb *layʔ* ‘say’.

- (7) *muuʔ doyʔ kol kəmay təra nan dom layʔ* (6.1.158-59)

grandmother run hug woman young that speak say
'The woman ran, hugged the young girl and said, "...'"

In (7) the quotative *lay?* 'say' occurs immediately after *dom* 'speak', another verb of saying.

Reflexives and reciprocals. Cham reflexives are marked with *trây* /trèy/ 'self', making them maximally transparent and thus maximally learnable. Joint action is marked explicitly with *càa? kàw?*, from *càa?* 'mutual' plus *kàw?* 'other'. And, reciprocal action is marked by using *kàw?* 'other', which in certain contexts is extended to mean 'together' or 'each other'.

- (8) plòh twà hətyu? pəthaan kol kàw? hya cəʔ. (6.1.180)
finish two wife husband hug other cry cry
'Then the husband and wife hugged each other, crying.'

Note that in example (8) *twà* 'two' indicates that the husband and wife form a group.

Experiencer marking. Subjects are normally actors, not experiencers, but Cham has evolved a simple strategy for labeling subjects as recipients or experiencers without changing the word order or using elaborate morphology: it uses *m□?* 'get; receive' as an auxiliary verb (9).

- (9) MəHləʔ m□? hu rilo, (6.1.5)
Hlok get have many
'Hlok caught a lot of fish.'
- (10) muu? m□? ɲa? on təlam tyaan (6.1.146)
Grandmother get make happy in stomach
'She became happy.'

The recipient marking *m□?* developed from the verb *m□?* 'get; receive', as in (10). It still exists as a main verb with the meaning 'get'. The path from marking recipients to marking experiencers is suggested in example (10), where emotions are treated as the movement of a feeling into one of the major organs of the body, a development found widely in Southeast Asia.

Transparent locatives. As is true for a number of the languages of the area, locative nouns do much of the work that is done by prepositions in English. The locative nouns are syntactically identical to genitive constructions, consisting of two juxtaposed nouns with the possessor preceding the possessed. Usually, but not always, the locative noun is preceded by a ‘true’ preposition, often the very general preposition *tì*, doing little more than marking the prepositional nature of the locative noun.

- (11) m□η likuu? kīη (6.1.38)
from back kitchen
‘at the back of the kitchen’

The essential meaning is clear just from the locative noun construction—the noun means ‘top’, ‘bottom’, ‘back’, or some such; from a learner’s viewpoint, the preposition only serves to mark the unit as a prepositional phrase.

Semantically salient prepositions. Prepositions, as the older default class, are the most diffuse in meaning but seem to mark the more core-like oblique cases and, thus, the more salient categories: benefactive, source and goal, and non-subject experiencers as well as some basic locative marking.

The inherited benefactive marker *ka* ‘for’ is also often used to mark the subject NP of embedded clauses. The inherited *mīη* ‘from’ marks sources and the innovated *tal* ‘arrive’ marks goals, often more specifically ‘arrival at a goal’. Unlike the other prepositions and the locative nouns, *tal* had a verbal origin, however, now it functions like a preposition syntactically and semantically.

Finally, the preposition *tì* ‘to; at’ does general duty. It seems to have a generalized locative function, including converting locative nouns into phrasal prepositions, but it also often codes a goal, including indirect objects in other than the subject slot. Its generalized locative function invites reference to a comment by Kay and Sankoff (cited in Slobin 1977:208) in which they note that when a pidgin has only two locatives, one marks the genitive and the other has a generalized locative

function, with other prepositions developing later. In Cham, simple juxtaposition marks the genitive, while *ìi* has the generalized locative function.

3.0 The preference for processing ease.

The preference for processing ease dominates Cham syntax, with its most obvious and most pervasive manifestation being Cham's rigid SVO word order (WO). The rigid SVO word order is the basis of almost all its syntax, paralleling the developments in SLA. In their Multidimensional Model, Clahsen (1984), Pienemann (1984), and Pienemann and Johnston (1987), note that SL learners begin with an extremely rigid WO, allowing more alternate WOs only much later when little or no attention needs to be allocated to basic production.

