

## 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 jiauw4 '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 - hyý3, 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 nõng5 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 hyý3 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

process of reinterpretation and grammaticalization, as it had happened with many Tai verbs in serial constructions. Eventually in some languages it became a marker of reciprocity and cooperativeness, while in others it became either a preposition indicating the addressee or a particle exhibiting correlation, cf. St.Thai *saam5 t002 haa3* 'three to five', *saam5 khrang4 t002 wan1* 'three times a day'.

The lack of data on these languages precludes from coming to definite conclusion about this unit. But it looks as if in the Northern Tai languages categorization of this morpheme has gone very far. A. Moskalev (1971) and Chinese linguists defined it as a prefix of reciprocity in Chuang. It seems that this morpheme together with morphemes *teng1* for passive and *hai3* for causative make up a paradigm of preverbs as a prerequisite for the appearance of voice category in this group of TL.

This morpheme in the form *'tu3'* obtains in some languages of Kamsui group, as Sui, Maonan, e.g. Sui *ya2 ai3 man1 tu3 njum3* 'They hate each other' [lit. two person he/they Reciprocal to hate]; Maonan *ya1 to2 kwi3 tu3 taaw3* 'Two buffaloes are butting each other' [lit. two Clf. buffalo Reciprocal to butt].

Besides that this morpheme occurs also in Tai languages of central branch where it competes with reciprocal morpheme *kan* (see next paragraph) and sometimes draws it into contaminated construction *<t0...kan>*, cf. Tai-Tho *luuk5 laan1 t02 chung1 kan1* 'Children lead each other by hand' [lit. children Reciprocal to lead by hand Reciprocal]; Nung *pi6 n00ng2 t02 tap5 kan1* 'Brothers kick each other' (lit. elder brother younger brother Reciprocal to kick Reciprocal). The usage of either of three possible ways is admissible, but, as Hoang Van Ma et al. posit, in practice the construction *<t02 V kan1>* is preferable (Hoang Van Ma (1971:38). In general, it is another corroboration that the Central branch of TL in many aspects is intermediate between Southeastern and Northern branches.

Among the most widely spread and well known markers of Reciprocal is morpheme *kan* (*kyn*, *kin*) which predominately occurs in the Tai languages of Southeastern branch. Various authors treat and define it differently. For instance, R. Noss (Noss 1964) calls it "mutual pronoun", Vichin Panupong (Panupong 1970) and N. Solntseva (Solntseva 1986) refer to it as a reciprocal adverb, R.N. Campbell (Campbell 1969) considered it as a marker of plurality, P. Bee (Bee 1972) defined it as an adverb of compressence and J. Plam (Plam 1972) labeled it as an auxiliary morpheme to mark the reciprocal voice.

In spite of different definitions and linguistic evaluation of its position in the grammatical system all the authors agree in their views about its function. It displays the semantic nature of the grammatical subject and its relation to the event. But in contradistinction to the morpheme *to4* preceding the verb it follows the verb together with its object, as in the following examples: St. Thai *ra4-vaang2 thaang1 raw1 ve4 kin1 khaaw3 kan1 nai1 pha3-ta2-khaan1* 'On the way we dropped in the restaurant to eat together' [lit. on way we to drop in to eat rice Reciprocal in restaurant]; Saek *phuak5-ruu4 dai3 phaana4 kin4 tee2 pii1 tlaaj1 an6 thua13* 'We met last year in the forest' [lit. we Past to meet Reciprocal since year last in forest]; Lao *khaw1 vaw3 njang1 kan2 b005 dai3* 'They can not say anything to each other' [lit. they to say something Reciprocal not to be able]; St.Thai *myang1 thai1 kb2 chyy3n3-myy3n3 kan1 thuk muu2-law2* 'The whole of Thailand had a good time' [lit. country Thai then merry gay Reciprocal every group]; Shan *van4 nyng4 khaw1 khyyn4 hop5 kan1 nai4 kaat3, tong5 kan1 tak5 kan1 jaw5* 'Once they again met in the market, greeted and saluted each other' [lit. day one they to return/again to meet Reciprocal in market to greet Reciprocal to salute Reciprocal completed]; Tai-Ya *haw2 swong1 kun2 lje8 sya3 kan1* 'We exchanged clothes' [lit. we two persons to exchange clothes]; St.Thai *khaw5 pen1 pii3 n00ng4 kan1* 'They are brothers' [lit. they to be elder brother younger brother Reciprocal].

