

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 *mây--mây* '(if) not, (then) not' construction, the reflexive *tuə?een* '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 *mây--mây* '(if) not, (then) not' construction

The first construction in Thai that is difficult for lexicase dependency grammar to accomodate is the conditional negative *mây--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 *may* '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. pɔ̌m mây dɔ̌ɔn pay roonriɔ̌n
 Pom not walk go school
 'Pom did not walk to school.'
2. naa mây klaa khàp rót een
 Na not brave drive car oneself
 'Na did not dare to drive by herself.'
3. nók tát kradaàt khaàt
 Nok cut paper tear
 'Nok cut paper into pieces.'
4. pàt klxxŋ mây khàtcay mxx
 Pat pretend not offend mother

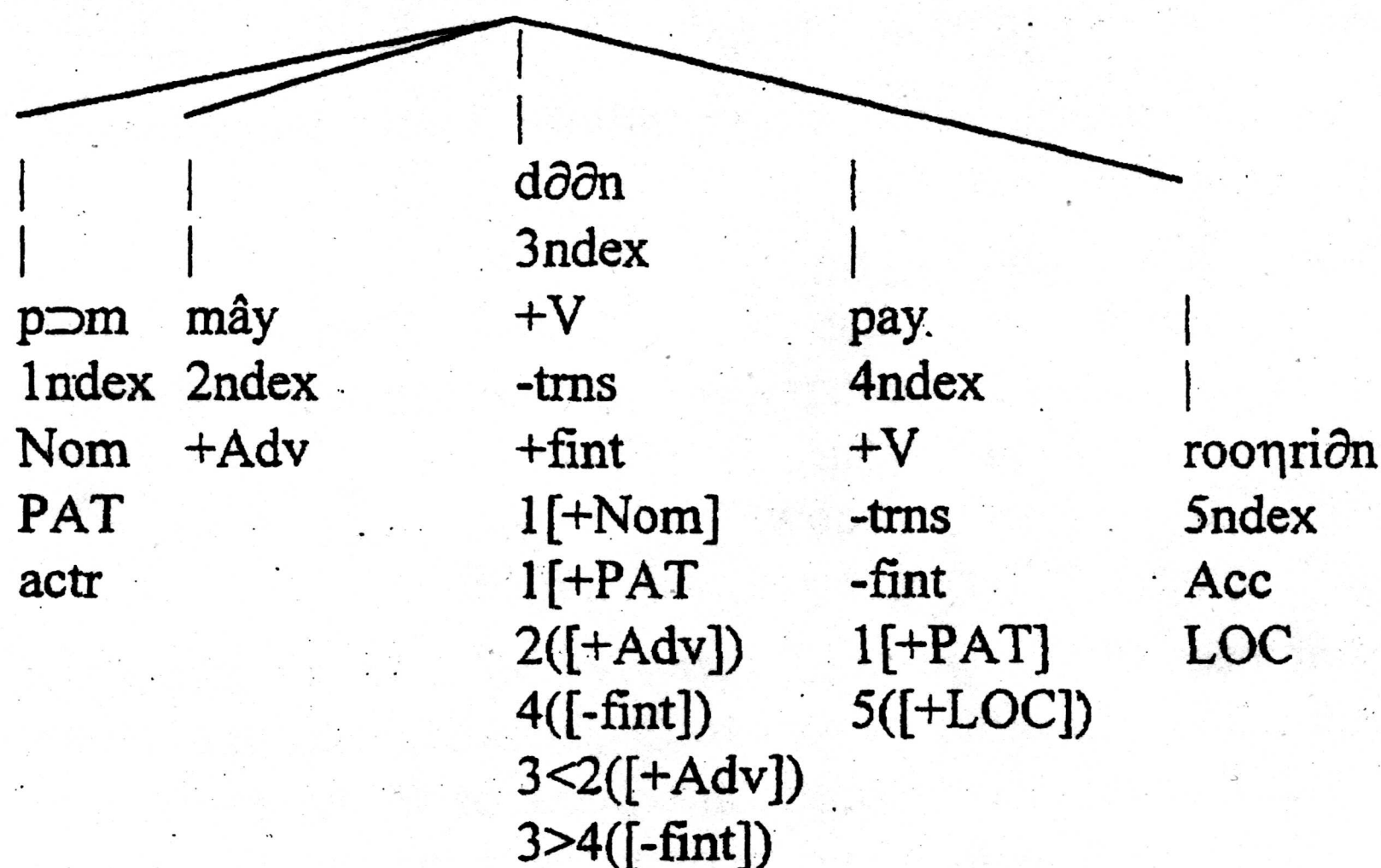
'Pat pretended not to offend her mother.'

