

ON IMPERSONAL VERBS IN THAI

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1. Introduction

This paper discusses the occurrence of impersonal verbs in Thai within the Lexicase dependency framework. The paper limits its scope to a discussion of the impersonal verbs which do not require a verbal dependent. These verbs are referred to in the Lexicase grammar as non-extension impersonal verbs. The paper proposes the postposing test to identify impersonal verbs and to distinguish a subject from a preverbal locational noun.

The paper is divided into 5 sections. While the first section presents an introduction, the second part provides an overview of impersonal verbs within the Lexicase analysis. The tests to be used in identifying impersonal verbs are discussed in the third section. An analysis of non-extension impersonal verbs in Thai is illustrated in the fourth section. The last section presents the conclusion.

2. Impersonal Verbs

Within the Lexicase dependency framework, verbs may be subcategorized with the feature [\pm mprs] (personal), as shown in SR-1, according to whether they take a referential subject or a non-referential subject. A personal verb ([$-$ mprs]) grammatically requires a referential subject, as illustrated in RR-1. An impersonal verb [$+$ mprs] requires a non-referential subject, as shown in RR-2. RR-3 captures the fact that the majority of verbs in Thai are referential.

SR-1	[+V]	->	[\pm mprs]
RR-1	[-mprs]	->	[? +Nom +rfn
RR-2	[+mprs]	->	[? +Nom -rfn
RR-3	[+V]	->	[-mprs]

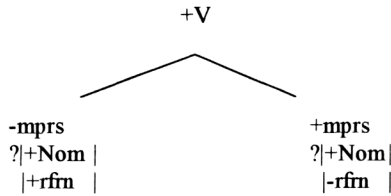


Figure 1: Subcategorization of Verbs in Terms of Referentiality in Lexicase

Impersonal verbs may be divided into two categories: true-impersonal and pseudo-impersonal verbs (Pagotto 1985). True-impersonal verbs are verbs which do not have an overt grammatical subject or those cooccurring with a phrasal constituent in a preverbal position, referred to as a 'subject surrogate', in the case of English (Pagotto 1985:1) as shown in (1a). Pseudo-impersonal verbs, on the other hand, are verbs which require the presence of an expletive subject 'it', as in (1b).

- (1) a. That he was elected upset Marry
+mprs
+trns
-xtns
- b. It upset Mary that he was elected.
+mprs
+trns
+xtns

Even though the Thai language has both types of impersonal verbs, this paper will only discuss the occurrence of impersonal verbs which do not require a verbal dependent, referred to as non-extension verbs. All non-extension impersonal verbs in Thai are true-impersonal verbs. True-impersonal verbs in Thai are verbs which do not allow an overt grammatical subject, for example, *kəɲ* 'to happen'.

3. Tests to identify Impersonal Verbs

In this section, I propose the postposing test and the postposing topicalization to identify the syntactic function of a noun phrase in a preverbal position. The postposing test distinguishes a referential subject of a personal verb from a preposing non-subject argument of an impersonal verb. The postposing topicalization is used as a supportive test to identify the preverbal noun phrase as a subject.

The Thai language has three case forms, namely the Nominative (Nom), the Accusative (Acc) and the Locative case form which is marked by the feature [+lctn]. Any arguments of a verb may be postposed via postposing topicalization. This postposing topicalization is performed by two mechanisms: 1) a final particle and/or a pause marking the end of a sentence preceding the constituent; and 2) a topic marker *nà?* at the end of a topicalized phrase.¹ The following example illustrates that in Thai a Nominative actant (a subject) and an Accusative actant (an object) may be postposed via postposing topicalization.

- (2) a. *kôy kin khanôm thii chán sǐ maa rǝʔyaŋ*
 Koy eat sweet which I buy hither or not
 Nom +trns Acc

'Has Koy eaten the sweets that I bought?'

- b. *kin khanôm thii chán sǐ maa rǝʔyaŋ* [PAUSE]
 eat sweet which I buy hither or not

kôy nə?
 Koy TOP

'Has she eaten the sweets that I bought, Koy?' (Lit.)