The origin of this morpheme (*kan* etc.) is not clear so far. It seems that its present phonetic form is a result of step by step phonetic contraction of such a phrase as Shan *k05 nyng3 l0 k05 nyng3* 'each other', 'one another' referred by Cushing (1871). This phrase consists of a classifier for humane beings *ko5* which also means 'person', of a numeral *nyng3* 'one' and a conjunction *l0* 'and', i.e. lit. person one and person one. The contraction of such

phrases is a common phenomenon. An intermediate form between the phrase and the word seems to be the phrase *kan1 lè3 kan1* 'each other' still employed in St.Thai and Lao. The first stage supposedly was the coalescence of a classifier and a numeral 'one', that is characteristic for many TL. The subsequent stage probably was the reduction of the phrase in order to do away with tautology. It would be very much to the point to refer to the Maonan language in which reciprocity is also exhibited with the help of classifiers. e.g. *haam1 ni4 man1 ni4 to5 ni4* 'Three persons taught each other' [lit. three Clf. they Clf. to teach Clf.].

As it has been mentioned above, the construction in question bears both meanings: reciprocal and cooperative depending on the semantic compatibility of words and common sense, cf. St.Thai *tiilhua5 kan1* to punch each other's heads' [lit.to beat head Reciprocal] and *tiil lek2 kan1* 'to hammer together' [lit.to beat iron Cooperative]. The discrimination between 'reciprocalness' and 'cooperativeness' seems to manifest itself, if it exists at all, somewhere at the depths of thought, at any rate, it hardly appears in surface syntax. The industrious attempt of P. Bee to discover the rule eventually were at a standstill. When all was said and done he came to compromise conclusion: defined morpheme 'kan' as "adverb of compresence", that, as he supposes, covers its both functions. My tentative observations show that when morpheme of Reciprocal implies reciprocity, it can not be substituted for synonymous adverbs and the like, and when it implies cooperativeness it can be changed for an adverb or a periphrastic phrase. However, this inference still needs further corroboration, based upon data of various TL.

Besides two morphemes examined above there are few words more that are employed to convey the meaning of reciprocity. For example, morpheme *diaw1* [liaw1, dew1,lew1] 'one', 'single', 'common', which occurs in TL spoken in Northeastern Laos and Northwestern Vietnam (Tai-Yang, Tai-Muei, Tai-men, Phutai etc.), e.g. *Tai-muei thiang1 diaw1* 'to quarrel with each other', or morpheme *thoong3* 'same, common' in the Li language, e.g. *zui3 dang1 zui3 tsaa1 thoong3* 'to look at each other' [lit. to look at nose to look at eyes]. Their behavior looks like that of adverbs, therefore they are beyond the scope of consideration here.

Thus, we may resume that there is no common way for displaying reciprocal and cooperative in TL. Different TL resort to specific means to manifest this category. Only morphemes *to* and *kan* may claim its right to be a more or less grammaticalized markers of Reciprocal-Cooperative in TL. Such a diversity should be regarded as an evidence of rather recent and separate development of reciprocal-cooperative in TL.