5. nDy tham khwaamsa?aat mây 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 *dDn* 'walk' and *klaa* 'be brave', respectively, whereas in sentences (3-5), *mây* negates the resultative verbs *khaat* '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. *nók mây tàt kradaat khaat
 Nok not cut paper tear
 7. *pàt mây klaa khàtcay maxx
 Pat not pretend offend mother
 8. *nDy mây tham khwaamsa?aat hây baan sòkkapròk
 Noy not do cleanliness give house dirty

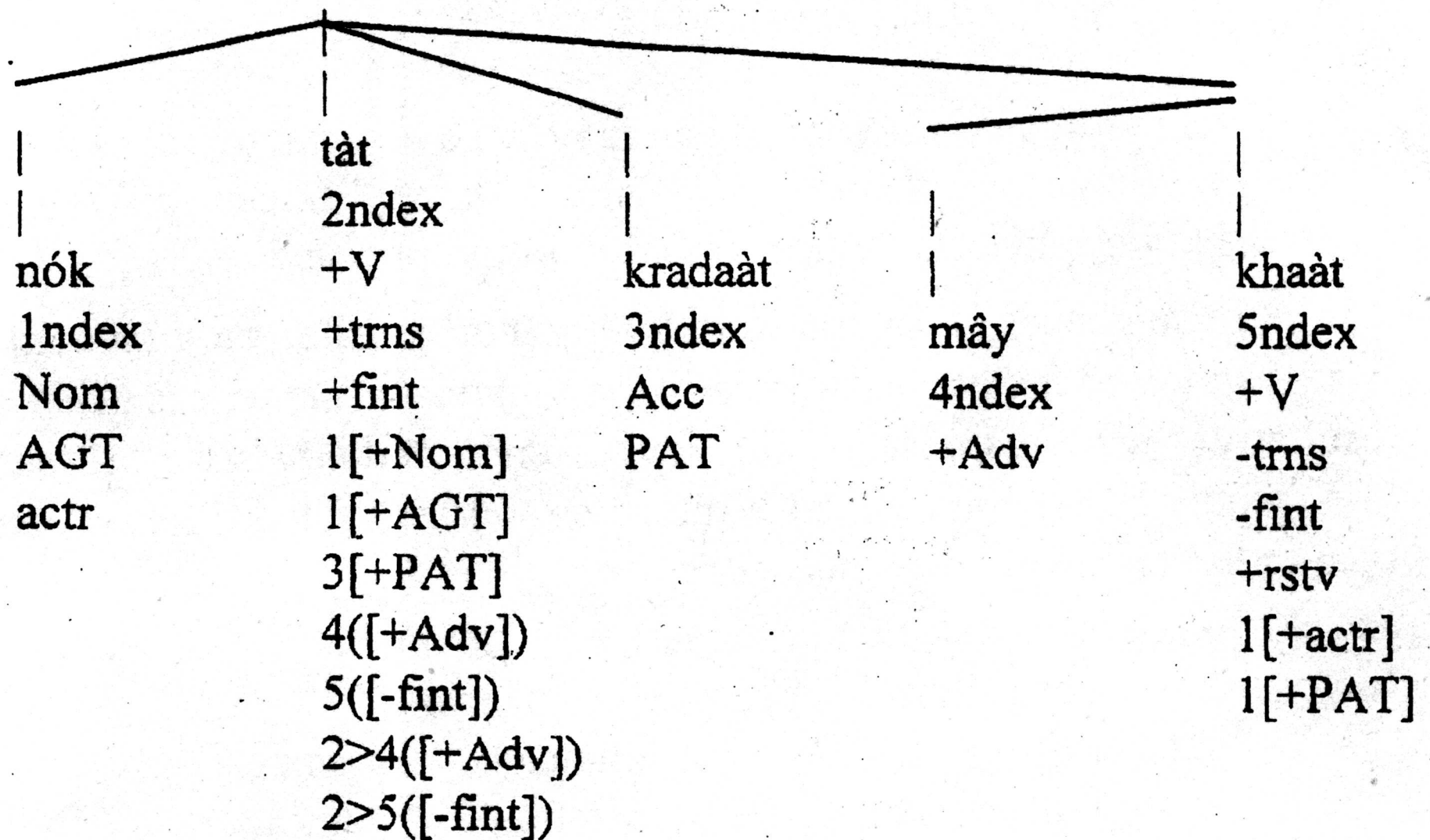
The internal structure for the negative construction in which the adverb *mây* negates the first commanding verb is illustrated as follows:



STEMMA I

The tree stemma demonstrates that the adverb *mây* 'not' negates the first commanding verb *dDn* '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:



STEMMA II

The tree stemma demonstrates that the adverb *mây* 'not' negates the resultative verb *khaàt* 'tear', instead of negating the first commanding verb *tát* 'cut'.

Now, consider the following conditional negative *mây--mây* '(if) not, (then) no constructions in Thai:

9. *mây híw mây kin*
not hungry not eat
'(If I / you) don't feel hungry, (I / you) will not eat.'
10. *mây หัดη mây รู๋*
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 *yàà* 'do not' or *haâm* '(it is) prohibited', as in (10) and (11), respectively.

11. *yaa phuût siðŋ dan*
do not speak voice loud
'Do not speak loudly.'
12. *haâm kin khanom nay หัดηริðŋ*
prohibit eat desert in classroom
'(It is) prohibited to eat some dessert in the classroom.'