- c. *kôy kin rǝʔyaŋ* [PAUSE] *khanôm thii chán sǐ*
 Koy eat or not sweet which I buy

maa nə?
 hither TOP

'Has Koy eaten them, the sweets that I bought?' (Lit.)

Both subject, *kôy* in (1b) and the object *khanôm thii chán sǐ maa* in (1c) can be postposed to the end of the sentence by having a pause marking the end of a clause and the topic marker *nà?* at the end of the topicalized phrase.

Moreover, a Locative actant marked by the localistic feature [+lctn] can be postposed via postposing topicalization. In (3), the Locative actant is in a preverbal position while in (4) it is in a postverbal position.

¹ The topic marker *nà?* is optional when the topicalized noun phrase is modified by the determiners *nii* 'this' or *nán* 'that'

- (3) a. *dəʔmal* *kəət* *fəymây* *rəə*
the Mall exist fire Ques
+lctn
'Did 'The Mall' burn?'
b. *kəət* *fəymây* *rəə* [PAUSE] *dəʔmal* *nəʔ*
exist fire Ques The Mall TOP
'Did it burn, 'The Mall'? ' (Lit.)
- (4) a. *thəə* *cəʔ* *pay* *pàcháa* *rəə*
you will go cemetery Ques
+lctn
'Are you going to the cemetery?'
b. *thəə* *cəʔ* *pay* *rəə* [PAUSE] *pàcháa* *nəʔ*
you will go Ques cemetery TOP
'Are you going there, the cemetery?' (Lit.)

It should be noted that the noun phrase in a preverbal position can be a Nominative actant or a Locative actant. The locative actant in this position is normally a lexically locational noun. A noun is identified as a locational noun if it may occur as immediate dependent of a locational verb such as *pay*, *maa*, and *yùu*. (Indrambarya 1994:53). For example, the locational verb *pay* 'to go' expects a noun with the feature [+lctn] as its dependent to be interpreted as a Locus and Locative actant. In (5a) the verb *pay* may have the noun phrase *dəʔmal* as its immediate dependent since *dəʔmal* is a locational noun marked by the localistic feature [+lctn]. The verb *pay* then assigns the Locative case form and the Locus case relation to *dəʔmal*, shown by the implied feature [3[+lctn]] and [3[+LOC]] on the lexical matrix of the regent verb *pay*. On the other hand, the noun *tôn máy tôn nán* 'that tree' in (5b) is not a locational noun and hence the regent verb's requirement for a locative complement is not satisfied.

- (5) a. *dəɛŋ* *pay* *dəʔmal*
Dang go The Mall
Index 2ndex 3ndex
Nom +lctn +lctn
PAT -trns LOC
actr 3[+LOC]
 3[+lctn]
'Dang went to The Mall.'

b.	*dɛɛŋ	pay	tôn máy	tôn	nán
	Dang	go	tree	CL	that
	Index	2ndex	3ndex		
	Nom	+lctn	-lctn		
	PAT	-trns			
	actr	?[+lctn]			
		?[+LOC]			

'Dang went to that tree.'

The Nominative actant and a Locative actant which occur in a preverbal position, in (2a) and (3a), exhibit different characteristics. Only a Locative actant may be postposed to the position before the final particle without a pause and a topic marker. Comparing the Nominative actant *kôy* in (2a) with the Locative actant *dô? mal* in (3a). Example (6) illustrates that the Nominative actant *kôy* in (2a) cannot be postposed to the position before the final particle. On the other hand, example (7) illustrates that the locative actant *dô? mal* in (3a) may be postposed to the position before the final particle.

- (6) *kin khamǎm thii chán sǐ maa kôy rǐ?yan
eat sweet which I buy hither Koy or not
'Has she eaten the sweets that I bought, Koy?' (Lit.)

- (7) kôət faymây dô? mal rǎo
exist fire the Mall Ques
Did it burn, the mall? (Lit.)