3.1 The basic clause. Cham has little morphology but a rigid WO: the two core arguments, the subject and the object, are only marked configurationally, but indirect objects must be overtly marked with a preposition, unlike Malay, for instance. The role of the arguments within the basic clause is, of course, primarily determined by the semantics of the verb but the basic identification of case roles is done by a combination of genitives, locative nouns, prepositions, and serial verb constructions, augmented by an experiencer construction in the verbal morphology (already discussed) and devices for marking reflexives and reciprocity (also already discussed). Thus, the three morphological systems, largely complementary but occasionally overlapping, serve to mark the oblique cases: Locative nouns phrases, with a locational noun as their head, mark stationary location. Co-verbs, derived from motion verbs, not surprisingly tend to mark directional motion, among other things. Prepositions, the default marking, occur with everything not marked by the first two systems and with the more core-like oblique cases. In all cases, the marking is relatively transparent.

Retention of subject pronouns. The transparency of the SVO clausal unit is augmented by the retention of subjects (except where subject deletion serves to mark cohesion between clauses). For instance, Bates has (1976) noted that, despite the normally optional nature of subject pronouns in

Italian, Italian children go through a stage in which the subject pronoun is always expressed. The fact is a rigid WO with overtly expressed subjects makes a language more learnable.

Configurally marked genitives. As with early language acquisition and with many creoles, the genitives are marked by simple juxtaposition, with the head noun first and the genitive following, e.g. *əmɛɛ? MəHlɔ?* ‘mother + Hlok’ = ‘Hlok’s mother’ and *həfiw? təluɣ?* ‘wife’ + ‘younger son’ = ‘wife of the younger son’.

3.2 Other sentence types. Most other sentence types are minimally altered variants of the declarative clause, generally modified by sentential particles at the periphery of the clause, thus keeping the basic clause configuration unaltered.

Questions. Questions follow the same word order as the corresponding declarative sentences. Questions answerable with a yes or no typically are signaled with nothing more than a rise in intonation on the last element in the sentence (Doris Blood 1977:42). Occasionally a yes/no question is signaled by the sentence-final particle *laay* ‘Q’.

- (12) *aay takri laay* (1977:42)
elder.brother want Q
‘Do you want to?’

Content questions, like yes/no questions, use the same word order as the corresponding declarative sentences, but with the question word inserted in place of the questioned item.

- (13) *təhla? wa? yaaw hlaay kay?* (1977:45)
I write like what (specifically)
‘How do I write it?’

Thus, in (13) the question word has been inserted where the corresponding element in a declarative sentence would appear.

Clause-final particles. Here as elsewhere in Cham, much of the work of identifying modes and moods is done by an abundance of sentence final particles which register a wide

range of moods and functions. The advantage to the learner, of course, is alternate sentence types do not require the learning of anything other than the appropriate clause-final particle—and, in many cases, context alone is sufficient.

Negation. Sentence-final *o* ‘NEG’ is the most common colloquial way to express negation (Doris Blood 1977:40).

- (14) *mɨ kaw poy? ɔ.* (1977:40)
father I scold NEG
‘My father won’t scold.’
- (15) *min ɔh dom tɔpià?.* (6.1.120)
but NEG speak out
‘but didn’t say anything’

In (15) the negation is before the main verb, which, as Doris Blood notes, is typical of more formal styles. The use of double negation, not surprisingly, correlates with intensity.

The match with second language acquisition is simple: the most colloquial matches the first stage in the acquisition of negation—utterance negation; the more colloquial, the closer to the language in its early acquisition. The more formal pattern is pre-verbal negation, the second stage in second language acquisition; this more formal register reflects the older, less contact-influenced register. Both are easy to learn. Finally, intensification is done by using both markers at once—a delightfully straightforward example of iconicity.

3.3 Interclausal cohesion. Interclausal cohesion is accomplished by heavy reliance on iconic juxtaposition. In addition, the deletion of the coreferential subject may be used to show cohesion between two clauses. Interclausal cohesion may also be marked by clause-final particles. Without exception, clausal concatenation is highly learnable and readily processible.

Clausal concatenation. Cham clause concatenation involves little more than the juxtaposition of clauses with addition coherence supplied by context and augmented by iconic sequencing. Few textual examples exist of non-iconic

action sequences. Further cohesion may be supplied when two or more juxtaposed clauses share the same subject through the deletion of the identical subject. Even further cohesion may be supplied through the addition of explicit markers at the clausal periphery. Thus, one also finds markers such as ‘before’, ‘arrive’, and ‘finish’ helping to mark the relationship of one clause to another.

