PATIENT SUBJECT CONSTRUCTIONS IN THAI

SARANYA SAVETAMALYA
Department of English, Faculty of Humanities,
Chiangmai University, Thailand

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explain how the grammar provides the way for the Patient to appear as a subject in Thai. To begin with, I would like to introduce the terms that are related to this topic. They include Agent and Patient case relations and the characteristics of transitivity as well.

1.1. Agent and Patient

In an accusative language, the grammatical subject occurs in a preverbal argument position. The grammar makes available the construction in which the subject is identified. Dixon (1972) states that there are two grammatical terms to identify a subject. One is an Agent, "the entity that initiates the action," the other is a Patient "the entity that undergoes the action."

Within the lexicase analysis, one of the constructions that allow an Agent to occur as a subject is a transitive clause, e.g., Mary ate some ice-cream. The example of a Patient subject is an intransitive clause, e.g., The apple rotted.

1.2. Transitivity and a subject choice hierarchy

The occurrence of an Agent is important in determining the transitivity. That is, a clause is transitive if there is an Agent; if not it is intransitive (Starosta 1982). Fillmore identifies the rank of a possible subject in relation to case relations under the notion of subject choice hierarchy. That is, when there is an Agent, it is a subject; when there is no Agent, the subject is an Experiencer, or an

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Instrument, or an Object, or a Source, or a Goal, respectively (Fillmore 1968:24).

Thai also follows this tradition. That is, when there is an Agent, it is always a subject. If there is no Agent, there is only one way for a Patient to be a subject in Thai, and that is for it to appear with an intransitive verb.

2. Subclassification of verbs

Within a lexicase analysis, verbs can be subclassified into two main subclasses: transitive and intransitive. A transitive verb requires an Agent, whereas the intransitive verb does not. Transitive and intransitive verbs can also be further subcategorized into two subclasses: locational and non-locational (Starosta 1982, Sayankena 1985, Pagotto 1988).

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[+V]
 /   
[-trns] [+trns]
 /     /
[-[+AGT]] [+[+AGT]]
 /     /
[-lctn] [+lctn] [-lctn] [+lctn]
    |
[?+[+LOC]] [?+[+LOC]]
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Example of locational intransitive verbs:

1. dek nOon plee
child sleep hammock
|PAT| | -trns| LOC
|actr| | -lctn|

'The child slept in the hammock.'

Example of non-locational intransitive verbs:

2. phyng bin
bee fly
|PAT| | -trns|
|actr| | +lctn|

'The bees flew.'

Example of locational transitive verbs:

3. mxx say kung nay tuuyen
mother put shrimp in refrigerator
|AGT| | +trns| PAT LOC
|actr| | +lctn|
'Mother put some shrimp in the refrigerator.

Example of non-locational transitive verbs

4. puk  ?aan  kaatuun
   Puk  read  comics
   |AGT|  |[-trns]| PAT
   |actr|  |+[lctn]|
   'Puk is reading comics.'

In addition to the two subclasses of locational and non-locational verbs, intransitive verbs in Thai can be further subcategorized into five subclasses (cf. Sayankena 1985:137):

a. Intrinsic intransitive verbs require a subject Patient case relation, and do not require other nouns to cooccur with them. They include action verbs, such as d@en 'walk', wing 'run', 10m 'fall', and stative verbs, such as sabaay 'convenient', su@y 'to be beautiful', yap 'wrinkled', and kaw 'old' as in the following examples:

5. nakri@n  d@en  rew
   student  walk  fast
   |PAT|  |[-trns]|
   |actr|
   'Students walk fast.'

6. phaa  chin  nii  su@y
   cloth  classifier  this  beautiful
   |PAT|  |[-trns]|
   |actr|
   'This piece of cloth is beautiful.'

2. Correspondent intransitive verbs ([[-trns, +crsp]]) require complements marked with the correspondent case relation to cooccur with them, such as nak 'be heavy', myyn 'resemble', e.g.,

7. ri@n  nak  sip  kram
    coin  weigh  ten  gram
    |PAT|  |[-trns]|  COR
    |actr|  |+[crsp]|
    'The coin weighs ten grams.'

1 Following Savetamalya (1989:72-76), su@y is treated as a stative verb not an adjective.
8. naa th@e myyn daaraa
   face she resemble movie star
   |PAT|  |+trns| COR
   |actr|  |+crsp|
   'Her face looks like a movie star.'