Lastly, reflexive diathesis, in accordance with its definition, exhibits event the goal of which is the subject in itself and which don't involve other objects. Reflexive diathesis presupposes that the subject and the object of the sentence refer to the same entity. For the realization of this relationship there is no overt expression yet in surface grammatical structure. This category usually manifests itself by lexical units or periphrastic constructions. The rudiments of this diathesis shoot out in some languages, first of all in St. Thai and Lao. The element that claims its right to be the marker of Reflexive is morpheme *tua1* or *tol*, etymologically 'body'. Thus, the process is going on according to universal rules. For example, Thai, Lao *kha2-jaa15 tua1* 'to develop' (intr.), *ruam1 tua1* 'to assemble, to unite' (intr.), *kòò5 tua1* 'to take shape, to form' (*kòò2* 'to erect'), *thòon5 tua1* 'to pull out, to retreat' (*thòon* 'to pull'), *jèeg2 tua1* 'to separate, to get detached', *sa2-nỳ5 tua1* 'to present oneself', *tang3 tua1* 'to establish oneself', *haai5 tua1* 'to disappear' (*haai5* 'to disappear'), *pra2kot2 tua* 'to appear' (*pra2kot2* 'to appear') and so on and so forth

J. Hinds (1988) quite reasonably rejects the existence of reflexive pronouns that might be regarded as markers of Reflexive in Thai. He recognizes only the existence of several idiomatic expressions with morpheme *tua* which looks like a reflexive marker, while "the broadest interpretation of this morpheme may remain 'body'" Hinds 1988:13). J. Hinds also posits that morpheme *tua*, as well as some others, though have some relevance to reflexization, eventually are full words. Their primary function is not a reflexive function, it is only coreferential (ibid. 17). General trend of his article seems quite correct, but a few

points look too explicit. Indeed, the number of verbs that are able to combine with morpheme *tua* is still rather small, but it tends to grow. The verb phrases with morpheme *tua* for the most part are not idiomatic, as it could be seen from above cited examples. To substantiate this view we can provide with more examples from modern Thai and Lao: St.Thai *khaw5 kô2 pai1 ruam1 tua1 thii3 cut2 kam1-not2* 'They will assemble at the fixed place' [lit. they then to go to assemble Reflexive at point to fix]; Lao *iik5 bôô5 don2 taa2-ven2 kô5 khong2-ca5 haai1 tua2 khaw6 pai2 lii3 juu5 san1 phuu2 myyt6* 'Soon the sun will surely disappear behind the Black mountains' [lit. more not long sun then surely to disappear Reflexive to enter to go to hide...]. In these sentences the verb phrase with morpheme *tua* are hardly idiomatic and the morpheme *tua* in itself adheres to the definition of Reflexive. However, it is not high time to generalize the event and proclaim grammatical category of Reflexive in Thai and Lao. It will at least be premature. This category is just at rudimentary stage. It seems that the process will develop further involving new groups of verbs into constructions with morpheme *tua*. But it may also come to a standstill.

So, we examined four constructions that have more or less grounds to be treated as diathesis constructions. The issue is: do they constitute category or super category of diathesis in TL? In order to answer this question it is essential to go back to the definition of the term "category" and see to what extent the constructions in point adhere to the given definition and how they correlate to each other. Since Aristotle there are plenty of definitions for category and there is no need to give one more. In my opinion, grammatical category should be based upon the following principals: (1) regularity, i.e. obligatory presence of proper overt unit for expressing a given relationship; (2) universality, i.e. uniformity of exhibiting; (3) absence of lexical meaning in the marker of the category; (4) opposition of forms.

First of all we should dismiss reflexive constructions, because they in fact do not satisfy any condition laid down before. They are a marginal phenomenon that is still in embryo.

Among three types of constructions it is causative construction that most of all satisfies the pre-conditions, though it also has some defects. It is not universal or omnipresent, it has no its own place in syntactic structures.

As to passive construction, it still retains residual meaning of adversity, the usage of diathesis marker in many instances is arbitrary, non universal, some TL are devoid of passive constructions at all, in others its employment is possible under special conditions.

