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PRAKORB PHON-NGAM : A MORPHOLOGICAL STUDY OF
NORTHERN KHMER. THESIS ADVISORS : SOMSONGE BURUSPHAT, Ph.D.,
JEROLD A. EDMONDSON, Ph.D., SUWILAI PREMSRIRAT, Ph.D., PITSAMAI
YUPHO, Ph.D., SUJARITLAK DEEPADUNG, Ph.D., 233 p. ISBN 974-662-728-7

The study presents a morphological description of Northern Khmer, including the morphophonemic features and morphological processes of affixation, reduplication and sound symbolism. The objective of the work is to investigate the phonological and grammatical conditions that affect phonemic alternations, and also to clarify the phonological form, and the grammatical and semantic function of each type of morphological processes. The theoretical framework for the study is a combination of Structural Grammar, Tagmemics and Generative Phonology. The data are drawn from the speech of Northern Khmer speakers from Muang District, Surin Province of Northeast Thailand.

The study shows that there are productive alternations of voiced and voiceless consonants, which are affected by the phonological processes of syllable reduction, assimilation and dissimilation. The study also shows that morphological processes in Northern Khmer are still active. Particularly, each phonological form of affixation varies in semantic roles and verbal categories; both plain words and expressive words can be reduplicated as style of speech with the well-defined phonological rules; and the final sequence of sounds, the nuclear vowel and final consonant control the meaning of the words. Words with the same sequence of such symbolic sounds usually share the property of meaning.