I then claim that the postposing test is able to identify the syntactic category of a preverbal noun phrase. The test is performed by postposing the preverbal noun phrase in question to the end of a sentence, before the final particle, if there is one. Note that there is no pause in between at all. If the sentence remains acceptable, the noun phrase is not a subject. Instead, it is a Locative noun phrase of an impersonal verb. On the other hand, if the sentence is unacceptable, the preverbal noun phrase is identified as the subject of the sentence. The postposing topicalization mentioned earlier may be used as a supportive evidence identifying a preverbal noun phrase as a subject if it can only be postposed with a pause and a topic marker.

Now consider the following sets of sentences in (8) and (9) in which the locational noun phrase *tây tô? nii* 'space under this table' is in a preverbal position². Since there is no final particle at the end of sentence (5a), one may test the syntactic function of *tây tô? nii* by simply postposing it to the end of the sentence without having a pause.

- (8) a. $\begin{array}{ccccc} \text{tây} & \text{tó?} & \text{nîi} & \text{yan} & \text{wâan} \\ \text{under} & \text{table} & \text{this} & \text{still} & \text{empty} \\ +\text{lctn} & & & & +\text{lctn} \\ \text{Nom} & & & & -\text{mprs} \\ \text{PAT} & & & & -\text{trns} \\ \text{actr} & & & & -\text{xtns} \end{array}$
- 'The space under this table is still available.'
- b. $\begin{array}{ccccc} * \text{yan} & \text{wâan} & \text{tây} & \text{tó?} & \text{nîi} \\ \text{still} & \text{empty} & \text{under} & \text{table} & \text{this} \end{array}$
- 'The space under this table is available.'
- c. $\begin{array}{ccccc} \text{yan} & \text{wâan} & \text{PAUSE} & \text{tây} & \text{tó?} & \text{nîi} & \text{nâ?} \\ \text{still} & \text{empty} & & \text{under} & \text{table} & \text{this} & \text{TOP} \end{array}$
- 'The space under this table is available.'

As shown in (8b), the sentence becomes ungrammatical when the noun phrase *tây tô? nii* is postposed to the end of the sentence without a pause and a topic marker. Example (5c) confirms that the noun phrase *tây tô? nii* can only postposed via postposing topicalization, that is, with the topic marker *nà?* and a pause. Hence, *tây tô? nii* in (5a) is identified as a subject, rather than a preposed Locative actant. Now compare the distribution of the noun phrase *tây tô? nii* in (8) with (9).

- (9) a.

tây	tóʔ	nii	mii	klɔ̃ɔŋ	sɔ̃ɔŋ	bay
under	table	this	exist	box	two	CL
+lctn			+lctn			
+N			+mprs			
			+trns			
			-xtns			

'The space under this table has two boxes.'

² According to Savetamalya (1989), relator nouns such as *tây* 'space under' and *bon* 'surface' are analyzed as nouns since they may have the determiner as their dependent, for example, *tây nii* 'space under this'.

b.	mii	klɔŋ	sɔŋ	bay	tây	tó?	nii
	exist	box	two	CL	under	table	this
	+lctn				+N		
	+mprs				+lctn		
	+trns						
	-xtns						

'There are two boxes under this table.'

Unlike (8a), because the locational noun phrase *tây tô? nii* in (9a) may be postposed without a pause and a topic marker, as illustrated in (9b), the noun phrase *tây tô? nii* in (9a) is not a subject. It is a preverbal locative noun phrase of a locational impersonal verb. This noun phrase is assigned the Locative case marker by the regent impersonal verb *mii* 'exist'.

Thus a locational noun in a preverbal position may function either as a subject of a personal verb or as a preverbal locative noun phrase of an impersonal verb. I have illustrated in this section that the postposing test and the postposing topicalization are helpful in identifying the function of the preverbal noun phrase and in distinguishing a personal verb from an impersonal one.

4. Non-extension Impersonal Verbs in Thai

Non-extension impersonal verbs in Thai are locational, true-impersonal ([-psdo]) and are all transitive verbs, as shown in RR-4. Thus they are non-extension impersonal locational transitive verbs.

