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

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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 māy--māy ‘(if) not, (then) not’ construction, the reflexive tuēen ‘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 māy--māy ‘(if) not, (then) not’ construction

The first construction in Thai that is difficult for lexicase dependency grammar to accommodate is the conditional negative māy--māy ‘(if) not, (then) not’ construction. In Thai, a negative construction is formed by using the negative adverb māy ‘not’ to negate a verb. (It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the syntactic evidence for treating māy ‘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. pôm māy dōn pay rōŋ rōŋ
   Pom not walk go school
   ‘Pom did not walk to school.’

2. naa māy kłaā khāp rōt eeŋ
   Na not brave drive car oneself
   ‘Na did not dare to drive by herself.’

3. nōk tāt kradaat khaāt
   Nok cut paper tear
   ‘Nok cut paper into pieces.’

4. pāt kļxŋ māy khāt cay māx
   Pat pretend not offend mother
‘Pat pretended not to offend her mother.’

5. Ṯǹɔ y tham khwaamsaʔaat mão hay baan sòkkaprok
   Noy do cleaning not give house dirty
   ‘Noy cleaned the house so that it would not be dirty.’

In sentences (1-2), the adverb mão ‘not’ negates the first commanding verbs dòōn ‘walk’ and klaâ ‘be brave’, respectively, whereas in sentences (3-5), mão negates the resultative verbs khaât ‘tear’, khâtcay ‘offend’, and hày ‘give’, respectively. Sentences (3-5) would be ungrammatical if the adverb mão negated the first commanding verbs, as seen in the following sentences:

6. *nòk mão tât kرادaât khaât
   Nok not cut paper tear
7. *pàt mão klaâ khâtcay mxx
   Pat not pretend offend mother
8. *ǹɔ̀ y mão tham khwaamsaʔaat hày baan sòkkaprok
   Noy not do cleanliness give house dirty

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

The tree stemma demonstrates that the adverb mão ‘not’ negates the first commanding verb dòōn ‘walk’ of sentence (1).

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

\[STEMMA \text{ I}\]

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The tree stemma demonstrates that the adverb máy ‘not’ negates the resultative verb khaat ‘tear’, instead of negating the first commanding verb takt ‘cut’.

Now, consider the following conditional negative máy--mây ‘(if) not, (then) not’ constructions in Thai:

9. máy hîw máy kin
not hungry not eat
(If I / you) don’t feel hungry, (I / you) will not eat.’

10. máy ถึงภูเขา máy ruû
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 yàa ‘do not’ or háâm ‘(it is) prohibited’, as in (10) and (11), respectively.

11. yaa phûût siôñ dan
do not speak voice loud
‘Do not speak loudly.’

12. háâm kin khanom nay ถึงภูเขา riôñ
prohibit eat desert in classroom
‘(It is) prohibited to eat some dessert in the classroom.’

Sentences (9) and (10) cannot be negated by either yàa ‘do not’ or háâm ‘(it is prohibited’, as (13-16) illustrate:
13. *yaâ hiw yaâ kin
do not hungry do not eat

14. *haâm hiw haâm kin
prohibit hungry prohibit eat

15. *yaâ lâ proximity yaâ ruú
do not try do not know

16. *haâm lâ proximity haâm ruú
prohibit try prohibit know

The question arises as to how to determine the internal structure of sentences containing conditional negative construction. Consider sentence (10), repeated here as (17):

17. mây lâ proximity mây ruú
not try not know
‘(If I / you) do not try, (I / you) will not know.’

There are three possible ways to assign the internal structure to sentence (17). The first hypothesis is that mây lâ proximity and mây ruú are treated as a coordinated clause. The structure would look like the following:

STEMMA III

However, this structure is not possible because if mây lâ proximity and mây ruú were to be coordinated, it means that the criteria for justifying a coordinate clause would be applicable with mây lâ proximity mây ruú clause. Let consider these criteria step by step. The first criterion is that constituents that are coordinated must have a coordinate conjunction, as in (18). However, there is no coordinate conjunction that can combine mây lâ proximity and mây ruú, as in (19):

18. maa káp mxxw pen satruu kan
dog and cat be enemy reciprocal
‘Dogs are cats are enemies.’

