Kui narrative repetition

SOMSONGE Burusphat
Mahidol University

0. Introduction

1. Forms of repetition
1.1 Verbatim
1.2 Reduction
1.3 Expansion
1.4 Synonym
1.5 Cycle
1.6 Pro–verb
1.7 Negated antonym

2. Functions of repetition
2.1 Linkage
2.2 Preview
2.3 Repeated attempt
2.4 Rhetorical underlining at the peak
2.5 Contra–expectation
2.6 Amplification
2.7 Summary

3. Summary

Abstract

The study of Kui narrative repetition is based on four texts narrated by a native speaker of Kui spoken at Khuton village, Amphoe Kapchoeng, Surin Province.

Repetition is frequent in Kui narrative discourse. It has different forms and functions. It is presented in the forms of verbatim, reduction, expansion, synonym, cycle, pro–verb, and negated antonym. The most notable function of repetition is to spread out the information load so that a theme line is highlighted. Repetition is usually used for linkage, preview, repeated attempt, rhetorical underlining at the peak, contra–expectation, amplification, and summary.

0. Introduction

Repetition can be found in all discourse genres. It is mostly used to control the rate or speed at which information is presented. As pointed out by Callow (1974), different languages convey information at different rates. Some languages may present the information slowly, with a great deal of redundancy or repetition whereas other languages convey close–packed information by using minimum of words and little repetition. Languages which use a great deal of repetition have a spread–out information structure whereas languages which use little repetition have a compact information structure.

Kui is an example of languages with a spread–out information structure which is obviously seen in narrative discourse. To slow down the rate at which *information is presented, Kui uses repetition which takes various forms and serves different functions.* This paper focusses on forms and functions of repetition as *found in four texts narrated by a speaker of Kui*[1] *spoken at Khuton village,* Amphoe Kapchoeng, Surin province. The titles of texts are as follows:

Text 1 ʔatçiiaŋ	*'An elephant'*
Text 2 ksan	'A snake'
Text 3 kɑɑn sipsɔɔŋ neʔ	'Twelve children'
Text 4 ʔatçɑɑ thịiŋ	'A fox'

1. Forms of repetition

The term repetition is used to mean "referring to the same event twice, whether the same words are repeated or not" (Callow 1974: 74). There are various ways of referring to the same event twice as discussed below.

1.1 *Verbatim*   *

Verbatim is a word for word repetition. An event or action may be exactly repeated. In example 1 the event in which a woman drinks an elephant's urine is exactly repeated in a relative clause when the woman is rementioned.

(1) pɑʔ   tçii   pthạh daaʔ   klɔɔm tçiiaŋ   kʌʔ   lɤɤj **ŋɑɑc   daaʔ**
     walk   go   find   water urine   elephant then   then drink   water

     klɔɔm   tçiiaŋ
     urine   elephant

[When the woman] found an elephant's urine, [she] then drank it.

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[1] Kui or Kuai is a language of the Mon–Khmer subfamily of the Austroasiatic phylum. It belongs to the Katuic Branch (Thomas and Headley 1970).

kpaj	deel	ŋɑɑc	daaʔ	klɔɔm	tɕiiaŋ
woman	who	drink	water	urine	elephant

The woman who drank the elephant's urine...

1.2 *Reduction*

When the same event is referred to the second time, it is usually reduced in form as in example 2.

(2) kʌʌt   niaʔsroʔ muuaj klum
     there is   villager   one   group

There was a group of villagers.

tɕii	bɔɔj	tphọʔ	ʔabaŋ		paa	kɑh
go	find	dig	bamboo shoot	in	forest

[They] went to find bamboo shoots in the forest.

tɕii	bɔɔj	kʌʔ	bɯɯn	khụneʔ
go	find	then	get	everybody

[When they] went to find [the bamboo shoots], everybody got [the bamboo shoots].

1.3 *Expansion*

When an event is restated, more information may be added. In Kui narrative, there are few examples of expansion. Example 3 illustrates a repetition via expansion.

