

Conditional Negative, Reflexive Constructions, And Negated Quantifier Noun Phrases In Thai: Insoluble Problems For Lexicase Dependency Grammar?

Savetamalya, Saranya

1. Introduction

Those who have been working on syntax using lexicase dependency grammar realize that lexicase is a formal and explicit kind of framework that provides a simple tool to account for almost every construction in any language better than other contemporary syntactic theories. Working under this kind of constrained dependency grammar, it will be pointed out in this paper that not every construction in Thai can be successfully accounted for. The constructions that will be discussed in this paper include the conditional negative *máy--mây* '(if) not, (then) not' construction, the reflexive *inǵuey* 'oneself' construction, and a negated quantifier noun phrase. It is the purpose of this paper to attempt to explain how a syntactic theory with considerable explanatory adequacy, like lexicase dependency grammar, can account for these kinds of syntactic phenomena in Thai. The result of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the diversity of languages and shows that the universality of linguistic features can still be legitimately claimed.

2. Conditional negative *máy--mây* '(if) not, (then) not' construction

The first construction in Thai that is difficult for lexicase dependency grammar to accommodate is the conditional negative *máy--mây* '(if) not, (then) not' construction. In Thai, a negative construction is formed by using the negative adverb *mây* 'not' to negate a verb. (It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the syntactic evidence for treating *mây* 'not' as an adverb. Those who are interested in this should read Indrambarya 1994.) There are two main types of negative constructions in Thai. The first type, which is the common one, is to negate the first commanding verb of a sentence, as in (1-2). The second type is to negate a resultative verb, if there is one, rather than negating the first commanding verb, as in (3-5):

1. Pm mây dǵen pay rooǵiǵn
Pom not walk go school
'Pom did not walk to school.'
2. naa mây klaa khap rǵi eey
Na not brave drive car oneself
'Na did not dare to drive by herself.'
3. nok tǵt kradaat khaat
Nok cut paper tear
'Nok cut paper into pieces.'
4. pat klxxn mây khatay mxx
Pat pretend not offend mother

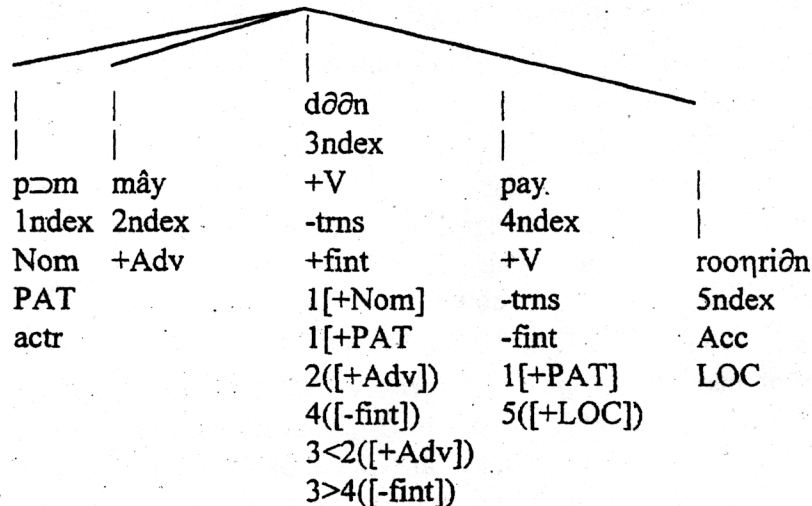
'Pat pretended not to offend her mother.'

5. $\text{n\ddot{o}y}$ tham khwaamsa?aat $\text{m\ddot{a}y}$ hay baan sokkaprok
 Noy do cleaning not give house dirty
 'Noy cleaned the house so that it would not be dirty.'

In sentences (1-2), the adverb *mây* 'not' negates the first commanding verbs *d\ddot{o}n* 'walk' and *klaâ* 'be brave', respectively, whereas in sentences (3-5), *mây* negates the resultative verbs *khaât* 'tear', *khàtcay* 'offend', and *hây* 'give', respectively. Sentences (3-5) would be ungrammatical if the adverb *mây* negated the first commanding verbs, as seen in the following sentences:

6. * $\text{n\ddot{o}k}$ $\text{m\ddot{a}y}$ $\text{t\grave{a}t}$ $\text{krada\grave{a}t}$ $\text{kha\grave{a}t}$
 Nok not cut paper tear
 7. * $\text{p\grave{a}t}$ $\text{m\ddot{a}y}$ $\text{kla\grave{a}}$ $\text{kh\grave{a}tcay}$ mxx
 Pat not pretend offend mother
 8. * $\text{n\ddot{o}y}$ $\text{m\ddot{a}y}$ tham khwaamsa?aat $\text{h\ddot{a}y}$ $\text{ba\grave{a}n}$ $\text{s\ddot{o}kkapr\ddot{o}k}$
 Noy not do cleanliness give house dirty

The internal structure for the negative construction in which the adverb *mây* negates the first commanding verb is illustrated as follows:



STEMMA I

The tree stemma demonstrates that the adverb *mây* 'not' negates the first commanding verb *d\ddot{o}n* 'walk' of sentence (1).

The internal structure for the type of negative construction in which the adverb *mây* negates the resultative verb is illustrated as follows:

The tree stemma demonstrates that the adverb *māy* 'not' negates the resultative verb *khāat* 'tear', instead of negating the first commanding verb *lāt* 'cut'.

Now, consider the following conditional negative *māy--māy* '(if) not, (then) not' constructions in Thai:

9. māy hīw māy kin
not hungry not eat
(If I / you) don't feel hungry, (I / you) will not eat.
10. māy lāw māy rū
not try not know
(If I / you) don't try, (I / you will) not know.

Sentences (9-10) are not imperative because the interpretation of a pronoun in both sentences can be either 'I' or 'you' which depends on the speaker. If the speaker is talking about himself or herself, the interpretation of the pronoun is 'I'. If the speaker is referring to the person with whom he or she is speaking, the interpretation of the pronoun is 'you'. Another reason why sentences (9-10) cannot be treated as imperative is that normally imperative sentences in Thai are negated by the negative word *yād* 'do not' or *hām* '(it is) prohibited', as in (10) and (11), respectively.

11. yāa phūtt sīn dān
do not speak voice loud
'Do not speak loudly.'
12. hām kin khānom māy hāy
prohibit eat desert in classroom
'(It is) prohibited to eat some dessert in the classroom.'
- Sentences (9) and (10) cannot be negated by either *yād* 'do not' or *hām* '(it is) prohibited', as (13-16) illustrate:

STEMMA II