19. *mây lâ proximity káp mây ruú
not try and not know
The second criterion is that constituents in a coordinate clause can be reversible as in (20). However, *máy *lżąη and *máy ruú cannot be coordinated as in (21):

20. nákrikn l?x? aajaan kháw óprom myywaannii
student and teacher participate work-shop yesterday
‘Students and teachers participated in the workshop yesterday.’
21. *máy lţţη máy ruú
not try not know

The third criterion is that constituents in a coordinate clause can be multiple in number, as in (22). Again, the conditional negative máy lţţη and máy ruú cannot be multiple, as in (23):

22. maa káp mxw l?x? käy pen sātṛuu kan
dog and cat and chicken be enemy reciprocal
‘Dogs, cats, and chickens are enemies.’
23. *máy lţţη káp máy ruú l?x? máy fāη
not try and not know and not listen

The conclusion is that the double negative clause máy lţţη máy ruú cannot be coordinated because their syntactic manifestation is against the criteria of justifying a coordinate construction.

The second hypothesis is that máy lţţη ‘do not try’ is treated as the first commanding verb of the clause, the internal structure would look like the following:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>lţţη</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>máy</td>
<td>+V</td>
<td>ruú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1index</td>
<td>-trms</td>
<td>4index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Adv</td>
<td>-fint</td>
<td>+V</td>
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<tr>
<td>1([+Adv])</td>
<td>3index</td>
<td>-trms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4([-fint])</td>
<td>-fint</td>
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<tr>
<td>2&lt;1([+Adv])</td>
<td>3([+Adv])</td>
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<td>2&gt;4([-fint])</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

STEMMA IV
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The internal structure illustrated in stemma IV will be discussed along with the third hypothesis.

The third hypothesis is that máy ruú ‘do not know’ is treated as the first commanding verb, the internal structure would be like the following:
Ordinarily, in Thai, the criterion used to find the commanding verb in a clause is that the highest verb can be negated by the negative adverb mày ‘not’, e.g.,

24. khaw wîn pay khyn rõtmeé
   he run go board bus
   ‘He ran to board the bus.’

25. khaw mày wîn pay khyn rõtmeé
   he not run go board bus
   ‘He did not run to board the bus.’

26. *khaw wîn mày pay khyn rõtmeé
    he run not go board bus

27. *khaw wîn pay mày khyn rõtmeé
    he run go not board bus

(Sentence (27) is grammatical if it is treated as having two separate predicate clauses instead of one predicate clause. The two clauses would be khaw wîn pay ‘he ran’ in which wîn is the first commanding verb and the clause mày khyn rõtmeé ‘he does not board a bus’ in which khyn is the first commanding verb.)

The adverb mày ‘not’ can negate only the verb wîn ‘run’ in sentence (25), but not the verbs pay ‘go’ or khyn ‘board’. This means that wîn is the commanding verb in the clause. Neither pay nor khyn can serve this function. Thus, the verb wîn is the verb that commands the other two verbs but not vice versa.

However, the negation test mày ‘not’ cannot be used to determine the commanding verb for sentence (17) because sentence (17) both clauses has been negated by the conditional negative mày—mày. The verbs lûn ‘try’ and ruû ‘know’ in both clauses can be treated as commanding verbs, and they could appear as formulaic structures.