RR-4	+mprs	->	-psdo
	-xtns		+trns
			+lctn

Non-extension impersonal locational transitive verbs do not allow the presence of a non-referential subject *man* 'it' in their case frames, as shown in the unacceptable (10b). Hence, these verbs are true-impersonal.

(10) a.	kəɔt ₃	phɛ̃ɛndinwaà _y	thii ₄	yīpùn
	happen	earthquake	at	Japan

'There is an earthquake in Japan.'

b.	*man	kəɔt ₃	phɛ̃ɛndinwaà _y	thii ₄	yīpùn
	it	happen	earthquake	at	Japan

'There is an earthquake in Japan.'

In general, impersonal locational transitive verbs do not allow any overt grammatical subject, especially in a formal speech such as a news report, as shown below.

Formal

- (11) *man cà? kòət phayú? khanàat yà y nay thaleesaay
 it will exist storm size big in desert
 +lctn
 +mprs
 +trns
 -xtns

hèŋ nĩ
 CL this

'There will be a big storm in this desert.'

However, verbs of this class may allow the presence of non-referential subject man 'it' in colloquial speech style, as in the following sentence. I do not classify it as another verb class because the variety depends on speech formality and there found to be no grammatically significant environments.

Colloquial

- (12) man mĩ phĩ nay bān nĩ dūay rǎ
 it exist ghost in house this also Ques
 +lctn
 +mprs
 +trns
 -xtns

'Is there also a ghost in this house?'

Within the lexicase dependency analysis, each word consists of three basic components, namely sound, distribution, and meaning. According to Starosta (1988:98), a form is considered to belong to two distinct lexical entries when it occurs in two distinct grammatically significant environments. In other words, if a form X can occur in syntactic patterns A and B, but some other form Y can occur only in pattern A but not B, or only in pattern B but not A, the form X is considered to belong to two separate lexical items distinguished by their distinct syntactic distributions. Consider (13) and (14):

- (13) a. kòət₃ námthũam thĩ₄ phãaktây
 happen flood at South

'There is a flood in the South.'

- b. *kəət*₄ *námthũam* *khîn*₄ *thĩi*₄ *phâaktây*
 happen flood up at South
 'There is a flood in the South.'

- (14) a. *mii*₃ *námthũam* *thĩi*₄ *phâaktây*
 exist flood at South
 'There is a flood in the South.'

- b. **mii* *námthũam* *khîn* *thĩi*₄ *phâaktây*³
 exist flood up at South
 'There is a flood in the South.'

As shown, the form *kəət* in (13) can occur in two environments, but *mii*₃ may occur only without the adverb *khîn*, as shown in (14a). This gives us evidence that *kəət* in the two sentences should be considered to be two distinct lexical items belonging to two separate subclasses.

With evidence from the grammatically significant environments criteria, verbs of this class may be divided with the feature [\pm ncpt] (inception) into two classes according to their cooccurrence with the path adverb *khîn* 'up'.

SR-1	+lctn	->	[\pm ncpt]
	+mprs		
	+trns		

³ However, it is found that when an object of *mii* indicates a gathering together for a specific purpose such as a negotiation and a conference, not a natural phenon, *mii* may coocur with the adverb *khîn* 'up', as shown below. This could be an instance of a selectional restriction of the noun phrase following *mii*. For example

- **mii* *kaansummana* *kiawkáp* *phasa* *thai* *khîn* *thĩi*₄ *roonræm* *nii*
 exist seminar about language Thai up at hotel this
 'There is a seminar on Thai language at this hotel.'

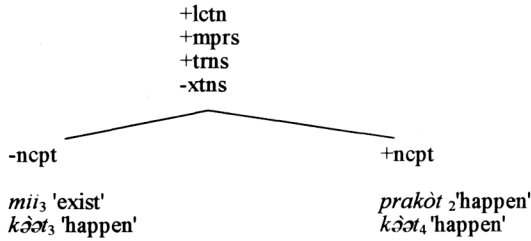


Figure 2: Syntactic Subclassification of Non-extension Impersonal Locational Transitive Verbs

4.1. Non-extension True-impersonal Locational Non-inception Transitive Verbs

Non-extension true-impersonal locational non-inception transitive verbs expect a locational complement and do not allow the presence of the path adverb *khin*₄ 'up'. They include *mii*₃ 'to exist' and *kəət*₃ 'to occur'. These verbs do not allow the presence of any grammatical subject.