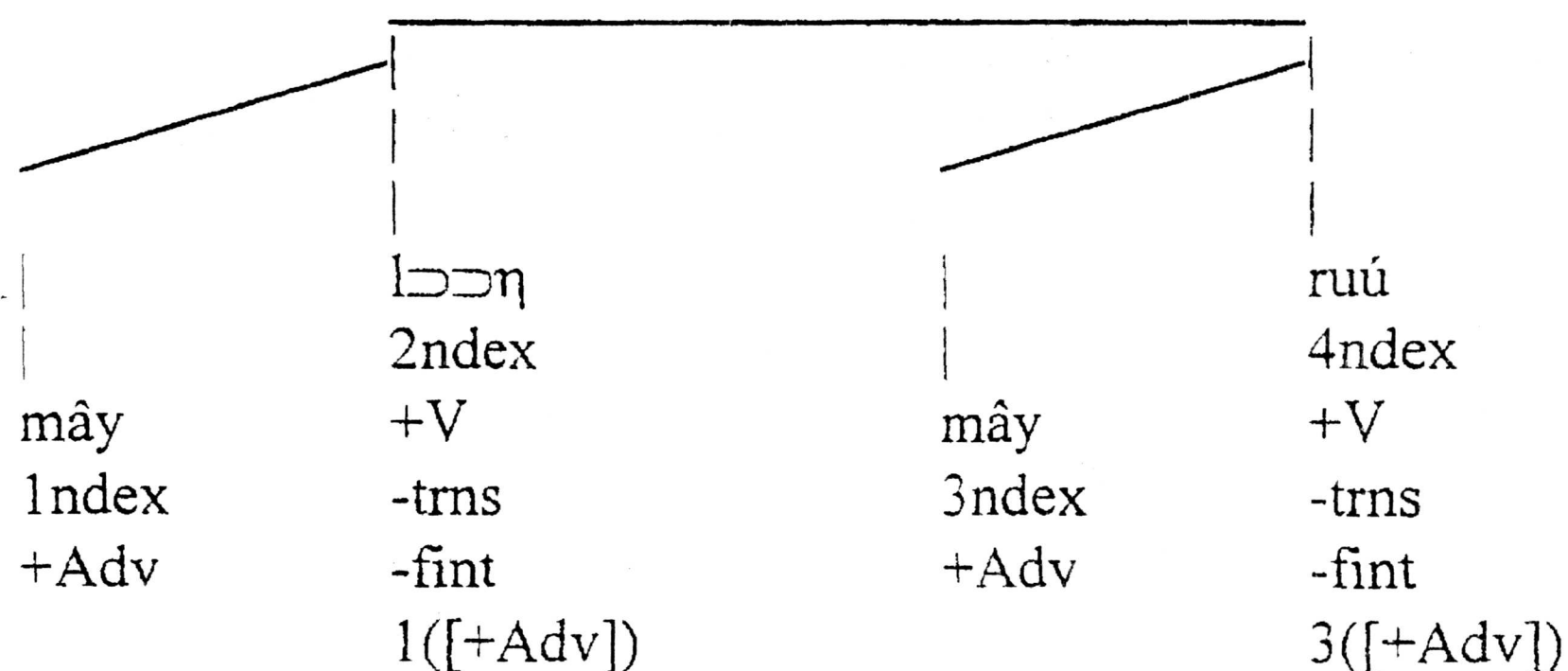
Sentences (9) and (10) cannot be negated by either *yàà* 'do not' or *haâm* '(it is) prohibited', as (13-16) illustrate:

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------|--------|----------|------|
| 13. | *yaà | híw | yaà | kin |
| | do not | hungry | do not | eat |
| 14. | *haâm | híw | haâm | kin |
| | prohibit | hungry | prohibit | eat |
| 15. | *yaà | lɔɔŋ | yaà | ruu |
| | do not | try | do not | know |
| 16. | *haâm | lɔɔŋ | 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 lɔɔŋ 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 lɔɔŋ* 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 lɔɔŋ* and *mây ruú* were to be coordinated, it means that the criteria for justifying a coordinate clause would be applicable with *mây lɔɔŋ 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 lɔɔŋ* and *mây ruú*, as in (19):

18. maa kàp mxxw pen sattruu kan
 dog and cat be enemy reciprocal
 ‘Dogs are cats are enemies.’
19. *mây lɔɔŋ kàp mây ruú
 not try and not know

The second criterion is that constituents in a coordinate clause can be reversible as in (20). However, *mây lɔɔŋ* and *mây ruú* cannot be coordinated as in (21):