(3) | læʔ | kɑɑn | lɑh | tɕoo | fææt | kpaj | muuaj | ŋthrụh | muuaj |
|-----|------|-----|------|------|------|-------|--------|-------|
| give birth | baby | out | come | twin | female | one | male | one |

[The woman] gave birth to a twin, a girl [and] a boy.

1.4 *Synonym*

Another method of referring to an event twice is by using different words to state exactly the same thing as in example 4.

(4) | tɕon | tuaʔææŋ | thẹt | tŋɤh | læh |
|-----|---------|------|------|-----|
| till | himself | run | out of breath | die |

Till [he] himself ran out of [his] breath [and then] died.

ksan	phɔɔ	taa	diiŋ	paaj	ŋthrʉh	kee	læh	læææw
snake	when	but	know	that	man	that	die	already

When the snakes knew that the man died.

1.5 *Cycle*

Cycle is defined as repetitions of similar facts with new information added each time (Thomas 1978). Cycle is a prominent feature of Kui narratives. It appears in all four texts. Each text has at least two cycles. All repeated cycles have a similar setting and the new information added is a different event. A set of cycles may have only one thematic participant attempting to do something again and again in each cycle. Another set of cycles may have a thematicity switch between two cycles but the settings and the actions will be the same. In text 4 there is a set of five cycles at the beginning of the story. A fox attempts to eat the livers of two sisters. He comes to see the sisters five times and asks how large their livers are. Each time the setting and the action are the same but the livers grow bigger and bigger. Each attempt is represented in each cycle. Example 5 illustrates the first two cycles of this set.

(5)   *First cycle*

tbɯɯ	kʌʔ	tɕoo	mah	naaŋ	lɔɔm	mej	phʉʉt	mahnaa
evening	then	come	ask	children	liver	your	large	how much

In the evening [the foxes] came to ask the children, "How large are your livers?"

ʔɤɤj	mah mah	ʔanææ sensɑʔ
Introductory particle	at the extent	this one hair

[The children answered that the livers were] as large as the hair.

ʔʌʌ	tɕii	lopkrɔɔj
yes	go	return

[The fox said] yes [and] returned.

Second cycle

naʔ	tbɯɯ	thɤɤn	tɕoo	mɑh	naaŋ	lɔɔm	phʉʉt	mahnaa
it is	evening	again	come	ask	children	liver	large	how much

In the next evening [the foxes] came to ask the children how large the livers were.

mah	ŋthrǽh
at the extent	nail

[The children answered that their livers were] as large as a nail.

1.6 *Pro–verb*

Repetition can be further expressed by a pro–verb, that is the verb is repeated and the demonstrative and comparative reference are added. The pro–verb is usually embedded in a cycle. In text 3 the father tries to lose his sons in the jungle three times. Each attempt is represented in each cycle. When the father repeats his action, a pro–verb is used to refer to the action described previously in the text as in example 6.

(6) ʔɔw   tɕii   klaaŋ   kʌʔ   waa   naʔ   ŋaj ɲuaŋ
     father   go   defecate   then   do   the same   the other day

The father went to defecate, then did the same way as the other day.

1.7 *Negated antonym*

An event may be stated twice as a negated antonym. This form of repetition is rare in Kui narratives. Example 7 illustrates negated antonym.

(7) kʌʔ   pthạh   taa   klaaŋ
     then   find   only   feces

[The children] then found only the feces.

phiʔ   pthạh   ʔɔw
not   find   father

[They] did not find the father.

2. Functions of repetition

The most notable function of repetition is to spread out the information load in order to highlight a theme line. An occurrence of repetition anywhere in the text enables the listener to be aware that the information being conveyed is significant.

Repetition in Kui narrative is mostly used for linkage. Old information is repeated before new information gets started. This repetitive back reference can be found throughout the text. Other dominant usages of repetition are preview, repeated attempt and rhetorical underlining at the peak. Some other usages of repetition which are infrequent include contra–expectation, amplification and summary. These functions of repetition will be discussed in detail below.