The intransitive verbs in (7-8) are different from transitive verbs. That is, a transitive verb requires an immediate following noun which is marked with a Patient case relation and the noun can be topicalized, as in 9b. On the contrary, the immediate following noun of an intransitive verb which is marked with a correspondent case relation cannot be topicalized, as in 10b:

9a. chan ?aan nangsyy nii
    I read book this
    |AGT|  [+trns] PAT
    |actr|
    'I read this book.'

9b. nangsyy na? chan ?aan lxxw
    book TOPIC I read already
    PAT |AGT|  [+trns]
    |actr|
    'The book, I already read it.'

10b. *sip kram na? ri@n nak
ten gram TOPIC coin weigh
    COR |PAT|  |+trns|
    |actr|

3. Locational intransitive verbs ([-trns, +lctn]) require complements marked with the Locus case relation to cooccur with them, such as nang 'sit', nOOn 'sleep'

11. khruu nang kaw?ii
    teacher sit chair
    |PAT|  |+trns| LOC
    |actr|  [+lctn]
    'A teacher sat on the chair.'

12. dek nOOn plee
    child sleep hammock
    |PAT|  |+trns| LOC
    |actr|  |+crsp|
    'A child slept in a hammock.'

4. Mode [+mode] intransitive verbs require complements marked with the Means case relation to cooccur with them. The complements are marked with th
prepositions du¿y and dooy 'with, by', and have a meaning related to materials, rather than instruments, e.g.,

13. kaw?ii tu¿ nii hum du¿y phaa may chair clsf this cover with cloth silk
   [PAT | ]-trns| MNS
   [actr | ]+mode|
   'This chair is covered with using silk cloth as material.'
   '*'This chair is covered with silk cloth.'

5. Extension intransitive verbs require a sentential complement to cooccur with them. The complements can be either finite or non-finite. The finite complement occurs with the prepositional complementizers waa 'that'. These kinds of verbs can be called informative extension verbs ([|trns, +xtns', +nfrm)], e.g., khit 'think', b00k 'tell', or sabaan 'promise'.

14. ph00 khit waa fon ca? t0k father think that rain will fall
    [PAT | ]+xtns | [+P] [+fint]
    [actr | ]+[+fint]]
    'Father thought that it would rain.'

The example of extension intransitive verbs occurring with a non-finite complement is chu¿y 'help':

15. nong chu¿y tham kaanb¿an Nong help do homework
    [PAT | ]-trns | [-fint]
    [actr | ]+xtns |
    [actr | ]+[+fint]]
    'Nong helped doing the homework.'

2.1. Patient centrality hypothesis and lexical derivation

This section emphasizes the concept of a Patient following a lexicase analysis. According to the Patient centrality hypothesis (Starosta 1988:128), every verb has a Patient and an actor in its case frame. In accusative languages, the subject is always an actor, and the Patient can be assigned to either the subject of an intransitive verb or the object of a
transitive verb. If the verb is transitive, the subject is an Agent. If the verb is intransitive, the subject is a Patient. In this case, the transitive and intransitive verbs are related.

The relatedness of the verbs in the sets as well as their systematic semantic differences can be accounted for in accordance with the Patient Centrality hypothesis by means of lexical derivation rules, such as the following:

\[
\begin{align*}
| +V & | \quad --> \quad | +V & | \\
| +\text{trns} & | \quad | -\text{trns} & | \\
| -\text{lctn} & | \quad | -\text{lctn} & | \\
| -\text{crsp} & |
\end{align*}
\]

The rule states that an intransitive verb, which does not take an Agent, an inner Correspondent or an inner Locus as its sisters is derived from a transitive verb, which requires an Agent case relation but does not take an inner Locus as its dependent sister. Since all verbs have a Patient and since the Patient must be the subject if there is no Agent in the case frame, the application of the rule results in the appearance of the transitive Patient as a subject of the corresponding intransitive verb, e.g.,

a. dek kin khanom nii
cild eat dessert this
AGT [+trns] PAT
'The child ate this dessert.'

b. khanom nii kin ?ar0Oy
dessert this eat delicious
PAT [-trns]
'This dessert is delicious to eat.'

The derivation process is non-productive. Non-productivity refers to the situation where some item meets the structural description of a rule but does not undergo it. If the rule does not apply to certain well-defined sets, they can be excluded from the structural description.

Some sets of transitive verbs do not have intransitive counterparts, such as, a verb allowing a correspondent case, or a locational verb. The examples are as follows:
However, there is no intransitive locational counterpart, e.g.,

The sentence (2b) is grammatical if cotmaay is interpreted as a topicalized noun, in which the subject noun can be inserted, e.g.,

There is a mode transitive verb, from which a mode intransitive verb can be derived, e.g.,
Since the mode intransitive verb is derived from the transitive counterpart, the Means case relation is included in the case frame, but need not be included in the derivation rule. On the other hand, the Locus and Correspondent (represented by [lctn] and [crsp]) case relations are included.

