

Diathesis in the Tai Languages

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There are several definitions of diathesis. In the present instance the diathesis is understood as a linguistic category showing the actual correlation between grammatical (syntactic) and functional semantic categories in a sentence. When it appears that grammatical and semantic subjects match each other we usually speak of an active diathesis, when grammatical subject correlates with patient, we imply a passive diathesis, when grammatical subject represents a causer, we have in mind a causative diathesis, and so on.

Before to set about diathesis it is expedient to make few remarks on grammatical structure of Tai sentence. As it is generally recognized, basic structure of Tai sentence looks like SVO or NP VP NP, in other words, NP preceding VP is a grammatical subject and NP following VP is an object. Other word orders occur rather rarely and above all it is irrelevant for this study.

There is a lot of different diatheses in the languages of the world. There is no need here to speak on diathesis in general. In the present study the object of consideration are diatheses that exist if not in all Tai languages, then in the majority of them and that manifest themselves in surface syntax through grammaticalized analytical constructions, i.e. collocations composed of a lexical full verb and of a more or less grammaticalized morpheme, on condition that they are productive, regular and standard versus exclusive, occasional and specific for a given language. Morphemes used in these constructions have the duty to distribute functional burden between grammatical subject and object, or, figuratively speaking, they indicate who is who in the sentence.

The observation of about thirty languages and dialects of Tai stock showed that there are only three diatheses that satisfy the conditions laid down earlier for grammaticalized construction, that is: Passive, Causative and Reciprocal, not counting Active, distinguished against the background of the rest.

Though diathesis category for the most part realizes with predicate or finite verb, however it is not its intrinsic feature at all. This category is bound to verb rather as a representative of a certain word class, than a syntactic unit. The evidence of it is a fact that markers of diathesis as well as constructions on the whole may occur in non-predicate environment, e.g. St. Thai *kaan1-plòb2 haj3 a2-thi3pa2-taj1 thuuk2 jiap2-jam3...nan4 man1 pen1 ryang3 sia5-haaj5 raaj4-reeng1 tòò2 kiat2-ti2-phuum1 khòong5 pra2-theet3* 'The admission to trample the sovereignty undermines the honor of the country' [lit. Nominalizer to admit Causative sovereignty Passive to trample ...that/Topicalizer it to be matter to suffer losses awful towards honor of country]. In this sentence the markers of Causative (haj3) and Passive (thuuk2) are incorporated into nominalized collocation

Among diathesis categories in TL the most investigated, especially as far as St. Thai is concerned, naturally is Passive. There are many works dealing with this problem beginning with a book of W. Bergen "The Passive verb of the Thai Language" published in Europe more than a century ago (1874) and ending with recently published article of Amara Prasithrathsint (1988) "Change in the Passive Constructions in Standard Thai from 1802 to 1982" and the research work of Gsell Rene (1994) presented at the 27 ICSTLL in Paris. Apart from it every grammar of Tai languages contains more or less lengthy passages concerning the so called Passive.

It is not the place here to review diverse standpoints and various approaches to the problem in question. It is suffice to say that all the authors, whether they speak of morphological (analytical), syntactical or lexical Passive in Tai, agree in that in Tai

grammatical sentences structured after the scheme [S deverbative Thuuk (or its equivalents in other TL) O V] the subject accounts for Patient (Experiencer) and that syntactic structures NP Thuuk NP VP and NP VP NP' VP' semantically are not synonymous, because properties of morpheme thuuk (etc.), on one hand, and any other verb which is able to occupy this position are rather different. For example, in the former construction the position of VP can be filled with verbs of long list, while in the latter construction both positions (1 and 4) can be filled only with a certain number of lexically compatible verbs, cf. Lao i-hen1 thyk5 ngu2 toot5 'The mongoose was bitten by a snake' [lit. mongoose Passive snake to bite] and i-hen1 cap5 ngu2 kin2 'The mongoose caught a snake to eat' [lit. mongoose to catch snake to eat]. Such facts seem to provide enough grounds to treat collocations with thuuk (or its equivalents) as grammaticalized passive constructions.