2.1 *Linkage*

Kui uses a large–scale repetition for linkage. The previous crucial event is frequently repeated by the back referential clause which indicates a completion of the previous event and serves as a point of reference for the following crucial event.

The following part of text 3 exemplifies a frequent occurrence of the repetitive back reference.

(8) juur   klaa   sɑh   ʔɔw   kʌʔ   nam   tɕii   thɣɣn
    wake up   morning up   father   then   take   go   again

In the morning the father woke up [and] then [he] took [the children] to go [into the forest] again.

    tɕii   kʌʔ   nam   moot
    go   then   take   go in

[When they] went, [he] then took [the children] to go [into the forest].

    tɕii   nthrṵu   dʑiaŋ   deel
    go   deep   more   former

[They went] deeper than the last time.

    ʔɔw   kʌʔ   ntee   kɑɑn   paaj   ʔɔw   tɕii   klɑɑŋ   ɲuaŋ   dɣɣ
    father   then   tell   child   that   father   go   excrete first   Fp

The father then told the children that he would go to defecate first.

    kɑɑn   kʌʔ   namnɔɔ   rap   paaj   ʔʌʌ
    child   then   together answer   that   yes

The children together said yes.

    ʔɔw   tɕii   klɑɑŋ   kʌʔ   wɑɑ   naʔ   ŋajɲuaŋ
    father   go   defecate then   do   as   day before

The father went to defecate, then did the same way as the other day.

    klɑɑŋ   ruac   kʌʔ   ntee   klɑɑŋ   paaj   bɔɔ   kɑɑn   kɣɣ
    defecate finish   then   tell   feces   that   if   child   my

    kjaa   ʔɑɑn   mbɔɔŋ   dɣɣ
    call   let   answer   Fp

[After he] had defecated, [he] then told the feces that if the children called him, the feces should answer the call [for him].

    kɑɑn   phɣɣʔ   ʔɔw   tɕii   duun   kʌʔ   kjaa   kjaa   kʌʔ   sɑŋ
    child   see   father   go   long   then   call   call   then   hear

    taa   sneeŋ   mbɔɔŋ
    but   voice   answer

[When] the children saw the father go so long, [they] then called [the father].
[When they] called, [they] then heard only the answering voice.

kʌʔ	tçii	tpoon	sneeŋ
then	go	follow	voice

[The children] then went to follow the voice.

tçii	kʌʔ	pthạh	taa	klɑɑŋ
go	then	find	only	feces

[When the children] went [to find the father, they] then found only the feces.

kʌʔ	khuut	paaj	ʔɔw	tçii	duŋ	læææw
then	think	that	father	go	home	already

[The children] then thought that the father had already gone home.

tçii	tʌʔ	duŋ	kʌʔ	phɣɣʔ	ʔɔw	kuua	ʔʉʉ	duŋ
go	arrive	home	then	see	father	stay	at	home

[When they] arrived home, then [they] saw [that] the father was at home.

Most examples of repetitive back reference are represented by the forms of
reduction and synonym. Verbatim is also found but rare. In example 8 the
repetitive back reference via reduction is illustrated as diagrammed below.

The previous event   **The repetitive back reference**

					reduction		
a.	ʔɔw	kʌʔ	nam	tçii	thɣɣn	------------------>	tçii
	father	then	take	go	again		go
					reduction		
b.	ʔɔw	tçii	klɑɑŋ			------------------>	klɑɑŋ (ruac)
	father	go	defecate				defecate
					reduction		
c.	kʌʔ	kjaa				------------------>	kjaa
	then	call					call
					reduction		
d.	kʌʔ	tçii	tpoon	sneeŋ		------------------>	tçii
	then	go	follow	voice			go

There are several points to be noted.

1. The repetitive back reference in (b) is tagged by the completive marker *ruac* 'to finish' to highlight the completion of the previous crucial event.