- (15) a.
- | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>mii</i> ₃
exist
Index
+trns
+mprs
+lctn
-xtns
-ncpt
-psdo
0[+Nom]
 -rfrn
0[+AGT]
0[+actr]
0([+Nom])
2([+Acc])
2([+PAT])
3[+lctn]
3[+LOC] | <i>phī</i>
ghost
2ndex
Acc
PAT | <i>nay</i>
inside
3ndex
+lctn
LOC | <i>bāan</i>
house
4ndex | <i>nīi</i>
this
5ndex
+Det | <i>rəə</i>
Ques
6ndex
+Sprt |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
- 'There are ghosts in this house?' (Lit.)

The noun phrases *nay bân nîi* 'inside this house' headed by the locational noun *nay* 'inside' in (15a) may be preposed, as shown in (15b).

- (15) b. *nay* *bân* *nîi* *mii*₃ *phĩi* *rõõ*
 in house this exist ghost Ques
 +N +lctn +lctn
 +lctn +mprs
 LOC +trns

'In this house, there are ghosts?'

The ability of the noun phrase *nay bân nîi* 'in this house' to occur both at the beginning of the sentence, as in (15b), and at the end of the sentence without a pause and a topic marker, as in (15a), illustrates that this noun phrase is a locative noun phrase of the impersonal verb *mii*₃ 'to exist', rather than a subject of a personal verb.

When a locational noun occurs sentence-initially, the same postposing test may serve as a reliable test in distinguishing a subject from a preposed locative noun phrase. Consider (16):

- (16) a. *bân* *nîi* *mii*₁ *phĩi*
 house this have ghost

'This house has ghosts.'

- b. **mii*₁ *phĩi* *bân* *nîi*
 have ghost house this

The example (16b) suggests that *bân nîi* in (16a) is subject of the non-extension personal transitive verb *mii*₁ 'to have'. This is because the noun phrase *bân nîi* in (16a) cannot be postposed without a pause, as shown in the ungrammatical (16b). Instead, it can only be postposed via postposing topicalization, that is with a pause and a topic marker, as in (16c).

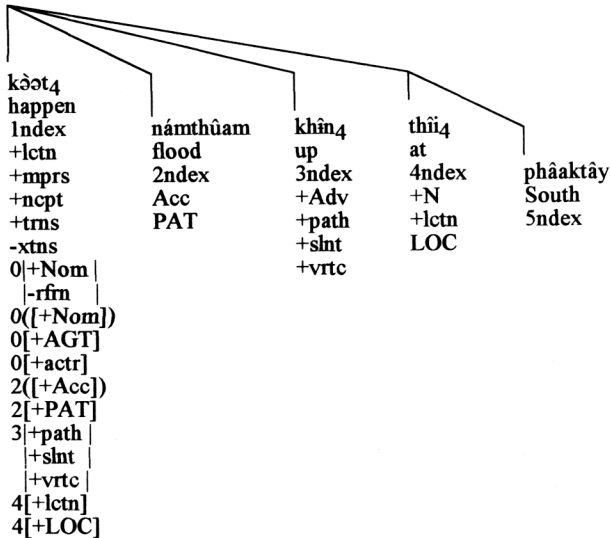
- (16) c. *mii*₁ *phĩi* *ná?* [PAUSE] *bân* *nîi* *nà*
 exist ghost prt house this TOP

'Has ghosts, this house.' (Lit.)

4.2. Non-extension True-impersonal Locational Inception Transitive Verbs

Non-extension true-impersonal locational inception transitive verbs are transitive verbs which do not allow an overt grammatical subject but which require the presence of the path adverb with the feature [+path,+vrtc,+slnt] namely, *khîn*₄. This class is limited in number and includes *kəət*₄ 'to happen' and *prakət*₂ 'to appear'.