Having discussed the subclasses of intransitive verbs which take Patient subjects within a lexicase analysis, I shall now turn to discuss alternate strategies and mechanisms for expressing non-subject Patients as subjects in Thai.

3. Derivation

There is only one way for a Patient to be a subject in Thai, and that is for it to appear with an intransitive verb through derivation rules.

3.1. Derivations focused on an Agent

The first type of derivation rules focuses on the Agent's role. The Agent can be affected either by being demoted or subtracted from the case frame, whereby the grammar allows the Patient, which remains the same to appear and function as a subject. There are two types of derivations that affect the Agent. One is called an Agent demotion, the other is an Agent subtraction. These derivational processes follow a fixed Patient strategy, in which the original Patient is unaffected in the process of deriving an intransitive verb from a transitive source (cf. Starosta 1988:164).

3.1.1. Agent demotion

Agent demotion is a strategy in which an Agent subject of a transitive verb is reinterpreted as a Means. This results in a changing of transitivity of a verb root into an intransitive form. The morphological form of the derived intransitive verb is unchanged, (cf. Kullavanijaya 1972, Sayankena 1985, Prasitrathsint 1985). The appearance of a Means case

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4 The term is originally used by Starosta in connection with causativization. It is extended here to account for the Patient-subject constructions in Thai.
relation requires the prepositions either dooy or duɓy ‘by, with’. Since the derived verb is intransitive, it takes the Patient as its subject. A set of verbs that undergo this strategy is limited to factitive verb, as in (1-3), not other kinds of verbs, as in (4-5),

1a. wisawakOOn saang baan nii
eengineer build house this
[AGT ] [+trns] PAT
[actr ]
'The engineer built this house.'

1b. baan nii saang dooy wisawakOOn
house this build by engineer
[+PAT ] [-trns ] MNS
[+actr ] [+mode ]
'This house was built by the engineer.'

2a. mxxkkhru@ tham ?aahaan caan nii
cook make food classifier this
'The cook made this dish.'

2b. ?aahaan caan nii tham dooy mxxkkhru@
food classifier this make by cook
'This dish was made by a cook.'

3a. nakkhi@n miichy plxx nangsyy lem
writer famous translate book clsf
nii
this
'A famous writer translated this book.'

3b. nangsyy lem nii plxx dooy nakkhi@n
book clsf this translate by writer
miichyy
famous
'This book was translated by a famous writer.'

4a. khaw tii maa
he hit dog
[AGT ] [+trns] PAT
[actr ]

4b. *maa tii dooy khaw
dog hit by him
[+PAT ] [-trns ] MNS
[+actr ] [+mode ]
5a. mxxkhaa khaay khaaw
    seller sell rice
    'The seller sold some rice.'

5b. *khaaw khaay dooy mxxkhaa
    rice sell by seller

Unlike factitive verbs saang, tham, and plxx in (1-3),
tii and khaay in (4-5) are not factitive verbs.
Therefore the corresponding intransitive clauses in (b)
are ungrammatical.

The original Agents of (1a-3a), wisawakoon, mxxkhruq,
and nakkhièn are reinterpreted as Means in (1b-3b).
Thus, baan, ?aahaan, and nangsyy remain as the Patient
but they are reinterpreted as subjects of intransitive
verbs.

Derivation rule 1: Agent demotion

\[ (+\text{trns } | ) \rightarrow (-\text{trns } | ) \]
\[ (+\text{fctt } | ) \rightarrow (+\text{fctt } | ) \]
\[ (n[+\text{AGT }] | ) \rightarrow (n[+\text{MNS }] | ) \]

This rule states that an Agent of a transitive
verb is reinterpreted as a Means, and also it results
in a derivation of an intransitive verb from a
corresponding factitive transitive verb.

3.1.2. Agent subtraction

In this study, the subtraction involves the
reduction of the number of noun phrase arguments
without requiring any to be reinterpreted. The Agent
of a transitive verb is subtracted, and the Patient of
a transitive verb automatically becomes the subject
Patient of the derived intransitive verb.

There is a potential \([+\text{ptnl}]\) or resultative
\([+\text{rslt}]\) meaning increment in a Patient subject of a
derived intransitive verb. The additional meaning
shows the semantic feature of being a property or a
result of a verb. Consider the following sentences:

1a. khāw dyym mailoo
    he drink Milo
    \[\text{AGT } | [+\text{trns}] \text{ PAT}\]
    'He drank Milo.'
1b. mailoo dyym ?arO0y
   Milo drink delicious
   [PAT | [-trns]]
   [actr] [+pnt1]
   'Milo makes a good drink.' or 'Milo is a good beverage.'