2. The previous event in (c) is already reduced in form as seen below so when it is repeated there is not much left for further reduction.

				reduction			reduction	
kaan	kʌʔ	kjaa	ʔɔw	------------>	kʌʔ	kjaa	--------------->	kjaa
child	then	call	father		then	call		call

3. The events following the repetitive back reference are all crucial and constitute a theme line of the story. These events are highlighted by the repetition of the auxiliary *kʌʔ*. This lexical repetition functions to link successive events within chronological order (see Burusphat 1992 for detailed discussion of *kʌʔ*).

4. The repetitive back reference may also link new information to old information mentioned somewhere in the text. This can be done via a relative clause as seen in example (1).

2.2 Preview

When the narrator aims to underline an event as a crucial information, she may alert the listener by letting a participant talk about that event before it actually happens. Therefore previews of events which constitute a theme line can be made through the speeches or cognitive experiences of participants. The repetition of previews usually take the forms of reduction and synonym in the theme–line events, as in example 8.

*   Speeches

Previews of theme–line events   **Theme–line events**

a. ʔɔw   kʌʔ   ntee   kaan   paaj
   father   then   tell   child   that

   ʔɔw   tɕii   klaaŋ   ɲuaŋ   dɤɤ   ---- reduction ----> ʔɔw   tɕii   klaaŋ
   father   go   defecate first   Fp   father   go   defecate

b. kʌʔ   ntee   klaaŋ   paaj
   then   tell   feces   that

   bɔɔ   kaan   kɤɤ   kjaa   ---- reduction ----> kʌʔ   kjaa
   if   child   my   call   then   call

   ʔaan   mbɔɔŋ   dɤɤ   ---- synonym ----> (kjaa)   kʌʔ   saŋ   taa
   let   answer   Fp   call   then   hear   but

                                                            sneeŋ   m̩bɔɔŋ
                                                            voice   answer

Cognitive experience (Thought)

Preview of theme–line event					Theme–line event		

c.　kʌʔ　khɯt　paaj
　　then　think　that

ʔɔw	tɕii	duŋ	læææw	synonym ------------->	tɕii	tʌʔ	duŋ
father	go	home	already		go	arrive	home

					kʌʔ	phɣɣʔ	ʔɔw
					then	see	father

					kuua	ʔuu	duŋ
					stay	at	home

2.3 Repeated attempt

Repetition is further used for a repeated attempt of participant. The devices which are mostly used to fulfill this function are cycle and pro–verb as illustrated in examples 5 and 8. Example 5 is from text 4. A repeated attempt of foxes to eat the livers of two sisters is represented by a set of five cycles. Example 8 is from text 3. There are three cycles with pro–verbs embedded in the second and third cycles. This set of cycles represents the repeated attempt of the father who tries to lose his children in the forest. Each time they return but in the third cycle the children are rescued by an elephant's keeper and stay with him in the forest until they grow up.

Both sets of cycles in text 4 and 3 focus on the theme which is represented in repeated pattern in cycles. The purpose of the cycles in text 4 is to focus on the repeated attempt of a fox to eat the livers of two sisters. In text 3 the focus is on the repeated attempt of the father to lose his children in the forest. The repeated pattern has to do also with a style of narration that makes the story enjoyable.

2.4 Rhetorical underlining at the peak

According to Longacre (1983) a climactic narrative discourse has climax as a notional structure feature. A story reaches a climax when there is a highest point of tension and frustration (cf. Burusphat 1991). Climax corresponds to the surface structure peak which has features peculiar to itself. There are various devices to identify peak and rhetorical underlining is one of them. Kui underlines the peak by slowing down the information rate via repeated words. Repetition is used to draw attention to the repeated word (cf. Rugaleva 1983). The following examples are the identification of peak via repeated words in all texts.