(17)



'There is a flood in the South.'

The locative complement noun phrase of the verb *kəət*₃ may be omitted contextually. The question pull test (Hasagawa 1988:71) may help to identify this missing constituent as a complement. When the given information seems incomplete, an addressee will use questions such as 'what?'/who?'/where?' to retrieve required information until the complete sentence is recovered, as shown below.

- (18) A: kəət phayú? yà
 occur storm big
 'There is a big storm.'

B: *thīi*₄ *nǎy*
 at where
 'Where?'

A: *thīi*₄ *Khaway*
 at *Kaui*
 'At *Kaui*.'

Sookgasem (1992a:291-293, 1992b:2), working within the HPSG framework, argues that Thai has two types of subjects: preverbal subjects and postverbal subjects. The forms *mii* 'to exist' and *kǎt* 'to occur' are instances of a limited set of verbs occurring in the verb-subject construction in Thai. In other words, the noun phrase following *mii* (i.e. *phīi* 'ghost' in (15)) is not an object but rather a subject of the verb *mii*. Her argument is based on the three criteria: passivization, imperativization, and VP topicalization.

According to Sookgasem (1992:291), only transitive verbs in Thai may be passivized with the *thīuk*₅ construction. Since a noun phrase following *mii* cannot be passivized, she concludes then that the noun phrase after *mii* must be a subject, rather than an object of the verb. However, 1) it does not follow that if only transitive verbs can be passivized, then all transitive verbs can be passivized; and 2) not all transitive verbs in Thai may trigger the *thīuk*₅ passive construction. Only activity non-factitive transitive verbs which are perceived as affecting a Patient, such as *tii*₁ 'to hit' and *dū*₁ 'to reproach', may occur as an embedded verb of *thīuk*₅ and *doon*₄, as shown in (19). While activity factitive transitive verbs such as *wāat*₄ 'to draw' may be passivized only with the *dooy*₁ construction as illustrated in (20), non-activity transitive verbs such as *dāyyn*₁ 'to hear' and *mǎn*₁ 'to resemble' cannot be passivized at all, as seen in (21) (Indrabarya 1994:168-178, 270, 275-276). Thus, her passive criterion is not generally valid.

(19) a. *mêe* *dū*? *nīt*
 mother reproach Nīt
 '(Nīt's) mother reproached Nīt.'

b. *nīt* *thīuk*₅/*doon*₄ *mêe* *dū*?
 Nīt undergo mother reproach
 'Nīt was reproached by her mother.'

- (20) a.

thomayantii	khân	níyaay	rián	níi
Thomaryantii	write	novel	CL	this

'Thomayantii wrote this novel.'
- b.

??níyaay	rián	níi	thiuk ₅ /doon ₄	thomayantii	khân
novel	CL	this	undergo	Thomaryantii	write

'This novel was written by Thomayantii.'
- c.

níyaay	rián	níi	khân	dooy	thomayantii
novel	CL	this	write	by	Thomaryantii

'This novel was written by Thomayantii.'
- (21) a.

chán	mñan	phôo
I	resemble	father

'I resemble my father.'
- b.

*phôo	thiuk ₅ /doon ₄	chán	mñan
father	undergo	I	resemble

'(My) father is resembled by me.'
- c.

*phôo	mñan	dooy	chán
father	resemble	by	I

'(My) father is resembled by me.'

Another test Sookgasem employed is imperativization, according to which only a subject may be imperativized (Sookgasem 1992:288-289), as shown in (22b).

(22) (Sookgasem's 17a and 17b)

- a.

mii	phayú?	nay	thaleesaay	níi	thâwnán
exist	storm	in	desert	this	only

'There exist storms only in this desert.'

b. phayú? PAUSE mii nay thaleesaay nii
 storm exist in desert this

thâwnán ná
 only IMP

'Storms, exist only in this desert.'