Nonetheless, there is another way to justify the internal structure of sentence (17). That is by an insertion of kû ‘then’. In Thai, there are two different lexical entries of
functioning as an adverb: ក្នុង I meaning ‘also’ and ក្នុង 2 meaning ‘then’. They differ in their syntactic distribution. That is, ក្នុង I appears without a preceding predicate dependent sister, whereas ក្នុង 2 always appears with a preceding predicate dependent sister (Savetamalya 1996). Based on the syntactic characteristic of ក្នុង 2, the internal structure of sentence (17) would favor stemma V over stemma IV. That is, if ក្នុង 2 is inserted, it must be inserted after មាន លើ ញិត which would bring about sentence (28):

28. មាន លើ ញិត ក្នុង 2 មាន រុី
not try then not know
‘(If you) don’t try, then (you) would not know.’

Sentence (28) indicates that ក្នុង 2 as an adverb requires a preceding predicate dependent sister which will appear on the left side of the stemma. The structure would look like the following:

STEMMA VI

The structure illustrated in stemma VI helps validating that the internal structure of the conditional negative clause មាន លើ ញិត មាន រុី must be the same as that illustrated in stemma V.

The conclusion here is that by using lexicase dependency grammar in analyzing the conditional negative មាន--មាន ‘(if not, then) not’ construction in Thai, there is a strong syntactic argument which could justify selecting one structure over other structure and would conform with native speaker’s interpretation of this type of construction.
3. Reflexive construction

In Thai, a reflexive construction is introduced by the reflexive pronoun *tue?eeŋ* ‘oneself’. Generally, in an accusative language, the reflexive pronoun is coindexed with the actor, not a nominative case form marked a constituent (which bears a case relation). Or in other words, “An antecedent of a reflexive pronoun is an actor which is not necessarily the grammatical subject of a sentence.” (Starosta 1996: p.c.). If the reflexive pronoun is not coindexed with the actor, the grammar would predict that the sentence is ungrammatical. Compare (29) and (30):

29. phim laāŋ caan duōy tūe?eeŋ
   AGT PAT MNS
   Nom
   actr
   Pim wash dish by oneself
   ‘Pim washed the dishes by herself.’

30. *caan laāŋ duōy tūe?eeŋ
    PAT MNS
    Nom
    -actr
    dish wash by oneself

In (29), the reflexive pronoun *tue?eeŋ* ‘oneself’ coindexes with the actor of the clause phim ‘Pim’, which in this case is also the grammatical subject marked by the feature [+Nom] (nominative). If there is no actor, but a nominative subject, the reflexive pronoun cannot be coindexed with the actor, thus resulting in the ungrammaticality of the sentence (30).

In Thai, the reflexive pronoun *tue?eeŋ* is always coindexed with the noun marked with the feature actor [+actr], as in (31). The interpretation of the reflexive pronoun *tue?eeŋ* ‘oneself’ is interpreted as associating with one single event. Consider the following sentences:

31. nit thaasii baān tūe?eeŋ
   Nit paint house oneself
   ‘Nit painted the house herself.’

32. nit chom tūe?eeŋ
   Nit admire oneself
   ‘Nit admired herself.’

33. nit hen tūe?eeŋ nay kracök
   Nit see oneself in mirror
   ‘Nit saw herself in a mirror.’

The interpretation of the reflexive pronoun *tue?eeŋ* ‘oneself’ in sentence (31-33) corresponds to only one single event. In sentence (31), the interpretation is that ‘Nit painted the house herself’. In sentence (32), the interpretation is that ‘Nit admires (only) herself’. And in sentence (33), the interpretation is that ‘Nit saw (only) herself in a mirror’. However, if the actor nouns are coordinated, the interpretation of the reflexive
pronoun *tuəʔeeŋ* 'oneself' can be interpreted as associating with either one single event or multiple events, as in (34-36):

34. nit káp phim thaasii baán tuəʔeeŋ
Nit and Pim paint house oneself
a. 'Nit and Pim painted the house themselves.'
b. 'Nit and Pim painted their own houses.'