Sentential complements. The basic clause does incorporate sentential complements, but when these occur they are usually in slots where the presence of a sentential complement is anticipated by the semantics of the verb such as verbs of ordering, thinking, seeing, and the like (ex. 16;6.1.147).

- (16) muu? təkri...?yə? [thay uraaŋ ɲa? lithay ka muu?].
 g.mother want...see [who person make rice for her]
 ‘The woman wanted to see who had made rice for her.’

Beyond the semantics, nothing special marks these Cham complements as complements.

Wish- and want-clauses are slightly more complex because the subject of the complement clause is marked by *ka*, here labeled ‘for’ as it occurs elsewhere as a benefactive.

- (17) məyah uraaŋ təkri [ka kəñi məñi syaam sap]
 (6.2.30)
 if person want [for *kanhi* call good sound]
 ‘If they want the instrument to sound good,...’

It is not obvious that other clausal complements exist.

Relative clauses. Relative clauses are restricted to subject relative clauses; the mechanism is the same deletion of the coreferential subject found elsewhere to mark clausal cohesion. The relative clauses that exist function to designate locations, times, and the like. The data examined showed no distinct relative clause construction. Instead, the device used the subject deletion used for marking clausal cohesion. This lack is puzzling as the closely-related Western Cham has a

relative clause construction with its own relative clause marker *kung*.

Purpose clauses. An explicit purpose clause exists which is marked with the grammaticalized *pyəh* ‘in order to’, which appears to be used when it might otherwise not be obvious to the listener (18). Fully as common, however, is the use of nothing more than a serial verb construction in which, given that the two clauses are being treated as connected, the purpose reading is inferable from the context (19).

- (18) oŋ nan caaw kılɔɔŋ pyəh pa-tàŋ tha bɛʔ kàŋ (6.2.7-8)
sir that drill hole in.order.to CAU.stand one CLF post
‘he drills a hole in order to erect an upright piece, ...’
- (19) ...prày aaw khan...ka MəKaam naaw məthil
...give clothes...for Kam go palace (6.1.66-7)
‘...gave clothes...for Kam to go to the palace.’

In either case, if the purpose clause has an explicit subject, as with *wish*-clauses, the subject is marked with the preposition *ka* ‘for; BENEFACTIVE’.

Serial verbs. Serial verb constructions exist. Again, the mechanism involved is the deletion of coreferential subjects and the juxtapositions are overwhelmingly, but not exclusively, iconic. The semantics of the serial verbs, even when the frequency indicates they have apparently become conventionalized, are transparent; not only are the verbs in question identical to main verbs in Cham but the connection between the serial verb use and the main verb use is readily deducible.

Serial verbs are simply a subset of the clausal conjoined verbs with a specific, conventionalized meaning. Thus, at least in Cham, the syntax is no different for these than for any of the other joined clauses, aside from this special conventionalized meaning for one (or both) of the verbs involved.

Sequential actions. Related sequential actions are usually no more than a sequence of clauses with the shared subject deleted in all but the first:

- (20) pətaaw tàŋ, diiʔ yun, naaw thaan. (1977:61)

king stand, climb.into hammock, go home.
'The king stood, entered his palanquin and went home.'

Were these the only such sequential clause juxtapositions one would treat them simply as conjoined verb phrases. However, in other concatenations the meaning is consistent with the meaning of a single clause and one of the verbs behaves, not as a verb, but as preposition. In Cham several areas have exploited these serial verb constructions: in particular, the directionals and the co-verb constructions.

Directionals. Directionals are co-verbs (prepositions < verbs), developed from commonly used motion verbs. In these constructions, they can no longer be negated as can verbs, nor can they have any aspectual marking, and so on. The two most common co-verbs developed from the least marked motion verbs *naaw* 'go' > *naaw* 'motion away from the center of action' and *maay* 'come' > *maay* 'motion towards the center of action'.

- (21) MəHləʔ pà cəɾɔʔ naaw thaəŋ (6.1.17)
Hlok take charok go > DIR house
'Hlok took the fish home.'

Note that the semantic change involved is minimal: the transition is from literal movement away from the center of interest to figurative movement away from the center of the stage and the sequencing is iconic.

Other directionals have also developed: for example, 'get up; rise up' > 'up' and 'go down; descend' > 'down'.

Other serial verbs. Other serial verbs have evolved along their own paths. In certain serial constructions, the verb *tuy* 'follow' developed the meanings 'with' and 'according to'.