Since one can command the word *phayú?* 'storm' in (22b), Sookgasem concludes that the noun phrase *phayú?* in (22a) must be the subject of the sentence, yielding the verb-subject construction. Such an analysis is statable in a powerful transformational framework, but from the constrained monostratal lexicase point of view, the imperative sentence in (22b) is not related to (22a) but to (23) below.

(23) phayú? bɛɛp nii mii₂ nay thaleesaay
 storm kind this exist in desert
 Nom +lctn +lctn
 PAT -mprs LOC
 actr -trns

nii thâwnan
 this only

'This kind of storm occurs only in this desert.'

Thus, in sentence (22) there are two lexical items *mii* 'to exist'. The form *mii* in (22a) is an impersonal locational transitive verb *mii*₃, while the form *mii* in (22b) and (23) is a personal locational intransitive verb *mii*₂ 'to exist', requiring an overt referential subject *phayú?* 'storm'. Two pieces of supporting evidence are the result of the postposing test and the postposing topicalization. The sentence (22b) becomes unacceptable when *phayú? bɛɛp nii* is postposed to the end of the sentence without a pause or a final particle and a topic marker, as in (24a). The sentence is acceptable only in the postposing topicalization test, which makes use of both a pause and a topic marker, as in (24b).

(24) a. *mii₂ nay thaleesaay nii thâwnan
 exist in desert this only

phayú? bɛɛp nii
 storm kind this

'This kind of storm occurs only in this desert.'

b. *mii*₂ *nay* *thaleesaay* *nii* *thâwnan* *lèʔ*
 exist in desert this only prt

[PAUSE] *phayúʔ* *bèep* *nii* *nàʔ*
 storm kind this TOP

'Exists only in this desert, this kind of storm.'

VP topicalization or Subject postposing is another kind of support adduced for Sookgasem's claim. Since the NP following *mii* may be postposed, as in (25), she concludes that it is the subject of *mii* in (22a).

(25) *mii* *nay* *thaleesaay* *nii* *thâwnan*
 exist in desert this only

phayúʔ *reɛŋ* *bèep* *nii*
 storm strong kind this

'Exists only in this desert, this kind of strong storm.' (Sookgasem 1992:294)

However, Sookgasem fails not only to note that (25) is acceptable only with a pause before the postposed noun phrase *phayúʔ reɛŋ bèep nii* 'this kind of strong storm', as shown in (26),

(26) *mii* *nay* *thaleesaay* *nii* *thâwnan* [PAUSE]
 exist in desert this only

phayúʔ *reɛŋ* *bèep* *nii*
 storm strong kind this

'Exists only in this desert, this kind of strong storm.'

but also to notice that (25), which I have rewritten as (26), is ambiguous. Since both a subject and an object may be topicalized via postposing, I argue that (26) is an ambiguous structure. The postposed noun phrase could either be a subject of the personal locational intransitive verb *mii*₂, as shown in (23) or an object of the impersonal locational transitive verb *mii*₃, as in (22a). Thus Sookgasem's VP topicalization is only a type of postposing topicalization in which a subject or an object is postposed. Hence, I contend that there is no verb-subject construction in Thai. There is, however, verbs which do not have a referential subject in their case frame referred to as impersonal verbs. These verbs may also have homophonous personal verb forms. For example, the non-extension locational non-inception

transitive verb *mii*₃ 'to exist' has the personal transitive verb *mii*₁ 'to have' and the personal locational intransitive verb *mii*₂ 'to exist' as homophones.

5. Conclusion

I have illustrated in this paper that there exists a construction in Thai called impersonal verbs construction, rather than verb-subject construction. I have proposed the postposing test and postposing topicalization to identify and differentiate a subject of a sentence from a preverbal locative noun phrase. Non-extension impersonal verbs in Thai do not allow an overt grammatical subject and hence they are true-impersonal. Moreover, non-extension impersonal verbs in Thai are also found to occur only with Locus actant and transitive verbs and thus are all classified as non-extension impersonal locational transitive verbs. These verbs are subdivided into non-inception and inception subclasses depending on whether they may cooccur with the path adverb *khin* 'up'.

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