So, schematic picture of Passive constructions in TL looks as follows: S Passive (O) V or in terms of word classes, NP Passive (NP) VP. The morphemes that can function as markers of Passive in TL may have different phonetic appearance, but they, with few exceptions, have quite identical original meaning: 'to undergo', 'to sustain', 'to suffer' etc. These morphemes are: thuuk2 in St. Thai and in some other TL of Southeastern branch, thyk 5 in Lao, tyk6 in N. Chuang and Buji, tiing in Maonan, teng1 in N. Chuang, tiang in Buji, ngaai2 (borrowed from Chinese) in S. Chuang, Tai-Tho, Mulam, Sui, tyw6 in Kam (Dong), luu3 in S. Chuang, ial in Li (baodin0, goom3 in Li (Tungtsa), men3, ram1, toj2 in Tai-Tho, cý3 in Laha, co3 in Lue and some others (cý3, co3 are borrowing from Chinese zho 'to undergo').

There is only one instance when Passive derived from another concept than 'to undergo', 'to suffer', i.e. from concept 'to lose', 'to yield to' that is conveyed by the morpheme sel in Lue.

Above mentioned morphemes, as a rule, retain their lexical meaning and are able to function as an independent unit. For instance, St. Thai khaw5 thuuk2 jaal phit3 'He was poisoned' [lit. he to suffer poison], Lao muul koo5 ca5 thyk5 fon1 thyk5 lom2 'The pigs then will suffer from rain and wind' [lit. pigs then will to suffer rain to suffer wind]. Some of these morphemes can perform other functions. According to Saranya Savetamalya (1993), St. Thai thuuk bears nine functions. But they have no any relevance to the present study.

Etymological meaning of these morphemes leaves its imprint on the passive construction taken as a whole. It is noticed that in sentences with passive construction the event, as a rule, is unfavorable, undesirable or unexpected for the subject. Therefor Tai Passive sometimes is called "adversative". But some researchers argue against such inference. In the opinion of Amara Prasithrathsint, morpheme thuuk in St. Thai when employed in above mentioned constructions is devoid of lexical content and exercises the function of a marker for Passive in nowadays language (Prasithrathsint 1992:93). High degree of grammaticalization has Lao morpheme thyk. As to other Tai languages, there is no enough language data in order to make definite conclusion in this respect.

The rate of frequency of these morphemes varies from one language to another. It is higher in the literary languages which have contact with European languages and lower in "closed" to the outer world languages. In some TL passive construction occurs rather seldom or occasionally, and in such languages as Ahom, Khamti, S. Shan, Phuthai, Tai-Yang, Tai-Muei, Tai-Nung there is no standard or regular used passive constructions at all, at best, they are exceptionally rare, therefore they remained unnoticed. On the whole, passive construction is a marginal phenomenon in TL, though it has a tendency to expand.

Lastly, concept of passive for Tai speaking people seems to be different from that of Europeans. Patient for Tais it is not only a person or an animate creature, it can be any imaginable object and it is not a converse (direct) object. It is rather an involuntary or forced bearer of event, state or position, as it can be seen from a number of sentences extracted from different TL. St. Thai pra2-tuul hòong3 thuuk2 khò4 rèeng1-rèeng1 'Somebody knocked heavily at the room door' [lit. door room Passive to knock heavily]; Lao pal1-theet6 nan3 thyk5 pen2 hual-myang2-khyn6 aa2-sii2 'That country had to become an Asiatic colony' [lit. country that Passive to be colony Asia]; Li naal ial aawl phooj2

pheng3 'Everybody scolds him' [lit. he Passive to scold to reprimand]; Maonan man2 tiing3 zuuj2 cit2 ljeu6 'He was bitten by snake' [lit. he Passive snake to bite already]; Kam tjiw2 myil tjaa5 tyw6 nam4 laaw4 khu3 waaj6 jaang4 'That wooden bridge was smashed away with high water' [lit. bridge wood that Passive water high to fill to smash completely]; Laha hot4 nyi3 cý3 cuk4 'The blanket got wet' (because of somebody malice or negligence) [lit. blanket this Passive wet]; Buji ku5 ku1 tiang1 pu4 laj2 aw1 paj1 jiaw4 'Someone has taken my saw' [lit. saw I Passive person some to take away already]; Tai-Tho naa2 mèn3 thuam3 'Rice fields were inundated' [lit. field Passive to inundate]; Saek phyyn1 phia3 thyyk6 byn1 vyn2 ram 3 preek5 'The shirt got wet from rainfall' [lit. Clf. shirt Passive sky rain to fall wet]; Buji dan1 pong 2 zaw2 tyk6 zum3 laaw4 pyt1 njaa2 paj1 lew4 'The grass roofing of our hut was blown away by the wind' [lit. Clf. hut we Passive wind strong to blow grass roofing to go away already]; Lue nok5-còk2 sel on2-noj6 jy2 taaj1 'Sparrow were exterminated by children' [lit. sparrow Passive children to kill to die].