- (22) ñu pa-pɔɔʔ pà tuy (6.1.51) export
she CAU-wrap take with < follow
'she wrapped up the shoes and took them with her.'

Other concatenations. Sequential concatenations have also developed special readings in other semantic domains without developing into co-verbs. The verb *ŋaʔ* ‘make’, when in a following clause, often takes on the meaning ‘become’.

What marks all these Cham constructions is their semantic transparency, the relative lack of morphological marking, and the high dependence on iconicity. The source morphemes still exist as such and the path of development is transparent, and, thus, easily learnable.

4.0 The lack of discourse restructuring.

Much of the complexity of grammar correlates with the backgrounding and foregrounding of discourse pragmatics, that is, with what Fillmore (1968) once termed secondary topicalization. Fillmore’s use of the term ‘secondary’ certainly has ontological validity. For first language acquisition, Slobin (1977:21) argues that “Apparently grammar develops, both in creoles and in children, to fulfill more communicative needs than the direct expression of propositional content.” It is not altogether surprising that the expression of content has a higher priority than discourse considerations and that the concern with the latter comes later.

As might be expected of a language serving until recently as a lingua franca, Cham tends to maintain its rigid SVO order. With the emphasis on basic comprehension and basic processing, a minimum of special syntactic machinery is devoted to discourse concerns: in fact, Cham seems to have only those discourse pragmatic markers common to almost all languages: topicalization, left dislocation, and a presentative.

Cham depends heavily on simple devices to serve the needs of comprehension. Sequencing is done primarily through juxtaposition and iconic sequencing, with addition cohesion supplied through the deletion of co-referential subjects in related clauses and the use of clause initial or clause final markers. The referent-tracking crucial to comprehension is done more through the use of indexicals, which index social and personal identity, and classifiers, which index objects and

classes of objects, than through pronouns, which carry significantly less information.

4.1 Topicalization < equational sentences. Explicit topicalization in Cham uses a construction in which the topic is marked with the word *nan* ‘that’. The construction itself originated in equative sentences. Note that a nominal sentence takes a known entity and comments on it, as in (23).

- (23) MəKaam MəHləʔ nan twà ətày aay... (6.1.1)
 Kam Hlok that two y.sib e.sib...
 ‘Kam and Hlok (were) two sisters...’
- (24) oŋ nan nan uraaŋ toy. (1977:63)
 mister that that CLF guest
 ‘That gentleman is a guest.’
- (25) pətaaw Taluyʔ ɲaʔ nan oh ʔjəwʔ pətaaw pyaʔ o.
 king Taluch do that NEG correct king real NEG.
 ‘King Taluch’s behavior was not that of a true king.’

In (24) we see the extension of this equative construction to a topic-comment construction. Under her brief discussion of topic-comment sentences, Doris Blood (1977:63-64) notes the first part of (24) presents the topic under discussion while the second part comments on it. In (25), we see the topic-comment structure quite distinct from an equational sentence (1977:64).

4.2 Presentative. Presentative clauses (or, existential clauses) introduce new entities onto the main stage. In the main verb uses, the subject appears in normal position before the verb *hu* ‘have; get’. The WO is iconic.

- (26) hu təmuh tha phun məkya (6.1.124)
 have grow one CLF ebony
 ‘(there) grew an ebony (or kya) tree’
- (27) hu tha uraaŋ cam [ɲaʔ kəñi khəh lo] (6.2.21)
 have one CLF Cham [make kanhi skillful very]
 ‘There is a Cham who makes the *kanhi* very skillfully.’

When used as a presentative, as in (26), although various adverbials may occur in the ‘vacated’ preverbal subject slot, the subject itself is found post-verbally.

Sentences in which both the topic and the comment are ‘new’ complicate sentence processing. Even first language speakers prefer to separate the introduction of the newly foregrounded topic from subsequent comment on it. For low level second language learners, the preference for separating the establishment of a new topic from subsequent comment on it is even stronger. The presentative construction, of course, is a solution to this potential processing overload.

4.3 Left-dislocation. The one other Cham construction with a non-canonical word order is left-detachment.

- (28) cəɾɔʔ əmɛɛʔ MəKaam ɲaʔ __ rilɔ baŋ pləh. (6.1.37)
charok mom Kam make ___ meat eat finish
‘The charok, Kam’s mother already made into food.’