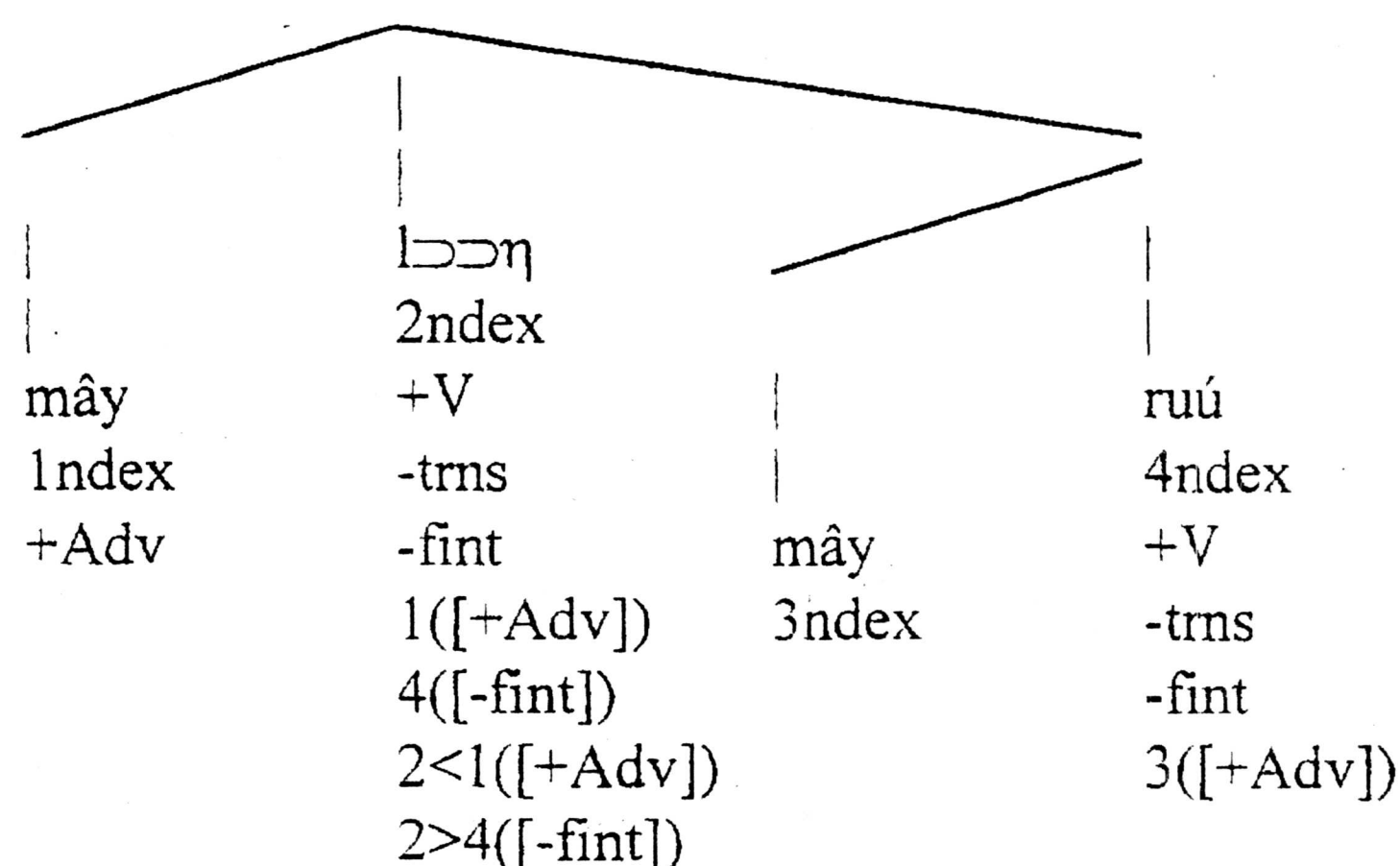
20. nákrìðn lx? aajaan khâw òprom myywaannií
 student and teacher participate work-shop yesterday
 ‘Students and teachers participated in the workshop yesterday.’
21. **mây lɔɔŋ mây ruú*
 not try not know

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

22. maa kàp mxxw lx? kày pen satruu kan
 dog and cat and chicken be enemy reciprocal
 ‘Dogs, cats, and chickens are enemies.’
23. **mây lɔɔŋ kàp mây ruú lx? mây fan*
 not try and not know and not listen

The conclusion is that the double negative clause *mây lɔɔŋ mây ruú* cannot be coordinated because their syntactic manifestation is against the criteria of justifying coordinate construction.