1c. mailoo dyym lxxw
   Milo drink already
   [PAT | [-trns]]
   [actr] [+pnt1]
   'Milo was already drunk.'

2a. nun sak phaa
    Nun wash clothes
    [AGT | [+trns] PAT]
    [actr]
    'Nun was doing the laundry.'

2b. phaa sak ngaay
    clothes wash easy
    [PAT | [-trns]]
    [actr] [+pnt1]
    'The clothes were easily washed.'

2c. phaa sak lxxw
    clothes wash already
    [PAT | [-trns]]
    [actr] [+rslt]
    'The clothes were already washed.'

The intransitive verbs dyym and sak are derived from their corresponding transitive counterparts in (a). In (b), the derived verbs carry a potential feature, whereas in (c), they carry a resultative feature.

Not every verb can undergo the Agent subtraction strategy. The non-affected [-afct] verbs, such as perceptual or cognitive verbs, e.g., hên ‘see’, m00ng ‘look at’, fang ‘listen’, etc., and mirror-image verbs, e.g., myyn ‘resemble’ are of this type. The examples are provided as follows:

3a. khaw hên phuying
    he see girl
    [AGT | [+trns] PAT]
    [actr]
    'He saw some girls.'
3b. *phuuying hen ngaay girls see easy

3c. *phuuying hen lxxw girl see already

4a. khaw myyn mxx he resemble mother
    [AGT] [+trns] PAT [actr]
    'He resembles his mother.'

4b. *mxx myyn ngaay mother resemble easy

4c. *mxx myyn lxxw mother resemble already

The following are examples of more verbs that introduce a Patient subject through the Agent subtraction strategy:

5a. tum chiik kradaat
    Tum tear paper
    [AGT] [+trns] PAT [actr]
    'Tum tore off a piece of paper.'

5b. kradaat chiik lxxw paper tear already
    [PAT] [-trns]
    [actr] [+rslt]
    'A piece of paper was already torn off.'

5c. kradaat chiik ngaay paper tear easy
    [PAT] [-trns]
    [actr] [+ptnl]
    'A piece of paper was easily torn off.'

6a. dek khon nii txxng phleeng keng
    child clsf this compose song smart
    [AGT] [+trns] [PAT]
    [actr]
    'This child composed songs well.'

6b. phleeng nii txxng phr'x?
    song this compose beautiful
    [PAT] [-trns]
    [actr] [+ptnl]
    'This song was composed beautifully.'
6c. phleeng níi txxng ngaay
song this compose easy

[+trns] [-trns]
[actr] [+rslt]

'This song was composed easily.'

The Patient objects of (5a-6a) chiik and phleeng become the Patient subjects of (5b-6c) when the Agents kradaat, and dek are subtracted.

Derivation Rule 2: Agent subtraction

[+trns] --> [-trns]
[+afct] [+ptnl]
[+rslt]

This rule states that an Agent of an affected transitive verb is subtracted from a case frame. Thus, it results in an object Patient appearing as a subject Patient in the derived verb.

3.2. Derivations focused on a Patient

The second type of derivation focuses on a Patient. The Patient is affected in two ways. That is, the Patient is added, or it is subtracted. Again, this kind of derivation affects the property of a verb. If the original verb is transitive, and the process of a Patient subtraction is involved, it results in deriving a corresponding intransitive verb. On the contrary, if the original verb is intransitive, and the process of a Patient addition is involved, it results in deriving a corresponding transitive verb.

The correlation between these two sets of verbs, transitive or intransitive, related by some lexical derivations sometimes cannot be clearly described. There is no absolute answer to determine which direction the derivation goes, since no morphological distinction is involved.\(^5\)

It could be that an intransitive verb is derived from a corresponding transitive verb through a Patient subtraction. Or, a transitive verb is derived from a

\(^5\) Hopper and Thompson's tests are for semantic transitivity. They state that semantic transitivity tends to correlate with grammatical transitivity, but the correlation is not absolute. For one thing, semantic transitivity is scalar while lexicase grammaticality is polar.
corresponding intransitive verb through a Patient addition. Let us assume the latter assumption first.

3.2.1. Patient Addition

Consider the following pairs of sentences:

1a. ph00 krot day ngāay
    father angry get easy
    [PAT ] [-trns]
    [actr] [+ptnl]
    'Father gets angry easily.'