(9) Text 1

kʌʔ	tɕii	tpoon	bɔɔj
then	go	follow	see

[The elephant] then went to follow [the tiger].

poon	tɕii	poon	tɕii	poon
follow	go	follow	go	follow

[He] went to follow, went to follow, followed.

kʌʔ	poon	mahnaa	kʌʔ	phiʔ	phɣɣʔ
then	follow	how	then	not	see

No mather how [he] followed [the tiger], [he] could not see [it].

In text 1 a woman goes to find fruit in the forest and drinks an elephant's urine. Later she gives birth to a twin, a boy and a girl, and tells them that their father is an elephant. She asks her children to go find their father. When they first meet their father, the elephant does not know that they are his children so he kills his son. After he finds out the truth he takes his daughter home. Later a tiger tricks the daughter and eats her while the elephant is away. The story reaches its climax when the elephant is highly frustrated and tries to find the tiger to kill. The climax is marked on the surface by the repeated word *tɕii (t)poon* 'to go to follow'.

Text 2

phɔɔ	taa	phuŋ	khlᶏaj	læææw	kʌʔ	ksan	lɑh
when	but	belly	break–open	already	then	snake	out

tɕoo	ruu	*phuŋ	ṇdæææl
come	at	belly	wife

When the belly was already broke open, the snake came out of the wife's belly.

kʌʔ	sæææŋ	tɕoo	tam	tam	mahnaa	kʌʔ	phiʔ	dʑim
then	down	come	hit	hit	how	then	not	all

[The husband] then came down to hit [them], but no matter how [he] hit, [he] could not [hit] all [of them]

dɑŋ	tam	tam	tɕon	tɕaʔæææŋ	thᵉt	tŋɣh	læh
still	hit	hit	till	himself	run	out of breath	die

[He] still hit [and] hit [the snakes] until he himself died.

In text 2 a woman goes to dig bamboo shoots. Her shovel is stuck in the ground. She says if a man helps her pull out the shovel she will be his wife (even though she is married). A snake helps her pull the shovel so she tells him to go to

her home during the night. Several months later she is pregnant. Her husband finds out the truth so he kills the snake. He takes his wife to cut wood in the forest. He climbs up a tree, cuts a stick, sharpens it and throws it down to his wife's belly. Then the belly is broken and the snakes come out from the belly. Here is the climax of the story. The husband is in trouble. He tries to hit all the snakes but he cannnot. The surface feature peak is identified by the repeated word *tam* 'to hit'.

Text 3

namnɔɔ	bɔɔj	knaa	tɕii	duŋ
go together	seek	way	go	home

[The children] went together to seek the way to go home.

bɔɔj	mahnaa	kʌʔ	phiʔ	phɣɣʔ
seek	how	then	not	see

No matter how [they] sought [they] could not see [the father].

rawaŋ	pɑʔ	bɔɔj	knaa	tɕii	duŋ	tɕii	pthạh
while	walk	seek	way	go	home	go	come across

kuuaj	siian	ʔatɕiiaŋ
person	take care	elephant

While [they] were walking to seek the way home, [they] came across an elephant's keeper.

In text 3 a poor couple cannot afford bringing up their twelve children. The father attempts to lose the children in the forest. The story reaches the climax on the last attempt as the children are highly frustrated. They cannot find the way home. The peak as the corresponding surface feature of climax[2] is marked by the repeated word *bɔɔj* 'to seek'.

Text 4

tɕoo	tʌʔ	kʌʔ	taʔ	tooŋ	muuaj	laa	læh	tɕii
come	arrive	then	pick up	coconut	one	throw	die	go

[When the foxes] arrived, [each of the two sisters] then picked up a coconut [and] threw [it at a fox until it] died.

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[2] See a discussion of correlation of notional and surface features in Longacre (1987, 1983).

tçoo	na?næææ	ta?	plaj	tooŋ	muuaj	laa	kʌ?	læh
come	like	this	pick up	fruit	coconut	one	throw	then	die

[When other foxes] came like this [again, each of the two sisters] picked up a coconut [and] threw [it at a fox until it] died.

ta?	plaj	tooŋ	laa	læh
pick up	fruit	coconut	throw	die

[Each of the two sisters] picked up a coconut [and] threw [it at a fox until it] died.

ta?	plaj	tooŋ	laa	læh
pick up	fruit	coconut	throw	die

[Each of the two sisters] picked up a coconut [and] threw [it at a fox until it] died.

læh	dʒim	læh	dʒim
die	*all*	*die*	*all*

[The foxes] died all.