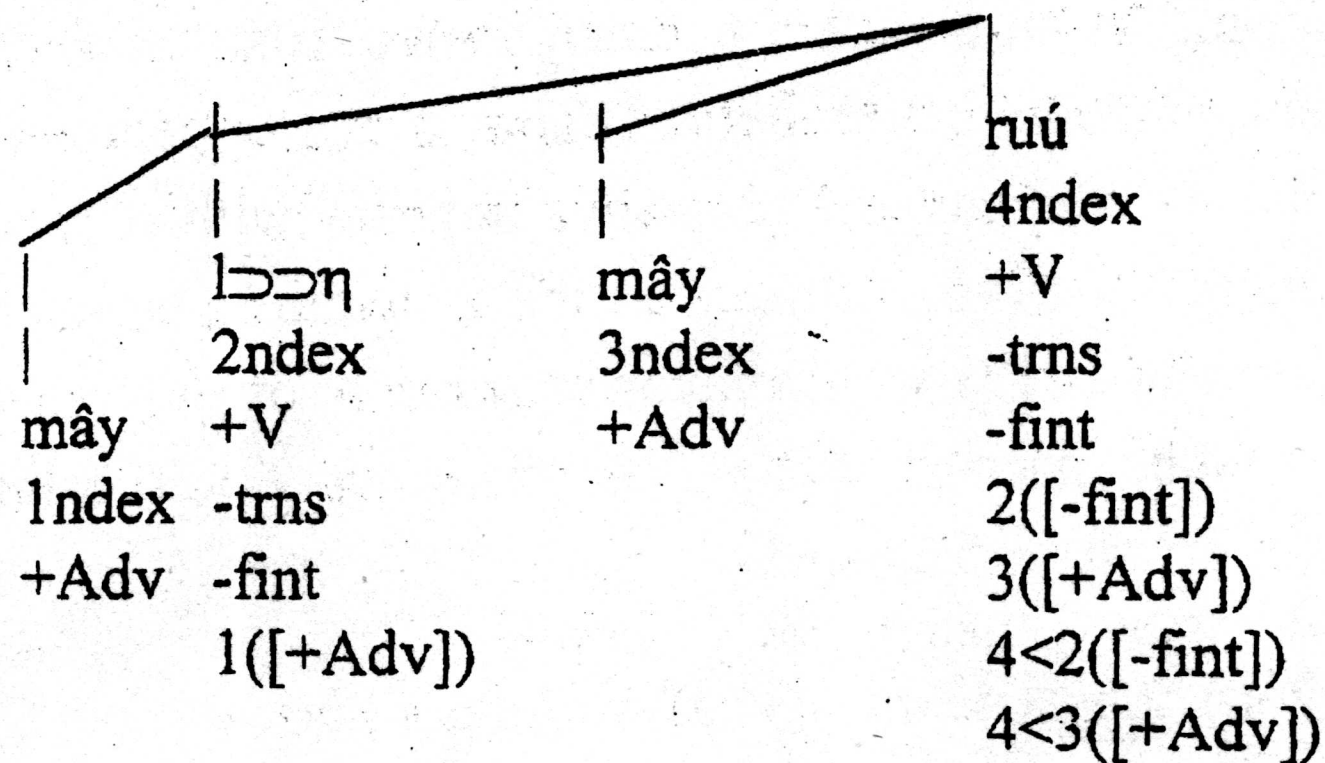
The second hypothesis is that *mây lɔɔŋ* ‘do not try’ is treated as the first commanding verb of the clause, the internal structure would look like the following:



STEMMA IV

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

The third hypothesis is that *mây ruú* ‘do not know’ is treated as the first commanding verb, the internal structure would be like the following:



STEMMA V

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 *mây* 'not', e.g.,

24. khaw wîŋ pay khyn rôtmeē
he run go board bus
'He ran to board the bus.'
25. khaw may wîŋ pay khyn rôtmeē
he not run go board bus
'He did not run to board the bus.'
26. *khaw wîŋ mây pay khyn rôtmeē
he run not go board bus
27. *khaw wîŋ pay mây khyn rôtmeē
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 wîŋ pay* 'he ran' in which *wîŋ* is the first commanding verb and the clause *mây khyn rôtmeē* '(he does not board a bus)' in which *khyn* is the first commanding verb.)

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

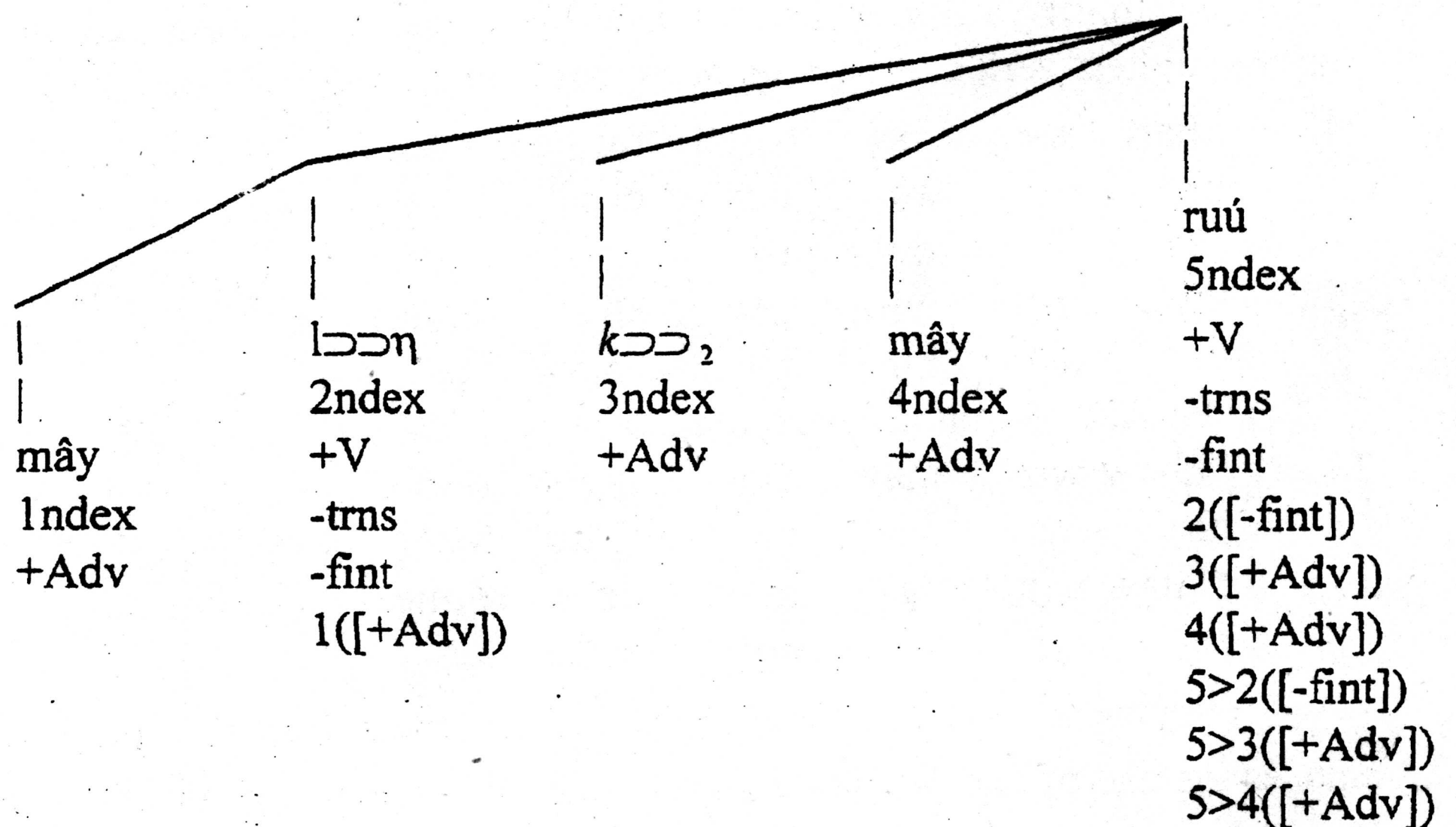
However, the negation test *mây* 'not' cannot be used to determine the commanding verb for sentence (17) because sentence (17) both clauses has been negated by the conditional negative *mây--mây*. The verbs *lɔɔŋ* 'try' and *ruú* 'know' in both clauses can be treated as commanding verbs, and they could appear as formulaic structures.