1b. ph00 krot luuk
    father angry child
    [AGT ] [+trns] PAT
    [actr]
    'Father gets angry at his children.'

The correlation between these two sentences can be explained along the following lines: The intransitive verb in (1a) seems to be more basic than the transitive verb in (1b). Intuitively, emotional verbs (except rak 'to love') do not require a following noun, such as krot, which does not need to specify whatever or whoever is the cause of anger. Thus, the intransitive is more basic. The transitive sentence is related to the intransitive sentence through the derivation called Patient addition.

It could be that a transitive verb is derived from a corresponding intransitive verb through a Patient addition strategy. For example, the following English transitive verb in (2b) is derived from the intransitive verb (2a):

2a. The gun fired into the crowd.
    [PAT ] [-trns]
    [actr]

2b. The troop fired rubber bullets into the crowd.
    [AGT ] [+trns] PAT
    [actr]

3.2.2. Patient subtraction

Patient subtraction is a derivation process by which the original Patient object of a transitive verb is subtracted from the case frame, thereby requiring
the Agent of the source verb to be reinterpreted as a Patient subject in accordance with the Patient centrality hypothesis (Starosta 1982).

1a. khonngaan sáang dáy rew díi
    worker build get fast good
    [PAT ] [-trns]
    [actr] [+pntl]
    'The workers built (it) really fast.'

1b. khonngaan sáang báan
    worker build house
    [AGT ] [+trns] PAT
    [actr]
    'The workers built the house.'

On the contrary, the (1a) sentence is conceptually more basic than the (1b) sentence. The verb sáang is an action verb which requires a Patient object. Thus, the intransitive verb is the result of a Patient subtraction.

Consider the following pairs of transitive and intransitive verbs:

2a. fay mây tyk níi
    fire burn building this
    [AGT ] [+trns] PAT
    [actr]
    'The fire burnt down this building.'

2b. fay mây nay tyk níi
    fire burn in building this
    [PAT ] [-trns] LOC
    [actr]
    'The fire burnt (something) in this building.'

3a. phaayu thàlòm cangwat chumph0On
    storm destroy province Chumporn
    [AGT ] [+trns] PAT
    [actr]
    'The storm destroyed Chumporn.'

3b. phaayu thàlòm thíi cangwat chumph0On
    storm destroy at province Chumporn
    [PAT ] [-trns] LOC
    [actr]
    'The storm destroyed at Chumporn.'

In both (2a-3a) and (2b-3b), there is a noun immediately following a verb, one is a full-fledged
noun, the other is a relator noun. The question arises of how to categorize these verbs. Which one is transitive and which one is intransitive? Hopper and Thompson (1980:251-299) proposed some parameters to justify the degree of semantic transitivity for verbs. Some criteria can be applied here to test the transitivity of verbs in Thai. The (a) sentence is more transitive than the (b) sentence by the following criteria:

1. The sentence (a) is more telic in aspectuality than the sentence (b). Therefore, the appearance of an aspect marker 1xxw in (b) results in ungrammaticality of (d), whereas it is grammatical in (c):

2c. fay máy tyk níí 1xxw
    fire burn building this already
    'The fire burnt down this building already.'

2d. *fay máy nay tyk níí 1xxw
    fire burn in building this 1xxw

2. The affected objects of the two sentences are different. In (2a), the Patient object is affected; it means 'the building was burnt down', whereas, in (2b) it was something in the building, not the building itself, that got burnt. In (a), the object is more affected; therefore the verb is more transitive than the one in (b).

Following Hopper and Thompson, the generalization captured here is that the verb in (a) is transitive, whereas that in (b) is less transitive or intransitive. The immediate noun following a verb in (a) is a Patient noun, whereas the one in (b) is a Locus noun and is marked by a relator noun nay.

4. Conclusion

According to the syntactic structure of Thai, there is a way in which a non-subject Patient can appear as a subject through a lexical derivation. When the process of a lexical derivation occurs, it effects the transitivity of the original clauses or sentences. That is, the original transitive construction loses its transitivity and derives an intransitive counterpart.

The lexical derivation affects either an Agent or a Patient of an original transitive clause. If the Agent is affected, there are two derivations involved:
Agent demotion and fixed Patient strategy. If the Patient is affected, it results in the following derivations: Patient addition and Patient subtraction.

Lexicase illuminates how the grammar provides the way for the non-subject Patient to appear as a subject in Thai. It seems that by using different syntactic framework, the result of the analysis may be different. Therefore, the study under this topic is still left open for other syntacticians who would like to do more research using frameworks, other than the lexicase.

REFERENCES