Even these scanty evidences seem to attest that Tai Passive is a specific, peculiar phenomenon and that passive construction is not a bare converted active construction that has undergone passivization. There is no direct opposition between Active and Passive, each has its own niche, opposition between them is not a general rule, but a particular event. It looks as if Tais have no need to oppose something to Active. When there is a necessity to present the event from the standpoint of Patient, they may resort to the operation of topicalization, and not passivization, by putting the object of proposition at the head of the sentence, as in the following Lao phrases: sya6 phyyn1 nan3 yai3 njip1 'That shirt was sewn by elder sister' [lit. shirt Clf. that elder sister to sew]; sya6 phyyn1 nan3 njip1 duai3 yai3 'That shirt was sewn by elder sister' [lit. shirt Clf. that to sew Instr. elder sister]; sya6 phyyn1 nan3 sak1 leew3 'That shirt has been washed already' [lit. shirt Clf. that to wash already]. However the configurational way of expressing passive perspective is not universal, sometimes it fails because of some reasons, for instance, because of grammatical and lexical nonconversiveness of certain verbs, inviolability or incompatibility of certain semantic structures, and so on. In this case passive construction may turn appropriate for meeting the demands of communication.

The Causative is another important constituent of diathesis system. This category, just as the Passive manifests itself through grammaticalized construction that schematically is identical with a passive one, that is: < S diathesis marker O V >. They differ only in linguistic value of the diathesis marker. The latter in causative constructions indicates that the grammatical subject is a Causer, or one that does not perform any real action but makes somebody (Causee) do something. The function of such a marker in TL is exercised by a morpheme that has etymological meaning 'to give' (in conformity with universal rules). In most cases this morpheme goes back to the form hai (C1), cf. St. Thai and Lao- hai3, Khamti, Shan, Chuang, Tho, Buji - hay3, Lue, Sak, Nung - hyy3, Sui - haai1, Kam - saai1. In some languages causative markers have another phonetic form but the same etymology, i.e. derive from the verb 'to give', i.e. naak1 in Maonan, nak1 in Laha, tyng2 in Li (Baodin), dex1 in Li (Tuntsu), khyl in Mulao (The latter is probably a corruption of Chinese gei 'to give').

These morphemes within causative constructions exhibit the relation of causation in the global sense of the word. Causation implies very wide range of realization: from request to command. Its meaning depends on the content of proposition. For example: Shan khu4-son1 hy3 man4 tem3 dai3 ngam4-ngam4 'The teacher tried to make them write beautifully' [lit. teacher Causative they to write to be able beautifully]; St. Thai nam4 kò2 mai3 hai3 tak2, baan3 kò2 mai3 hai3 thuu5 'They did not allow neither to fetch water nor to wash floor' [lit. water then not Causative to fetch, house then not Causative to scrape]; Tai-Tho pi1 naa2 nõong5 hay3 tel long2 raa2 kaa4 'Next year I shall send them to stay with you' [lit. year next younger brother Causative they to go down house you]; Buji law3 zaw4 mi2 hay po6-me6 zo4 'We shall not inform our parents about our engagement' [lit. engagement we not Causative parents to know]; Saek pòò5 raan4 hyy3 man4 nang2 saang2 theel5 'The host invited them to sit on the cushion' [lit. father house Causative they to sit on cushion]; Sui pu4 ni4 ?naa3 haai1 laang1-fail 'The parents did not allow to waste money' [lit. father mother not Causative waste]; Kam maaw6 kwe2 saai1 jaaw2 paai1

'He does not allow me to go' [lit. he not Causative I to go] Li naa1 tyng2 how1 tshap2 paal
 'He permitted me to take the jar' [lit. he Causative I to take jar]; Tai- Ya po3 hay3 kun2 aw1
 khaw3 ho3 njin2 hay3 myn1 'Father told servants to give him food and silver' [lit. father
 Causative men to take rice and silver to give /to him].