Nonetheless, there is another way to justify the internal structure of sentence (17). That is by an insertion of *kɔɔ* 'then'. In Thai, there are two different lexical entries of

kɔɔ functioning as an adverb: *kɔɔ*₁ meaning 'also' and *kɔɔ*₂ meaning 'then'. They differ in their syntactic distribution. That is, *kɔɔ*₁ appears without a preceding predicate dependent sister, whereas *kɔɔ*₂ always appears with a preceding predicate dependent sister (Savetamalya 1996). Based on the syntactic characteristic of *kɔɔ*₂, the internal structure of sentence (17) would favor stemma V over stemma IV. That is, if *kɔɔ*₂ is inserted, it must be inserted after *mây lɔɔŋ* which would bring about sentence (28):

28. *mây lɔɔŋ kɔɔ₂ mây ruu*
 not try then not know
 'If you) don't try, then (you) would not know.'

Sentence (28) indicates that *kɔɔ*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 validifying that the internal structure of the conditional negative clause *mây lɔɔŋ mây ruu* 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 *mây--mây* '(if) not, (then) not' construction in Thai, there is 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 *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ* ‘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* *laán* *caan* *duɔ̌y* *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ*
 AGT PAT MNS
 Nom
 actr
 Pim wash dish by oneself
 ‘Pim washed the dishes by herself.’
30. **caan* *laán* *duɔ̌y* *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ*
 PAT MNS
 Nom
 -actr
 dish wash by oneself

In (29), the reflexive pronoun *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ* ‘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 *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ* is always coindexed with the noun marked with the feature actor [+actr], as in (31). The interpretation of the reflexive pronoun *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ* ‘oneself’ is interpreted as associating with one single event. Consider the following sentences:

31. *nít* *thaasii* *baân* *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ*
 Nit paint house oneself
 ‘Nit painted the house herself.’
32. *nít* *chom* *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ*
 Nit admire oneself
 ‘Nit admired herself.’
33. *nít* *hen* *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ* *nay* *kracòk*
 Nit see oneself in mirror
 ‘Nit saw herself in a mirror.’

The interpretation of the reflexive pronoun *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ* ‘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 *tuð?eeŋ* ‘oneself’ can be interpreted as associating with either one single event or multiple events, as in (34-36):

34.

nít

kàp

phim

thaasii

baân

tuð?eeŋ

Nit

and

Pim

paint

house

oneself

a.

‘Nit and Pim painted the house themselves.’

b.

‘Nit and Pim painted their own houses.’
35.

nít

kàp

phim

chom

tuð?eeŋ

Nit

and

Pim

admire

oneself

a.

‘Nit and Pim each admired themselves.’

b.

‘Nit and Pim admired themselves.’
36.