35. nit káp phim chom tuəʔeeŋ
Nit and Pim admire oneself
a. 'Nit and Pim each admired themselves.'
b. 'Nit and Pim admired themselves.'

36. nit káp phim hen tuəʔeeŋ nay kracök
Nit and Pim see oneself in mirror
a. 'Nit and Pim each saw themselves in a mirror.'
b. 'Nit and Pim saw themselves in a mirror.'

Semantically, a coordinate subject noun phrase regards a reflexive pronoun as a separate participant, which correspond to the interpretation of a single event, represented in the (a) meaning of sentences (34-36), or as one single unit, which corresponds to the interpretation of multiple events, represented in the (b) meaning of sentences (34-36). Syntactically, by looking at the internal structure of a sentence there is no way to capture the two different interpretations. The two-way interpretation is directly assigned by the predicate of the clause. That is, the predicate would interpret an action which would consequently refer back to the actor nominative subject. The presence or absence of a reflexive pronoun has nothing to do with the two-way interpretation of a whole clause. The multiple interpretation is built-in in a coordinate noun phrase and results in this two-way interpretation. Consider the following tree stemmas of sentence (31) and (34) respectively:

```
   _______  
  |      |  
  |      |
thaa\text{\textup{\textsc{ii}}}
  
  2\text{\textup{\textsc{index}}}
  
  nit
+\text{\textup{\textsc{v}}}
  
  3\text{\textup{\textsc{index}}}
tu\text{\textup{\textsc{ee}}}
  
  ba\text{\textup{\textsc{an}}}
  
  4\text{\textup{\textsc{index}}}

Index
+\text{\textup{\textsc{trans}}}
  
Nom
+\text{\textup{\textsc{fint}}}
  
AGT
1[+\text{\textup{\textsc{Nom}}}]  
  
actr
1[+\text{\textup{\textsc{acotr}}}]  

1[+\text{\textup{\textsc{AGT}}}]
  
3[+\text{\textup{\textsc{PAT}}}]

4([+\text{\textup{\textsc{COR}}}])
  
2>4([+\text{\textup{\textsc{COR}}}])

STEMMA VII
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4. Negated quantifier noun phrase

The sentence consisting of the noun phrase in that is ambiguous, as shown in (37)

Negated quantifier may think, not every, and a classifier (Sawommaia 1983). Ordinarily, a negated quantifier noun phrase is a noun phrase consisting of a noun with a


Two nouns are related to one that is recognized for a semantic explanation (Kurzban)

The fact regarding the reflexive pronoun in that within that is a noun with verbal

Predicative:

The reflexive pronoun does not associate with the accusative noun but a verb with verbal.

The reflexive pronoun is independent from the accusative noun, which confirms that the scope of the reflexive pronoun is not a verb form. The reflexive pronoun is used in a verb form, not a noun. This indicates that the reflexive pronoun is a morphological marker.

This kind of two-way interpretation, which is imposed by the predicative in association with the accusative noun, is not common in the interpretation comes from the predicative clause. In association with the conjunction, it is shown. The two-way interpretation is that the phrase is also two-way interpretation. The first interpretation is that the first phrase is the predication phrase, and the second phrase is the reflexive.

On the contrary, there is only one interpretation for sentence (31), which is N1 of a predicated reflexive.

STEMMA VII

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\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c}
\text{COR} & \text{Pat} & \text{Agt} & \text{Nom} \\
\text{Acc} & \text{Pat} & \text{Agt} & \text{Nom} \\
\text{Index} & \text{Index} & \text{Index} & \text{Index} \\
\text{Argument} & \text{Argument} & \text{Argument} & \text{Argument} \\
\end{array}
\]
In Thai, a noun appearing in a bare noun phrase is ambiguous. That is, a bare noun can refer to one individual or more than one. The words 'tum', 'paw', and 'hit' can each refer to having two meanings. There are four dichotomies for the overall meaning of sentence (37) as shown in the English glosses above. However, the grammar has provided some tools which can reduce some of the ambiguity of a bare noun phrase. One of the tools, which is introduced here, is to use the quantifier 'thuk' 'very' and a classifier to modify a bare noun. This type of classifier construction would limit the meaning of the noun it modifies to refer only to one individual. If the classifier construction modifies the noun 'tum', the interpretation will be reduced to two, as indicated in (38). And if the classifier construction modifies the noun 'paw', the interpretation will be reduced to two, as seen in (39).