Causative constructions in TL have apparently taken shape many centuries ago, to say the least of it, long before than passive constructions. They occur already in ancient inscriptions in Tai. The early origin of such constructions is also accounted for by the uniformity of causative constructions in different groups of TL. Being used within these constructions, morpheme *hai* and the like no longer bears semantic connotation. As to its etymon, i.e. the verb *hai* 'to give', is relegating to the background ceding semantic field to another verbs having similar or identical meaning. For instance, in Shan the idea 'to give' is denoted by the verb *pan1*, while the morpheme *hai3* is used only as an auxiliary. Such tendency is true for many other TL. In Lao, for example, lexical verb *hai6*, for the most part, is used mainly in short sentences in everyday colloquial speech, while in written language the concept 'to give smth. to smb.' is rendered by means of, let us call it ad hoc, object construction <aw1...hai3>, lit. to take...to give. Summing up this passage, we may infer, that semantic value of Tai verb *hai* (C1) is fading and its at one time secondary functions are coming to the foreground. According to Kitima Indrambarya (1992) in St. Thai morpheme *hai3* fulfills ten functions. But for this paper only one of them has direct relevance, that is marker of Causative.

At present pure or non-contaminated causative constructions occur rather rarely. For the most part semantically synonymous propositions include lexical full verb, as in St. Thai: kruul book2 hai3 nak4- rian1 aan2 nang5sy1 thuk3 wan1 'The teacher tells pupils to read books every day' [lit. teacher to tell Causative schoolchildren to read books every day] or kruul book2 nak3- rian1 hai3 aan2... 'The teacher tells schoolchildren to read...' [lit. teacher to tell schoolchildren Causative to read...]. Syntactic structures of this sort are causative as well, but it Causative of another kind. While in the former construction the morpheme defined as Causative is designed to display roles of grammatical subject (Causar) and object (Causee), in the latter structures it does not bear such function. It undoubtedly has something to do with causation, but it is not a diathesis master any more. Such causative structures as have just been mentioned as well as their relation to the causative constructions which are under consideration in this paper should be the object of special investigation.

The next diathesis category is Reciprocal. This category in TL signify that in a given event each of agents denoted in the subject does the same what others do or is the same what others are. Their actions can be aimed at each other, i.e. reciprocal, or run in unison, i.e. cooperative. Discrimination between reciprocal and cooperative lies beyond surface structure. (For some afterthoughts in this respect see at the end of this section). General principal is: if the verb is transitive, then the reciprocal diathesis is implied, and if the verb is intransitive, then the cooperative is meant. However, if the predicate verb is accompanied by an object, then either interpretation is possible (for examples see below). So, to be correct, this category should be defined as reciprocal-cooperative, but for short, hereafter the term "reciprocal" will be used as before.

Unlike Passive and Cooperative Reciprocal has no uniform manifestation. In various languages it manifests itself through divers morphemes and constructions or, in short, Reciprocal is a varioform category.

One of the wide spread exponents of this category is preverb 'to' (B2) which occurs in many Tai languages and dialects spoken in Guichow and Guangxi provinces of China and in the Northern areas of Vietnam. This morpheme always precedes a main verb as in Chuang: lyk6-baaw5 to4 paw6 ram4 'Sons splashed water at one another' [lit. son Reciprocal scoop water]; Tai-Nung myn3 to4 aw1 'They got married' [lit. they Reciprocal to take]; Chuang ta6-po6 ta6-me6 to4 dei1 'Father and mother live in harmony' [lit. father mother Reciprocal to be good]. Cross language examination explicitly reveals that this morpheme goes back to the polysemantic verb to (B2), one of the etymological lines of which is: 'to oppose, to confront, to be correlated to'. Used in series with other verbs it underwent the