nít

kàp

phim

hen

tuð?eeŋ

nay

kracòk

Nit

and

Pim

see

oneself

in

mirror

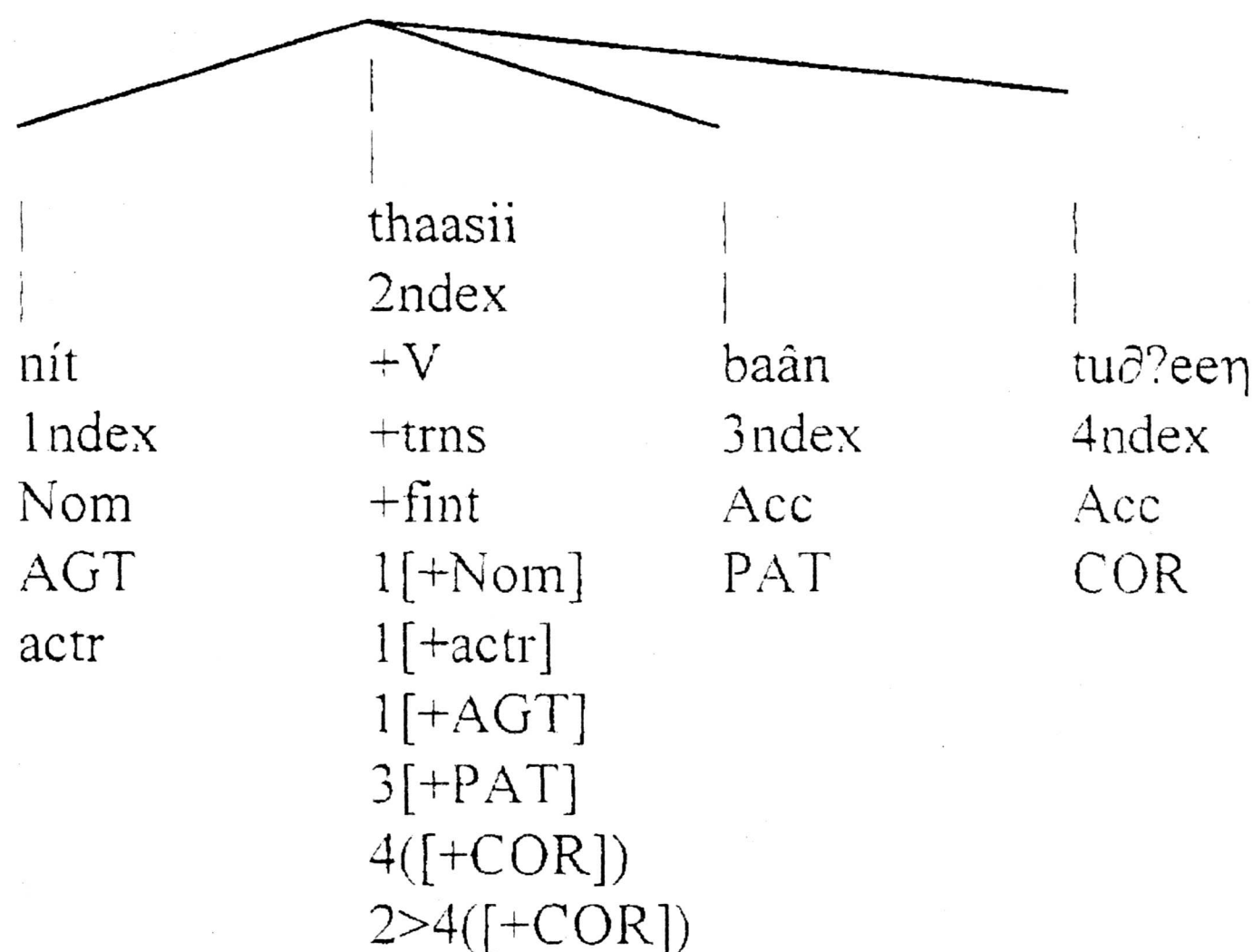
a.

‘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:



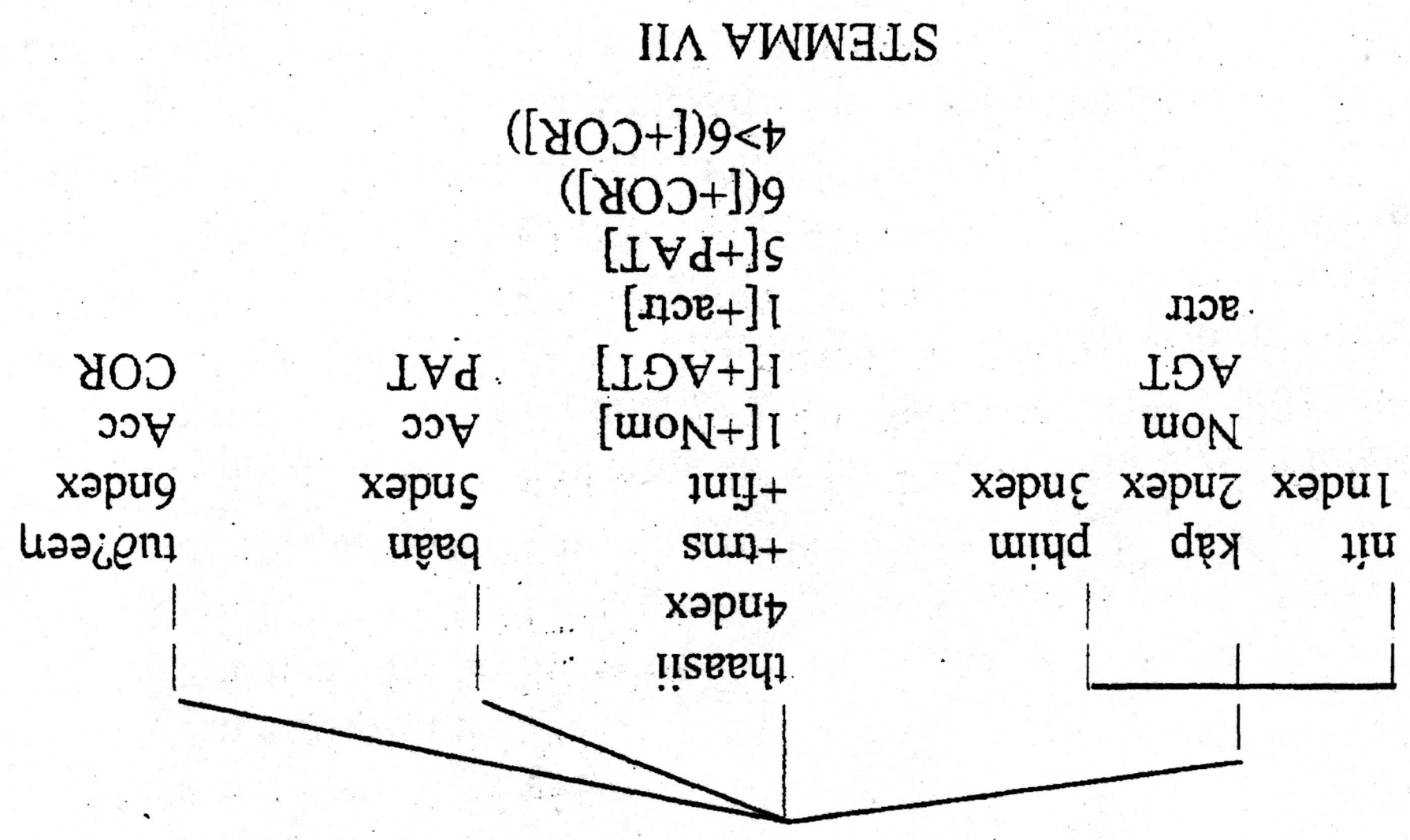
STEMMA VII

A negated quantifier noun phrase is a noun phrase consisting of a noun with a negated quantifier *may thuk* 'not every' and a classifier (Savetamalya 1989). Ordinarily, the sentence consisting of bare noun phrases in Thai is ambiguous, as shown in (37):

4. Negated quantifier noun phrase

The fact regarding the reflexive pronoun in Thai within lexicae dependency grammar which can be explained by the relationship of an antecedent noun and the reflexive pronoun *tu2'een* cannot be stated in purely grammatical terms. Whether the two nouns are related or not has to be accounted for by a semantic explanation (Starosta 1996: p.c.).

There is only one interpretation for sentence (31), which is 'Nit admired herself'. On the contrary, there is a two-way interpretation for sentence (35). The reflexive pronoun *tu2'een* 'oneself' in sentence (35) provides two-way interpretation. The first interpretation is that 'Nit admired herself, and Pim admired herself'. The second interpretation is that 'Nit and Pim admired themselves'. The reflexive pronoun tells who admires who but does not directly determine the two-way interpretation. The two-way interpretation comes from the predicate *chom* 'admire' in association with the coordinate noun phrase *nit kap phim* 'Nit and Pim'. This kind of two-way interpretation which is imposed by a predicate in association with an antecedent noun is quite common in the reflexive construction in Swahili (Khamisi 1985). In Swahili, a morphological marker for a reflexive pronoun is inflected in a verb form, not on a noun. This indicates that the reflexive form is independent from the antecedent noun, which confirms that the scope of the reflexive pronoun does not associate with its antecedent noun but a with verbal predicate.



37. thanuu thuk paw
 arrow hit target
 'An arrow hit a target'
 'All the arrows hit all the targets.'
 'All the arrows hit a target.'

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 *thanuu* 'arrow' and *paw* 'target' in (37) can each be interpreted as having two meanings. There are four dichotomies for the overall meaning of sentence (37), as shown in the English gloss 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* 'every' 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 more than one individual and at the same time it would eliminate the meaning of one individual. If the classifier construction modifies the noun *thanuu* 'arrow', the possible interpretation will be reduced to two, as indicated in (38). And if the classifier construction modifies the noun *paw* 'target', the interpretation will be reduced to two, as seen in (39):

38. thanuu thuk luek thuk paw
 arrow every clsf hit target
 'All the arrows hit the target.'
 'All the arrows hit all the targets.'
 39. thanuu thuk paw thuk paw
 arrow hit target every clsf
 'An arrow hit all the targets.'
 'All the arrows hit all the targets.'

Notice that nouns which are not modified by the quantifier *thuk* 'every' and a classifier remain ambiguous, as indicated in the translation of the bare noun *paw* 'target' in (38) and the bare noun *thanuu* 'arrow' 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, if this type of construction is negated by *may* 'not', this would result in an ambiguous interpretation of the noun it modifies. Consider the following sentence:

40. thanuu may thuk luek thuk paw
 arrow not every clsf hit target
 'Not a single arrow hit the target (all missed).'
 'Not every arrow hit the target (some did, some did not).'

Analyzing sentence (40) using lexibase dependency grammar, the tree stemma would look like the following:

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 *mây--mây* '(if) not, (then) not' construction, the reflexive pronoun *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ* '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 *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ* '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 *mây--mây* '(if) not, (then) not', the reflexive pronoun *tuɔ̌ʔeeŋ* '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.

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