The charok, a fish, has already been established as central to the scene, with the left-detachment functioning only to bring it back into focus.

Lambrecht (1994) notes that left-detachment is extremely common in the world’s languages, suggesting that a device for bringing an already-established but not currently foregrounded topic to the forefront is, like the presentative, part of the minimal discourse machinery for a natural language.

4.4 Pronouns, classifiers, and indexicals. Most of the participant tracking in the text is done by indexicals, which, as mentioned earlier, index personal and social identity, and by classifiers, which index objects and classes of objects. Much more rarely pronouns are used but in the texts typically only when no possibility of ambiguity exists, usually because just a single major participant is being tracked.

Indexicals and classifiers. Indexicals index the social and personal identity of human participants and classifiers index the non-human participants. Certainly, as in other Southeast Asian languages, Cham classifier constructions play

a major role in clarifying participant tracking. As in many languages, a full classifier construction may occur marking the initial mention of an important entity in the discourse, although in Cham this use is apparently limited to non-humans, but such uses are both optional and secondary. Overwhelmingly, the classifier serves as a sort of pronoun, parallel to the way that indexicals (nouns characterizing social roles such as grandmother, elder sister, stepmother, king, and such) are used in the place of pronouns. In fact, in the texts examined, pronouns are never used to track nonhumans; instead, the tracking is done with a combination of zeros (safely ignored in this discussion), CLFs, and, far more rarely, various (other) noun substitutes.

5.0 Conclusions

Cham is now a mainland Austronesian language that is distinctly different from the Austronesian languages left behind in the islands. A little of this is simply due to the normal course of historical change but most of the changes are the result of intense, long-term contact with the Mon-Khmer languages. The changes are intensified by the role that Cham played as a lingua franca for a better part of its long history. While much remains to be learned about Cham, we already see quite clearly the imprints of extended contact on the way Cham packages propositional content.

Conversely, it is also possible to tell by a careful examination of Cham and its history that it has undergone extensive contact by careful examination of the structures involved. On the one hand, many of the Cham structures are what might be termed highly learnable; on the other hand, many of the markers themselves are quite old. In the case of new constructions not only are the origins of the structure often readily apparent but also the central words themselves still co-exist as independent morphemes. The combination of new, more transparent grammar and older, more opaque grammar argues for long term contact, not prior creolization of a pidgin as part of its language history.

Thus, in Cham as in many of the world's languages, it can be argued that the 'early' or 'creolized' flavor to the structure of Modern Cham is an outgrowth of the natural advantage that the more learnable structures have in an intensely multilingual setting. A major contributing factor is the widespread tendency to reduce two (or more) languages to one whenever possible, often leaving the phonology, the syntax, and the semantics strikingly parallel, with the blatantly-distinguishable lexicon remaining to keep the various contributors to the amalgamation from realizing how similar the once distinct languages have become (Gumperz and Wilson 1971, Tadmor 1995, Thomason 1996, Thomason and Kaufman 1998). Thus, the survival advantages given by increased learnability, coupled with the related drive to the structures of the languages in contact similar, are by themselves sufficient to bring about the appearance of 'early' creolization out of long-term, intense language contact.

In short, it is argued that the modern Chamic structures are a natural outgrowth of a linguistic situation in which language acquisition and language shift are such a central part of the linguistic landscape that learnability becomes one of the most dominant determinant of the direction of language change.

It is further argued that it is possible, in the case of Cham, to tell that it has undergone extensive contact by careful examination of its structures.

References

- Bates, Elizabeth. 1976. *Language and context: The acquisition of pragmatics*. New York: Academic Press.
- Bates, Elizabeth and Brian MacWhinney. 1981. Second language acquisition from a functionalist perspective: pragmatic, semantic, and perceptual strategies. In H. Winitz (ed.), *Native language and foreign language acquisition. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 379. Pp. 190-214.