The reciprocal construction is much more uncertain. First, it is not uniform, then it is based on different foundations: either on deverbative, either on pronominalized morpheme, either on adverb or on contaminated form. Among these means only preverb to(B3) looks like an actual auxiliary, while the rest are some sort of specialized adverbs than grammatical markers of a given relationship.

Above examined diathesis constructions do not line up a paradigm members of which are in opposition to one another, in other words, fail to satisfy the preconditions for the member of grammatical category: opposition and non intersection. In Tai sentence, though it happens quite rare, there can simultaneously be two clauses, for instance, passive and causative, that intermingle and form complex construction in which the subject of one clause is an object of another and vice versa. For example: St.Thai *khuam2-chuai3-lyaa5 dang1-klaaw2 thuuk2 khen5 hai3 phaana2 sa2-phaal ôôk2 maal* 'The said assistance has been pushed through the parliament' [lit. assistance as said Passive to push Causative to pass parliament Dir.1 Dir.2]; Lao *kôô2-mai3 bôô5 hai6 (khaa2) thuyk5 (lom2) pat3 piw2 pai2 thua4-thip3* '(the bush) prevented (the vine) from being blown away (by the wind)' [lit. (bush) not Causative (vine) Passive (wind) to blow to float to go away wherever]; Lao *lot3-thip5 thuyk5 ban2-saa2 hai6 jut1 tôô5 naa6 hyan2* 'The bike was ordered to stop in front of house' [lit. bike Passive to order Causative to stop in front of house].

The cooccurrence of Reciprocal and Passive, Reciprocal and Causative is an ordinary fact, e.g. Lao *thii4-din2 thuyk5 beeng-pan2 kan pai2 lêew3* 'The land has been

distributed already' [lit. land Passive to distribute to go completed]; khuu2-fyk1 hai6 nak3-hian2 song5 baan2 kan1 'The trainer tells students to pass ball to each other' [lit. trainer Causative student to pass ball Reciprocal].

Lastly the example of Reflexive and Reciprocal. St.Thai: chaa4 khum4 vat4 thuk4 kha4na4 ca2 pai1 ruam1 tua kan1 tham1 phii4-thii4 song5 nam4 'All groups of parishioners would go to assemble for the sprinkling water ceremony' [lit. people block monastery every group would go to unite Reflexive Reciprocal to do ceremony...].

The explanation of this fact probably lies in that the diathesis markers retain residual meaning of the parent lexemes, they are still sensitive to their original meaning. It looks that for tai mind the certain entity at one and the same time, for instance, can be both a causer and cause, Agent and Patient etc. These notions don't oppose each other and therefor can appear in one sentence.

The aforesaid enables us to posit that there is no grammatical category of diathesis in TL, there are but standard syntactic constructions for displaying corresponding meanings. However the negative inferences, in my opinion, should not distress research fellows. The examination revealed functional roles of certain linguistic elements that has connections with expression of relations between grammatical and functional categories in Tai sentence. Though these elements does not form united system which is likely accounted for by their recent appearance and by uneven degree of grammaticalization, nonetheless a certain relationship between them is evident. It is my firm conviction that the investigation of language units which is the motto of adherents to the theory of grammaticalization should be combined with the exploration of categories, i.e. combination of analyses and synthesis. Ending the paper I would like to cite B. Comrie: "We must always be open to the possibility of finding evidence, perhaps unexpected evidence, in favor of grammatical opposition that we thought non-existent in a particular language" (Comrie 1994:121).

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#### Remarks

Language data are borrowed from many sources not cited here. The transcription of sounds and notation of tones follow the original or tradition, only minor changes are made. Specific Tai sounds are transcribed with the following signs: y - for a high, back, unrounded vowel, è - for a low, front vowel, ý - for a central, neutral vowel, ò - for a low, back, rounded vowel, ɣ - for a velar liquid, symbol j after a consonant marks palatalization.