In text 4 a group of foxes attempt to eat the livers of two sisters. When the livers are big enough to eat, the two sisters grow a coconut tree and stay up the tree. The story reaches its climax when the foxes come and the sisters try to protect themselves by hitting the foxes with coconuts. The surface feature peak is clearly marked by a great deal of verbatim repetition.

2.5 Contra–expectation

Repetition is also used when there is a contra–expectation which is represented in the form of negated antonym as illustrated in example 7. This example is from text 3. The father tries to lose his children in the forest. He tells the children to wait while he goes to defecate. After defecating, he tells the feces to answer the children' call for him. When the children come after the voice, they are disappointed because they see only the feces, not their father.

2.6 Amplification

Kui uses repetition for amplification in the same way as mentioned by Callow (1974:74) below:

Some languages use repetition frequently for amplification. Here the second mention of the event is used as a vehicle for carrying some added information, some new material that was not mentioned the first time.

The form of repetition for amplification is usually expansion as illustrated below:

(10) kʌʔ   phɣɣʔ   khlɔ̰ɔŋ   ʔadʐɣɣl   khlɔ̰ɔŋ   juɯɯŋ   ʔadʐɣɣl
     then   see   print   tiger   print   feet   tiger

[The elephant] then saw the print of the tiger, the footprint of the tiger.

Example 10 is from text 1. *khlɔ̰ɔŋ ʔadʐɣɣl* 'the tiger's print' is repeated with some added information.

2.7 *Summary*

Summary is "a type of brief, generalized repetition" (Callow 1974:78). There is only one instance of summary which is made through a speech of participant. In text 3 when the children come across the elephant's keeper, they tell him about their father's attempt to lose them in the forest. This summary is old information which is repeated again to highlight it as a theme line and is provided for those listeners who may miss it in a previous telling. Summary takes the forms of reduction and synonym.

(11) kʌʔ   ɲtee   kuuaj   siian   ʔatɕiiaŋ   paaj   ʔɔw   nam   tɕoo
     then   tell   person   take care elephant   that   father take   come

     bɔɔj   plajlaaŋ   ʔɔw   kʌʔ   tɕii   duŋ   ɲuaŋ   mohaj   bɔɔj
     find   fruit   father   then   go   home   before we   find

     knaa   tɕii   duŋ   phiʔ   phɣɣʔ   kʌʔ   lɣɣj   klʌʔkruaŋ
     way   go   home   not   find   then   then   get lost

[The children] then told the elephant's keeper, "The father took [us] to find fruit, then he went home. We could not find the way home, then [we] got lost [in the forest]".

3. Summary

Kui uses a large–scale repetition to spread out the information load in order that a theme line is highlighted. There are various ways to repeat the same event. The devices which are frequently used include cycle, reduction, synonym and pro–verb. Other forms of repetition which are infrequent are verbatim, expansion, and negated antonym. The notable functions of these forms are linkage, preview, repeated attempt and rhetorical underlining at the peak. Some other functions can also be found but rare. They are contra–expectation, amplification and summary. The relationship between forms and functions is diagrammed as follows:

Forms   Functions

Verbatim ⎤
                    ------------>   Rhetorical underlining at the peak
Reduction ⎦

Reduction ⎤   Linkage
                    ------------>   Preview
Synonym   ⎦   Summary

Cycle   ⎤
                    ------------>   Repeated attempt
Pro–verb ⎦

Expansion   ------------>   Amplification
Negated antonym   ------------>   Contra–expectation

Even though repetition is basically used for underlining a theme line, it has to do
also with a style of narration as seen in the form of cycles.[3]

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