- Bates, Elizabeth and Brian MacWhinney. 1987. Competition, variation, and language learning. In *Mechanisms of language change*. Edited by B. MacWhinney. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum. Pp. 157-193.
- Baumgartner, Neil. 1998. A grammar sketch of Western (Cambodian) Cham. *Papers in Southeast Asian Linguistics No. 15: Further Chamic Studies*. Pacific Linguistics. Series A-89. Pp. 1-20.
- Blood, David L. 1967. Phonological units in Cham. *Anthropological Linguistics* 9.8:15-32.
- Blood, David L. 1977. A three-dimensional analysis of Cham sentences. *Papers in South East Asian Linguistics No. 4: Chamic Studies*. Edited by David Thomas, Ernest W. Lee, and Nguyen Dang Liem. Pacific Linguistics Series A, No. 48:53-76.
- Blood, Doris Walker. 1977. Clause and sentence final particles in Cham. *Papers in South East Asian Linguistics No. 4: Chamic Studies*. Edited by David Thomas, Ernest W. Lee, and Nguyen Dang Liem. Pacific Linguistics Series A, No. 48:39-51.
- Blood, Doris Walker. 1978. Some aspects of Cham discourse structure. *Anthropological Linguistics* 20.3:110-132.
- Bybee, Joan, Revere Perkins, and William Pagliuca. 1994. *The evolution of grammar: Tense, aspect, and modality in the languages of the world*. University of Chicago Press.
- Clahsen, H. 1984. The acquisition of German word order: a test case for cognitive approaches to L2 development. In R. Anderson (ed.), *Second Language: a crosslinguistic perspective*. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House. Pp. 219-242.
- Dittmar, N. 1992. Introduction:grammaticalization in second language acquisition. *Studies in Language Acquisition* 19:195-221.
- Fillmore, Charles J. 1968. The case for case. In *Universals in Linguistic Theory*, edited by Emmon Bach and Robert T. Harms. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Givón, Talmy. 1979. *On understanding grammar*. New York: Academic Press.

- Gumperz, John J. and Robert Wilson. 1971. Convergence and creolization: a case from the Indo-Aryan/Dravidian border. In Dell Hymes (ed.), *Pidginization and creolization of language*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 151-168.
- Heine, Bernd, Ulrike Claudi, and Friederike Hünemeyer. 1991. *Grammaticalization: A conceptual framework*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lambrecht, Knud. 1994. *Information structure and sentence form: Topic, focus and the mental representations of discourse referents*. Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 71. Cambridge University Press.
- Mühlhäusler, Peter and R. Harré. 1990. *Pronouns and people: The linguistic construction of social and personal identity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Pienemann, M. 1984. Psychological constraints on the teachability of languages. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 6.2:186-214.
- Pienemann, M. and M. Johnston. 1987. Factors influencing the development of language proficiency. In D. Nunan (ed.), *Applying second language acquisition research*. National Curriculum Resource Centre, Adult Migrant Education Program, Adelaide. Pp. 45-141.
- Sethuraman, Nitya, Adele E. Goldberg, and Judith C. Goodman. 1997. In Eve V. Clark (ed.), *The Proceedings of the Twenty-eighth Annual Child Language Research Forum*. Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Information. Pp. 283-293.
- Slobin, Dan I. 1977. Language change in childhood and in history. *Language learning and thought*, edited by John Macnamara. Academic Press. Pp. 185-214.
- Tadmor, Uri. 1995. Language contact and systemic restructuring: The Malay of Nonthaburi, Central Thailand. Ph.D. dissertation: U. of Hawai'i.
- Thomason, Sarah. 1996. *Introduction. Contact languages: a wider perspective*, edited by Sarah Thomason. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

- Thomason, Sarah and Terrence Kaufman. 1988. *Language contact, creolization, and genetic linguistics*. Berkeley: The University of California Press.
- Thurgood, Graham. 1999. *From Ancient Cham to Modern Dialects: Two Thousand Years of Language Contact and Change*. Oceanic Linguistics Special Publication No. 28. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Thurgood, Graham. ~~forthcoming~~. 2005. Phan Rang Cham. In *The Austronesian Languages of Asia and Madagascar*. Edited by Alexander Adelaar and Nikolaus P. Himmelmann. Routledge Language Family Series. London and New York: Routledge. Pp. 489-512.
- vanPatten, Bill. 1996. *Input Processing and Grammar Instruction in Second Language Acquisition*. Norwood, NJ : Ablex.

gthurgood@csuchico.edu

Acknowledgements

The examples all come from the work of David and Doris Blood gathered roughly a quarter of a century ago, with the vast majority of them coming out of Doris Blood's texts. The influence of Slobin 1977 on the paper is obvious.

Citation:

Thurgood, Graham. 2000. Learnability and direction of convergence in Cham: the effects of long-term contact on linguistic structures. *Proceedings of the Western Conference On Linguistics. WECOL 2000*. California State University, Fresno. Pp. 507-527.