

LEXICAL STRUCTURES CONCERNING MOVEMENT AND SPACE
IN SOME ASIAN LANGUAGES

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The main thesis of this paper is that Thai belongs to a class of languages which lexicalize the path of a movement in a monomorphematic verb, e.g. verbs like long 'to move down', k'w n 'to move up' in long bandai 'to go down the staircase' or k'w n bandai 'to go up the staircase' express a path with regard to the staircase. Such languages are rather common in East and in South East Asia. In earlier papers I have mainly dealt with Japanese and Korean as path languages. In the present paper I will concentrate on Thai, but I will do so in a typological perspective. I also want to show that Thai movement verbs incorporating a path carry important functions in the language. Typological facts of lexicalization, thus, are tied to other structural properties. The type as I said is rather common in South East Asia, although there is no survey of the languages concerned. E.g. also in Malay/Indonesian there is a fair amount of path incorporation in movement verbs. As the type can be found in languages of different genetic background and with different typological affiliations in other domains, one can study the interaction of lexicalization type in movement verbs with other typological features, such as presence/absence of morphological marked cases or presence/absence of prepositions or postpositions. One thing that all languages of the path type in East or South East Asia share is relational nouns with local interpretation like Thai nāa 'area in front', tāi 'area below'. At least in East Asia and South East Asia path incorporation in movement verbs seem to be in structural interaction with relational nouns.

In Thai we find sentences like

- (1) weelaa fǒn tòk saiduən ʔɔ̌k
 'time' 'rain' 'fall' 'earthworm' 'move out'
 càak din
 'separate' 'soil'
 'When rain falls, earthworms (will) come out of the soil'
- (2) c'aawpramoŋ naam ruə ʔɔ̌k t'àlee
 'fisherman' 'take' 'boat' 'move out' 'lake'
 'Fishermen take the boat out of the lake'

In (1) ʔɔ̌k corresponds to something which can be rendered by a verb in English whereas in (2) ʔɔ̌k seems more readily translatable by a preposition. There are many similar cases. Consider

- (3) rǒtfay cà t'ǎŋ kruŋtēep prunŋii c'áaw
 'train' 'will' 'arrive' 'Bangkok' 'tomorrow' 'morning'
 'The train will arrive in Bangkok tomorrow morning'
- (4) t'áhâan k'âas ǎ k t'ɔ̌y t'ǎŋ k'eetdeən
 'soldier' 'enemy' 'retreat' 'arrive' 'frontier'
 'The enemy's soldiers retreated to the border'
- (5) k'ǎw càak pay naan léəw
 'he/she' 'move away' 'go' 'long (of time)' 'already'
 'He left (=passed away) a long time ago'
- (6) k'ǎw pay càak thii níi naan léəw
 'he/she' 'go' 'move away' 'place' 'this' 'long' 'already'
 'he left here a long time ago'

t'ǎŋ and càak in (3) and (5) behave very much the way a verb is expected to behave in English whereas the very same t'ǎŋ and càak in (4) and (6) rather seem to behave like English prepositions.

Another usage of a movement verb in two different functions may be observed in the following cases: First, consider the uses of loŋ in (7) and (8).

- (7) p'ǒm loŋ pay k'âanlâan sú nǎŋsúup'im
 'I' 'move down' 'go' 'area at the' 'buy' 'newspaper'
 bottom of s.th.'
 'I go downstairs to buy a newspaper'

- (8) p'ôm kràdòot loŋ (nay) mɛ̌nám
 'I' 'jump' 'move down' 'in' 'river'
 'I jump (down) into the river'

loŋ can be used as an independent verb and as such means 'move downwards' 'move towards a position lower than the position before the movement starts'. As such it may be used in a simple utterance like p'ôm loŋ 'I go down' or p'ôm cà loŋ 'I will go down'. This is the use we also encounter in (7), pay in (7) is used the same way as càak in (6) which we said resembled the use of an English preposition. Note that pay might be left out in (7) and we would still have a grammatical, albeit less idiomatic sentence.

- (7a) p'ôm loŋ k'âaŋlâaŋ sũu nãŋsũu p'im
 'I go down to buy a newspaper'

In (8) we see loŋ joined to the verb kràdòot 'jump'. Here loŋ may be likened to the English use of a verbal particle as in go down, jump down, run down and so on. In (8) loŋ cannot be dropped.

- (8a) *p'ôm kràdòot nay mɛ̌nám

would be ungrammatical whereas English I jump into the river is perfectly acceptable. Similar uses can be observed in the following pairs of sentences with the path verbs k'ũu 'move up', k'âw 'move into' and k'âam 'move across'.

- (9) k'âw k'ũu k'rũuŋ bin
 '(s)he' 'move upwards' 'airplane'
 'She/he goes aboard an airplane'

- (10) ŋuu luay k'ũu tɔnmáy
 'snake' 'crawl' 'move upwards' 'tree'
 'A snake crawls up a tree'

- (11) k'âw k'âw bâan
 '(s)he' 'move into' 'house'
 'He/she enters/goes into the house'

- (12) nók bin k'âw maa nay hũuŋ
 'bird' 'fly' 'move into' 'come' 'in' 'room'
 'A bird flies into the room' (where the person observing the event is located, hence the use of maa 'come').

- (13) p'ôm k'âam sap'aan
'I' 'move across' 'bridge'
'I crossed a bridge'
- (14) rôtýon lêên k'âam sap'aan
'car' 'drive' 'move across' 'bridge'
'A car drove across the bridge'

Also ʔɔk 'move out' which we observed in sentences (1) and (2) can be used conjoined to another verb as in

- (15) karunaa ʔaw năŋsũm ʔɔk maa
'please' 'take/bring' 'book' 'move out' 'come'
'Please bring the book' (taking it out of the thing in which it is contained when the sentence is being uttered).

just as k'âam 'move across' may be used in ways resembling an English preposition similar to sentences (2), (4) and (6) as in

- (16) k'on t'ay cà sâaŋ sap'aan
'human being' 'Thai' 'will' 'build' 'bridge'
- k'âam mêk k'ǎŋ
'more across' 'Mekong'

'The Thai people will build a bridge across the river Mekong'

This multiple use of verbs is not restricted to movement verbs expressing a path with regard to an object. It is found also with pay 'go', for instance:

- (17) p'ôm c'ɔp pay dɔan nay paa
'I' 'like' 'go' 'walk' 'in' 'forest'
'I like going for a walk in the forest'
- (18) rôtɕay pay kruŋt'êep ʔɔk weelaa hòk
'train' 'go' 'Bangkok' 'move out' 'time' 'six'
- moon c'áaw
'hour' 'morning'

'The train for Bangkok will leave at six o'clock in the morning'

and with yet other verbs, e.g. pen 'be' (in the sense of expressing being a member of a class):