Notice that nouns are not modified by the quantifier 'thuk' 'very' and a classifier remain ambiguous, as indicated in the translation of the bare noun 'tum', target in (38) and the bare noun 'paw', target in (39). It is concluded here that the construction consisting of 'thuk' 'very' and a classifier is able to disambiguate the meaning of a bare noun in Thai. However, this type of construction is negated by 'mey' 'not', this would result in an ambiguous interpretation of the noun it modifies. Consider the following sentence:

'Not a single arrow hit the target (all missed).'

'Not every arrow hit the target (some did, some did not).'

Analyzing sentence (40) using lexicae dependency grammar, the tree stemma would look like the following:
The internal structure of the noun phrase thanuu māy thūk luūk in (40) demonstrates that māy ‘not’, as an adverb, is the dependent sister of the adjective thūk ‘every’ and in turn thūk is the dependent sister of the classifier luūk. Since māy is the dependent sister of thūk, it means that semantically māy directly negates thūk. As a result, there can be only one semantic interpretation for this noun phrase, which is ‘not a single arrow’. The question arises as to how the grammar could predict the other possible meaning of the noun phrase thanuu māy thūk luūk ‘not every arrow’. The semantic ambiguity of a negated quantifier noun phrase can be accommodated within lexicase dependency grammar by setting up a semantic default feature marked on the adjective thūk ‘every’.

The feature [+cltv] (collective) is a semantic default feature which will be introduced into lexicase dependency grammar in this paper for the first time. The [+cltv] implies a default interpretation. That is, the feature [+cltv] marks a collective meaning, whereas [-cltv] marks an individual meaning. If the negative adverb māy ‘not’ negates the feature [+cltv], we would get the interpretation of ‘not a single one’. If the negative adverb māy ‘not’ negates the feature [-cltv], we would get the interpretation of ‘not every one’. For sentence (40), the default interpretation is individual, thus the interpretation of ‘Not every arrow hit the target.’ is preferable to the collective interpretation of ‘Not a single arrow hit the target’. This interpretation matches native speaker intuition.

Thus, introducing a semantic default feature into lexicase dependency grammar would assist in explaining how the two-way interpretation dealing with individual and collective meanings has arisen in the negated quantifier noun phrase in Thai.
5. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that lexicase dependency grammar can successfully account for three different kinds of constructions in Thai. They include the conditional negative máy--máy ‘(if) not, (then) not’ construction, the reflexive pronoun tuǐeη ‘oneself’ construction, and a negated quantifier noun phrase. What we have learned from the paper is that lexicase dependency grammar has revealed its explanatory capability in accounting for such syntactic phenomena. However, it could be pointed out that some constructions, such as the reflexive pronoun tuǐeη ‘oneself’ cannot be accounted for in purely grammatical terms, but must be explained in terms of semantics instead. This leads to the introduction of the semantic default feature which is marked on a quantifier phrase in Thai.

Major constructions in Thai, such as Noun-headed constructions and Verb-headed constructions, have already been successfully accounted for by lexicase dependency theory. By analyzing minor constructions in Thai, such as the conditional negative máy--máy ‘(if) not, (then) not’, the reflexive pronoun tuǐeη ‘oneself’, and a negated quantifier noun phrase, which have limited occurrence, this paper has shown that the theory can be further refined through the introduction of new concepts. Other mysteries of syntax linger on to challenge those who are fascinated with the exploration of the world of syntax.

References


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